MASTER OF ARTS IN PHILOSOPHY

Admission to Program

To enter this program with classified graduate status, students should have completed the following five SF State undergraduate courses (or equivalents philosophy courses at another university) with a grade of B or better. Students who have not completed these prerequisites may begin the program as conditionally classified with the approval of the Graduate Coordinator in philosophy, but they will be required to make up any deficiencies by receiving a grade of 3.0 or better in each prerequisite class.

- PHIL 205 Formal Logic I 3
- PHIL 301 Ancient Philosophy 3
- PHIL 303 Modern Philosophy 3

Select One Upper Division Course in Ethics 3
- PHIL 395 Ethical Issues: Science and Technology
- PHIL 450 Ethics
- PHIL 451 Feminist Moral Issues

Select One Course in Core Area of Metaphysics and Epistemology 3
- PHIL 321 Being and Knowing
- PHIL 350 Philosophy of Science
- PHIL 351 Philosophy of Risk
- PHIL 605 Metaphysics
- PHIL 610 Theory of Knowledge
- PHIL 611 Philosophy of Perception
- PHIL 620 Philosophy of Mind
- PHIL 621 Minds, Brains and Computers
- PHIL 630 Philosophy of Language
- PHIL 694 Philosophical Logic Workshop
- PHIL 695 Advanced Logic Workshop

A GPA of at least 3.0 is expected for (1) the last 60 undergraduate units, and (2) all philosophy courses.

Applicants must submit a Philosophy Department Application, obtained online and returned to the department office, as well as the general university application form.

Written English Proficiency Requirement

The University has a requirement for written English proficiency that is to be assessed at two different points in a student’s program.

Level One
Pre-admission writing sample.

Level Two
Satisfactory completion of the examination in PHIL 898 (and Oral Exam).

Advancement to Candidacy

To be advanced to candidacy so as to commence work formally on their M.A. thesis, students must be in the process of completing or else have completed 18 units with grades of B or better, which must include PHIL 715 and at least two graduate seminars in philosophy. An “Advancement To Candidacy” form must be filed with Graduate Studies; students should file during the semester in which they expect to have reached 18 units or in the immediately following semester.

All upper division courses offered by Philosophy may be considered for the master’s degree, upon approval of the Graduate Coordinator. The graduate coordinator will not approve any course numbered 300–599 in which a student receives below an A–. Courses numbered 600 or higher must have received a grade of B– or higher, except that with permission of the Graduate Coordinator some courses in this range may be counted with a grade of CR.

Students become subject to declassification from the Philosophy MA program and/or disqualification from the university if they are on administrative/academic probation for more than one consecutive semester during their time as a graduate student.

Philosophy (M.A.) – Minimum 33 Units

Course Requirements:

Students must take three required courses: PHIL 715 Seminar in Philosophical Writing; PHIL 896 Directed Reading in Fundamental Philosophical Texts (the M.A. qualifying exam); PHIL 898 Master’s Thesis (and Oral Exam). PHIL 715 should be taken during the first year (preferably during the first semester of graduate coursework); PHIL 896 should be taken during the second or third semester of graduate coursework (and in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator); PHIL 898 should be taken during the final semester of coursework. Also required are four elective philosophy graduate seminars (12 units), as well as another 12 graduate or upper division elective units. Students may select from a wide array of graduate and upper division courses, including various kinds of supervised research and applied, practicum, or publication projects to complete the last group of 12 elective units, but at least three of the units in this group must be at the graduate level.

- PHIL 715 Seminar in Philosophical Writing 1
- PHIL 896 Directed Reading in Fundamental Philosophical Texts (A student who fails the comprehensive examination at the end of this course may repeat the course only once) 2
- PHIL 898 Master’s Thesis (and Oral Examination in Defense of Thesis) 3

1. PHIL 715 should be taken during the first year (preferably during the first semester of graduate coursework)
2. PHIL 896 is a mandatory CR/NC course. Students who fail the exam may attempt it only once more, after enrolling again. Before enrolling again, students should consult with the Graduate Coordinator to determine when they are ready. It must be completed with a CR before the student may enroll in PHIL 898, the master’s thesis course.
3. PHIL 898 should be taken during the final semester of coursework.