

Virginia Tech

**Department
of
Philosophy**

**Graduate Student
Handbook**

2009-2010

College
Liberal of *Human*
Arts & *Sciences*

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Department of Philosophy Virginia Tech Graduate Student Handbook

Purpose of this Handbook:

This packet contains information concerning graduate study in Philosophy at Virginia Tech. It will be useful to prospective applicants, incoming students, and those continuing in the program.

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Application Information

The Masters of Arts Program in Philosophy at Virginia Tech welcomed its first students in the fall of 1993. We currently enroll 6-12 new students each year, normally in the fall. The two-year MA program is designed to provide students with a solid grounding in Western Philosophy in the broadly analytic tradition. It is well-suited to students with a variety of interests: many transfer to a Ph.D. program in philosophy after obtaining the MA, but others go on to further studies in other areas of academia or in law, and still others seek primarily just to broaden their liberal education through advanced study. Please go to our website at www.phil.vt.edu, and follow the link to the Master of Arts degree program for complete placement records and more.

Costs and Financial Aid

Tuition and fees in 2009-10 are \$5,114 per semester for Virginia residents and \$8,964 per semester for non-residents. Graduate assistantships are available on a competitive basis. Assistantship stipends are approximately \$11,052 (i.e., \$1,228 per month for 9 months) for the academic year 2009-2010, plus tuition and academic fee remission (though students are responsible for remaining fees at the in-state rate--currently \$703 per semester-- and out-of-state students are assessed an additional \$197.00 capital fee).

Application Procedures

The department maintains a page with complete information for applicants: follow the link for the Master of Arts degree program at the website above, then scroll down to the Admissions section. Please consult this page before submitting an application. Applicants are strongly advised to apply for admission and financial assistance by February 1, though later applications can be considered. Applicants *MUST* submit:

- 1) An official transcript of their undergraduate academic record: one to the department and one to the graduate school.
- 2) Three letters of recommendation on the forms (electronic or paper) provided by the Graduate School;
- 3) A completed official application form (online);
- 4) A writing sample (to the department); and
- 5) An official report of scores on the quantitative and verbal portions of the **GRE**.
- 6) Applicants from institutions where English is not the primary language must also submit an official record of scores on the **Test of English as a Foreign Language**.

Applications are done online, through the Graduate School's website, <http://www.grads.vt.edu>. Requests for further information should be directed to william.fitzpatrick@vt.edu or by mail:

Director of Graduate Studies
Department of Philosophy (0126)
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Phone: (540) 231-7543

Although electronic applications are preferred, application materials can also be obtained by mail from:

The Graduate School
Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown (0325)
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Phone: (540) 231-2494

General Information

Life at Virginia Tech

The Locale

Virginia Tech is located in Blacksburg, in the scenic New River Valley of southwestern Virginia. The university campus lies in the Allegheny Mountains, 2,100 feet above sea level. The entire area is famous for its natural beauty, healthy atmosphere, and year-round outdoor recreational opportunities. The town of Blacksburg is noted for its progressive planning and high quality of life. Blacksburg has three main shopping areas within easy reach of the campus. Regularly scheduled local bus service is available to Virginia Tech students as part of their student services fee. Non-students are charged a nominal fee.

The Roanoke metropolitan area (pop. 250,000) with its many cultural, commercial and recreational opportunities is 40 miles east of the campus. Several airlines maintain scheduled flights from Roanoke Regional Airport to most major US cities. The Smart Way Bus offers Blacksburg-Roanoke bus service that includes stops at Squires Student Center and the Roanoke Airport (see <http://www.smartwaybus.com>).

The University

Virginia Tech is a diversified university with an enrollment of about 26,000 students. Since its founding as a land-grant college in 1872, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, popularly known as Virginia Tech, has grown to become the state's largest university and a major research institution.

The university offers 60 bachelor's degree programs and over 120 master's and doctoral programs, through its eight colleges and graduate school. Virginia Tech conducts more than \$200 million per year in externally funded research; in terms of research expenditures it is consistently ranked as one of the nation's top fifteen universities (among those without medical schools).

Please see <http://www.vt.edu/about/> for more.

