

PHILOSOPHY

About Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy has particular strength in the following areas:

- Ancient Philosophy
- Early Modern Philosophy
- Kant and post-Kantian German Philosophy
- Philosophy of Language and Philosophy of Mind
- Aesthetics
- Moral and Political Philosophy
- Feminist Philosophy
- History and Philosophy of Science and Mathematics
- Contemporary European Philosophy

The Department offers assistance to students in every aspect of placement. Our Placement Officer counsels students about coursework and areas of competence, helps to establish evidence of teaching ability, administers the dossier for job applications, and provides advice and follow-up in the interview process. Many of our graduates have gone on to do postdoctoral research and over 80% are now in tenure track or sessional appointments.

The Department offers courses of study leading to the **Ph.D.** in Philosophy. It also offers, in conjunction with the Biomedical Ethics Unit, a course of study leading to the **M.A.** degree in Bioethics.

Ph.D. Program

By December 15 of their third year in the program (Ph.D. 3) for students admitted at Ph.D. 1 and August 15 in their second year in the program (Ph.D. 3) for students admitted at Ph.D. 2, students must submit a research paper (the "candidacy paper" [3 credits]), which may be worked up from a paper written to fulfil the requirements of a graduate course, to a Thesis Advancement Committee consisting of at least two members of the staff of the Department. The membership of this committee will be determined by the Graduate Director in consultation with the student; it is anticipated that members of this committee would, in principle, direct the student's thesis.

This committee assigns a grade to the student's paper and reviews her or his graduate performance; on the basis of its assessment and review, it recommends to the Department as a whole either to permit the student to continue with the Ph.D. program and undertake a thesis or to decline to permit the student to continue. Two necessary conditions for a positive recommendation are that the student: **(a)** receive a grade of at least B+ on the candidacy paper, and **(b)** have at least a 3.5 GPA (on the undergraduate Grade Point scale) in the coursework required for the program.

The Department as a whole, taking into account the Thesis Advancement Committee's recommendation and the student's overall academic record in the program, decides whether to permit the student to continue. Students who do not receive a positive recommendation but who satisfy Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies requirements (no courses below a B- and completion of 45 credits) will be recommended to Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies by the Department to transfer from the Ph.D. program to the M.A. program.

Graduate students are expected to continue to contribute to the intellectual life of the Department after being promoted to candidacy. They can do so by participating in reading and discussion groups and, most of all, by auditing seminars both within and outside their areas of specialty.

Philosophy Admission Requirements and Application Procedures

Admission Requirements

Ph.D.

The Department admits students into two degrees: Master of Arts, specialization in Biomedical Ethics, and a Doctor of Philosophy. Ph.D. 1 is a direct-entry program for students with an Honours B.A. degree in Philosophy or the equivalent. Ph.D. 2 is a program for students who hold an M.A. degree in Philosophy, or equivalent. At present, we do not consider applicants for an M.A. in Philosophy. We offer an M.A. specialization in Bioethics in conjunction with the Biomedical Ethics Unit. Information for students interested in the Specialty M.A. in Biomedical Ethics can be found here: mcgill.ca/equity-ethics-policy/education/masters-specialization-bioethics.

The Department considers an adequate undergraduate training in philosophy to be one that provides a student with:

1. a general knowledge of the history of Western philosophy: Greek, Medieval, Modern;
2. a systematic knowledge of the main philosophical disciplines in their contemporary as well as historical contexts: logic, ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics;
3. an ability to present, in written form, clear and substantial reconstructions and analyses of the materials normally studied in the areas mentioned in (1) and (2).

To demonstrate their competence in these areas, applicants must submit transcripts of academic work, three letters of recommendation from persons with whom they have studied, and at least one substantial example (approximately 15–20 typewritten pages) of their written philosophical work.

In addition, applicants from North America whose first language is English are strongly encouraged to submit scores of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Applicants to graduate studies whose mother tongue is not English, and who have not completed an undergraduate or graduate degree from a recognized foreign institution where English is the language of instruction or from a recognized Canadian institution (anglophone or francophone), must submit documented proof of competency in oral and written English (TOEFL score).

M.A. (Bioethics)

Students applying to the Bioethics Specialty program must write an M.A. thesis proposal. All applications to this program must also receive the approval of the Director of the Specialty program. Students who apply for this program should note that they must participate in a practicum, which continues beyond the end of their second term of classes.

Application Procedures

McGill's online application form for graduate program candidates is available at mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply-now.

See University Regulations & Resources > *Graduate* > *Graduate Admissions and Application Procedures* > Application Procedures for detailed application procedures.

Additional Requirements

The items and clarifications below are additional requirements set by this department:

- Letters of Reference – three (3) original letters of reference, from three qualified individuals familiar with your work
- Writing Sample (15–20 pages) – a sample of your written work in philosophy
- Personal Statement (2–3 pages) – explaining your reasons for wishing to undertake graduate studies in philosophy at McGill University

Application Dates and Deadlines

Application opening dates are set by Enrolment Services in consultation with Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS), while application deadlines are set by the Department of Philosophy and may be revised at any time. Applicants must verify all deadlines and documentation requirements well in advance on the appropriate McGill departmental website; please consult the list at mcgill.ca/gps/contact/graduate-program.

Information on application deadlines is available at mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/how-apply/application-steps/application-deadlines.

Admission to graduate studies is competitive; accordingly, late and/or incomplete applications are considered only as time and space permit.

Available Programs

- Philosophy (Ph.D.)
- Philosophy (Thesis): Bioethics (M.A.) (45 credits)
- Philosophy: Environment (Ph.D.)
- Philosophy: Gender and Women's Studies (Ph.D.)
- Philosophy: Teaching Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Program Overview

Master of Arts (M.A.) Philosophy (Thesis): Bioethics

The **Master's in Bioethics** is an interdisciplinary academic program that emphasizes both the conceptual and the practical aspects of bioethics. Ordinarily, it takes at least two years to complete, although some students have completed it in 18 months. The first year is devoted to coursework (including a clinical practicum), and the second year is devoted to a master's thesis on a topic in bioethics that also satisfies the requirements of the base discipline.

The curriculum is composed of required courses (6 credits) offered in the Biomedical Ethics Unit, bioethics courses (6 credits minimum) offered by the base faculty or department, and any graduate course required or accepted by a base faculty for the granting of a master's degree, for a total of 21 credits. A minimum of 45 credits is required, including the thesis. Students graduate with a master's degree from the faculty of their base discipline (M.A., M.Sc., or LL.M.) with a specialization in bioethics.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Philosophy

The program is intended for students with a B.A. or M.A. in Philosophy, though some exceptions may be possible. It is a pluralist department with an excellent professor-to-student ratio, strong preparation for dissertation work, and guaranteed full funding for four years for all admitted Ph.D. students.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Philosophy: Environment

****This program is currently not offered.****

The graduate option in Environment provides students with an appreciation for the role of science in informed decision-making in the environmental sector, and its influence on political, socio-economic, and ethical judgments. The option also provides a forum whereby graduate students bring their disciplinary perspectives together and enrich each other's learning through structured courses, formal seminars, and informal discussions and networking.

Students who have been admitted through their home department or faculty may apply for admission to the option. Option requirements are consistent across academic units. The option is coordinated by the Bieler School of Environment (BSE), in partnership with participating academic units.

Location

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