

PHILOSOPHY, M.A.

Mission Statement

The M.A. program at Loyola Marymount University is marked by three emphases: the history of Philosophy, including recent and contemporary continental philosophy; ethical studies; and philosophy informing and informed by the Catholic and Jesuit tradition. Our students are invited to acquire a solid grasp of the history of Philosophy, both Western and Eastern, and to pursue specialized studies of a range of philosophical issues and figures. The program is designed for students who seek the comprehensive background and training required for admission to and success in a Ph.D. program in Philosophy, as well as for those who wish to complement their studies in related disciplines with the Master of Arts in Philosophy. A special feature of our M.A. Program is our commitment to imparting to students the skills associated with effective teaching as they broaden and deepen their philosophical understanding.

Financial Assistance

Every student admitted into the program is considered for tuition assistance. The amounts of the grants vary and are awarded on the basis of both merit and need. One Research Assistantship is awarded each year. Teaching Fellowships may be awarded to students who participate in the Teacher Orientation Program (TOP). Students may also apply for a number of on-campus jobs reserved for graduate students. Rains Research Assistantships (60 hours per semester, 120 hours per year) may be obtained by arrangement with individual professors.

Learning Outcomes of the M.A. Program in Philosophy

Upon successful completion of the M.A. Program in Philosophy, the student

- will be familiar with the major figures, movements, positions, and issues characterizing the ancient, medieval, modern, late modern, and contemporary periods in the history of Western Philosophy;
- will be able to make intelligent and critical use of the resources and tools required for thorough philosophical research and writing;
- will be able to interpret philosophical texts intelligently, critically, and charitably;
- will be able to analyze and evaluate philosophical arguments;
- will be capable of clear, coherent, and rigorous argumentation and expression in their own philosophical writing;
- will be able to communicate their interpretations of philosophical texts and their own critical views confidently in both informal and professional settings;
- will be able to engage in fruitful philosophical dialogue and discussion;
- will be able to formulate precisely and communicate clearly their own developing positions on the basic epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical questions;
- will have a clearer understanding and firmer grasp of the philosophical questions with which they themselves are most deeply concerned;
- will be familiar with the range of responsibilities associated with the professional side of the philosophical life.

Admission Requirements

1. The General Test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (waived for some foreign applicants).
2. Demonstration of undergraduate competence in Philosophy, as evidenced by the completion of an undergraduate major or minor in Philosophy, or strong undergraduate preparation in a closely related field. The competency of students with non-traditional backgrounds will be determined in interviews with the Program Director.
3. An undergraduate GPA of 3.0.
4. An application, an application fee, and two letters of recommendation testifying to the student's aptitude for graduate studies in Philosophy, from professors familiar with the student's undergraduate work in Philosophy.
5. A personal statement, of no more than four typed pages, on why the applicant wishes to pursue philosophical studies at the graduate level. Applicants should indicate in their statements their intention to pursue either a terminal M.A. or to seek admission to a Ph.D. program after earning the M.A.
6. A writing sample of approximately 10 typed pages, preferably of philosophical writing.
7. The deadline for the receipt of all materials is March 15 for the Fall semester and November 1 for the Spring semester.

Degree Requirements

The two-year program requires 30 credit hours of course work (10 6000-level courses), successful completion of a reading proficiency examination in French, German, Latin, or Greek, and successful completion of an oral examination. Students are expected to take six courses in their first year, and four in their second. Students may complete their credit requirement with their own choice of graduate courses. A portion of the course requirement may be fulfilled by graduate course work in the Departments of English or Theological Studies, or in the Bioethics Institute, with the approval of the Program Director. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing.

Teacher Orientation and Practicum (TOP)

Students may elect to participate in the TOP Program. Students who wish to be considered for a Teaching Fellowship must participate in the TOP Program. The aim of TOP is to introduce students to the practical and pedagogical tasks involved in teaching at the undergraduate level, and to provide basic instruction in the effective performance of those tasks. TOP is administered by members of the Department of Philosophy. It includes both instructional sessions and practical applications. The instructional sessions provide guidelines for the preparation of course descriptions and syllabi, assignments and examinations, and for the grading of assignments and examinations. In addition, they offer guidelines for the preparation and delivery of lectures and the conduct of classroom discussions. The practical applications include: interviews with faculty members about their approaches to teaching and their methods, their successes and their failures; preparation of sample course descriptions and syllabi; preparation and delivery of a lecture, with optional videotaping, and a final review of the student's performance. Students participate in TOP in the second and third semesters of the M.A. Program and receive a Certificate of Participation upon completion of the program.

Oral Examination

The Oral Examination is a one-hour oral, conducted by three faculty members. Its aim is to probe and evaluate a student's ability to articulate

and defend his/her developing epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical positions.

Language Requirement

Before completion of the program students must demonstrate reading proficiency in French, German, Latin, or Greek. Language examinations are offered every semester and may be retaken.