The Library

Carol M. Newman Library has more than 2 million volumes, over 5 million microforms, subscribes to more than 19,000 journals and is designated as a repository for US government documents. The library is a member of the Association of Research Libraries and the Southeastern States Library Network. The Newman library also stores numerous CD-ROMs, data bases, and search systems available for research use.

The Graduate Life Center

Conveniently located near the library, Squires Student Center, academic buildings, and downtown Blacksburg, the Graduate Life Center (GLC) provides space and venues that meet the unique needs of graduate and professional students. The GLC is the hub of graduate student life, providing students with opportunities to meet and collaborate with faculty and peers across disciplines, develop skills for academic and professional success, and maintain a healthy work-life balance. The programs and services offered in the Graduate Life Center encourage and facilitate active participation in the graduate community. For more information, please go to: http://www.grads.vt.edu/student_life/glc/index.html.

Recreation

Numerous recreational facilities are available to students at Virginia Tech, including those found in the War Memorial Gym and the McComas Center (swimming pool, racquetball and basketball courts, weight rooms, and much more), and the Squires Student Center (bowling, billiards, table tennis, video games). Equipment for outdoor recreation is available for rental through the University Union. The University Golf Course is also available for student use. The Appalachian Trail is within easy reach and the area has numerous biking opportunities. In addition, the university attracts a variety of nationally and internationally recognized cultural events each year and has an active performing arts program.

The Philosophy Department

The Department of Philosophy at Virginia Tech is internationally recognized for its research-oriented faculty. The department has nine regular faculty members (not counting visiting faculty) covering a broad range of fields, with particular strengths in the history and philosophy of science.

The department is also distinguished by an unusually strong tradition of good teaching. Over the last 14 years, three members of the department have been inducted into Virginia Tech's Academy of Teaching Excellence, a distinction restricted to less than one percent of the university faculty.

The department has a variety of computer facilities, including a number of data-bases, and computer-accessible complete works of a number of important historical figures in philosophy, with appropriate software for search and information retrieval. One of the data-bases is the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) on a CD-ROM (with appropriate hardware and software for use), which provides access to virtually all works ever written in ancient Greek. Some of the philosophers accessible on CD's include: Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Leibniz, Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, Kant, Mill, and Peirce. Graduate students are provided access to the full range of computer facilities available on campus.

The Newman library also holds a web-based version of *The Philosopher's Index*, many valuable data-bases, and electronic copies of journals.

Computer Technology

The Computer Center at the university is one of the finest in the United States and one of the few to operate a "super-computer." Virginia Tech was recently ranked first in the nation in student access to computers. For on-line and timesharing access, the system supports over 3000 terminals and access to the world-wide INTERNET system for communication and data transfer.

The Philosophy Department makes available to all graduate students access to computer terminals, internet access, and e-mail accounts (see below under "Office Procedures" for more information).

Departmental Activities

The Philosophy Faculty sponsors a year-long lecture series and an annual Spring conference. A majority of the conferences have resulted in the publication of a book or a special issue of a journal.

Some conference topics: "The Role of History In and For Philosophy" (1984); "Rationality" (1985); "Causation and Explanation" (1986); "Autonomy" (1987); "Methodological Approaches to Plato and his Dialogues" (1988); "Pierre Duhem: Historian and Philosopher of Science," (1989); "The Role of Experiment in Scientific Change" (1990); "To Honor Marjorie Grene - A Conference on the Occasion of

her 80th Birthday" (1991); "Six Objectors to Descartes' Six Meditations" (1992); "Complex Representations" (1994), "Leibniz in the 90's" (1995); "Intellectual Property and the Commons" (1996); "Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and Aristotle's Theory of Intellectual Virtue" (1997); "Kant and the Sciences" (1998); "Wittgenstein and Biography" (1999); "Kuhn Reconsidered" (2000); "Between History and Philosophy" (2000); "Brown Farm and Uncle John's Mountains: Caring about Nature" (2001); "Objects and Artifacts: An Issue in Philosophy of Technology" (2001); "The Metaethics of Moral Status: Perspectives on the Nature and Source of Human Value" (2003); "'Peirce-pectives' on Metaphysics and the Sciences"(2004); "Scientific Images: Learning From Pictures (2006); "The First Symposium on Philosophy, History, and Methodology of E.R.R.O.R. (Experimental Reasoning, Reliability, Objectivity & Rationality: Induction, Statistics, Modeling)" (2006); "Wittgenstein" (2007); and "Meaning and Modern Empiricism" (2008).

Some recent speakers in the colloquium series include: Harry Frankfurt, Wesley Salmon, Sidney Schoemaker, Helen Longino, Edwin Curley, Richard Kraut, Peter Railton, Alvin Plantinga, Robert Sleigh, Martha Nussbaum, Michael Ferejohn, Owen Flanagan, Rose-Mary Sargent, Susan Haack, Susan Wolf, William Galston, Russ Shafer-Landau, and Kenneth Winkler.

For the past five years, our graduate students have held a Graduate Conference in the fall, featuring keynote addresses by Christine Korsgaard, Helen Longino, Brian Leiter, Fred Dretske, and Simon Blackburn, with James Woodward for the 2009 conference on Philosophy of Science. The conference has attracted graduate student presenters from leading Ph.D. programs across the country, and has become an important part of departmental life.

The Faculty

Mark Bauer (Visiting Assistant Professor) is interested in the accommodation of psychological and semantic typing in scientific practice. His recent and present work concerns the projectibility of psychological and semantic typing within the cognitively-oriented biological sciences, the explanatory function of normative characterization within the biological and cognitive sciences, and the explanatory relationship between autonomous explanatory domains. Much of this work assumes cognitive ethology/behavioral ecology as the primary model for a well-developed, sufficiently general cognitively-oriented science.

Steven Daskal specializes in moral and political philosophy, combining an interest in metaethics with work that addresses concrete political issues such as welfare policy. He has recently published "Plan Based Expressivism and Innocent Mistakes" in *Ethics* and his papers "Fellow Citizenship and U.S. Welfare Policy" and "Absolute Value as Belief" are forthcoming in *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* and *Philosophical Studies*, respectively.

William FitzPatrick works in ethics and serves as Graduate Program Director. His research and teaching range over the three major branches of ethics: metaethics, normative ethics and applied ethics. He has recently published articles on topics ranging from the foundations of ethics (e.g., "The Practical Turn in Ethical Theory: Korsgaard's Constructivism, Realism, and the Nature of Normativity," *Ethics* 115: 4), to issues in normative ethical theory (e.g., "The Intend/Foresee Distinction and the Problem of Closeness," *Philosophical Studies* 128:3), to ethical issues surrounding human embryonic stem cell research (e.g., "Surplus Embryos, Non-reproductive Cloning and the Intend/Foresee Distinction," reprinted in *Ethical Issues in Modern Medicine*, 7th edition) and global climate change ("Climate Change and the Rights of Future Generations," *Environmental Ethics* 29:4). Other recent work explores the intersection of evolutionary biology and morality ("Morality and Evolutionary Biology," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*), develops and defends non-naturalist ethical realism ("Robust Ethical Realism, Non-Naturalism and Normativity," *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, Vol. 3), and

defends claims of moral responsibility against recent skeptical arguments (“Moral Responsibility and Normative Ignorance: Answering a New Skeptical Challenge,” *Ethics* 118: 4). He is a recipient of the 2008-09 *Certificate of Teaching Excellence*, and chaired the *New River Valley Local Human Rights Committee* for the past six years.

James Klagge serves as Department Chair, and pursues a variety of research interests in moral philosophy, metaphysics, and 20th century analytic philosophy. He is especially interested in the metaphysical underpinnings of morality and the mind, focusing on supervenience and realism. He is also interested in the problem of conceptual change as it arises in our thinking about morality and mentality. Most recently, he has worked on Wittgenstein, both in his historical context and in his implications for current issues. Dr. Klagge teaches a wide variety of courses, focusing on moral philosophy, but straying into Ancient Greek culture, the history of political philosophy - especially Hobbes and Marx, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, African-American thought, and the meaning of life. Recent publications include: an edited anthology of papers on *Wittgenstein: Biography & Philosophy* (2001), a collection of primary material from Wittgenstein, *Public and Private Occasions* (2003), and papers on "Wittgenstein in Exile" (2005), "The Puzzle of Goethe's Influence on Wittgenstein" (2003), "Wittgenstein on Non-Mediative Causality" (1999), and "When Are Ideologies Irreconcilable? Case Studies in Diachronic Anthropology" (1998). Currently Klagge is writing a book, *Wittgenstein in Exile*, about the relationship between Wittgenstein's life and his work, and editing a book collection of writings that influenced Wittgenstein.

Simon May works mainly in political philosophy. His present research project concerns conflicts of moral conviction in democratic politics, particularly as they affect the legitimacy and authority of democratic law, norms of public deliberation, the justifiability of public policies, and the moral status of conscientious objection to the law. His paper “Religious Democracy and the Liberal Principle of Legitimacy” appeared in *Philosophy & Public Affairs* in the spring of 2009.

Deborah Mayo works in the epistemology of science and the philosophy of statistical inference. Her recent research has involved developing an account of experimental inference in science based upon statistical reasoning and the idea of learning from error. Her "error statistical" philosophy of experiment is set out in her *Error and the Growth of Experimental Knowledge* (The University of Chicago Press, 1996), winner of the 1998 *Lakatos Award*. She applies her approach toward solving key problems in philosophy of science: underdetermination, the role of novel evidence, Duhem's problem, and the nature of scientific progress. Dr. Mayo is also interested in applications to problems in risk analysis and risk controversies, and has co-edited *Acceptable Evidence: Science and Values in Risk Management* (with Rachelle Hollander). Dr. Mayo teaches courses in introductory and advanced logic (including the metatheory of logic and modal logic), in scientific method, and in philosophy of science. She also teaches special topics courses in Science and Technology Studies. Recently, she has been involved in a collaboration with the London School of Economics, giving a series of lectures there in the fall of 2008.

Phil Olson (Visiting Assistant Professor) works on (and branches out from) problems relating to virtue theory (in ethics and epistemology), rationality, and value theory. His approach to these problems is eudaimonistic and pragmatic, in a Deweyan sense. Olson teaches both in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies and in the Philosophy Department, and he is an **ASPECT** (<http://www.aspect.vt.edu>) affiliate. At Virginia Tech, he has taught introductory courses in ethics, metaphysics and epistemology, and ancient Greek culture, as well as advanced courses on ethical theory and philosophy of religion. In 2008-2009, Olson taught a graduate seminar in the Philosophy Department on the topic of virtue epistemology, and a team-taught ASPECT seminar on neo-liberalism. In the fall of 2009, he will teach a graduate seminar on American pragmatism.

Walter Ott works primarily in metaphysics and epistemology in the modern period. He also has interests in contemporary and historical philosophy of language and mind. Before coming to Virginia

Tech, he was a faculty fellow at Colby College and an assistant professor at East Tennessee State University. In the summer of 2004, he participated in an NEH summer institute, “The Intersection of Philosophy, Science, and Theology in the Seventeenth Century,” directed by Steven Nadler and Donald Rutherford. His current research focuses on causation and laws of nature, which was the topic of his graduate seminar in the fall of 2005. Recent work includes “Descartes and Berkeley on Mind,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 14, 3 (2006), “Aristotle and Plato on Responsibility for Character,” *Ancient Philosophy* (2006), and *Locke’s Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). In the fall, Oxford University Press will publish his second book, *Causation and Laws of Nature in Early Modern Philosophy*.

Ted Parent (*Visiting Assistant Professor*) works in epistemology and the philosophy of language (especially in relation to ontology). His dissertation, entitled ‘Metasemantics’ discusses certain epistemic limitations on semantic theorizing; it argues that under certain natural assumptions, some semantic questions cannot be resolved (even in principle). He is currently working on several articles, covering topics such as ontological commitment, two-dimensional semantics, and the apparent conflict between semantic externalism and *a priori* knowledge of content.

Daniel Parker specializes in the philosophy of physics. His current research projects involve foundational issues in statistical mechanics such as the reduction of thermodynamics to statistical mechanics and attempts to ground the distinction between past and future in the 2nd law of Thermodynamics. Dan spent the fall of 2008 at the University of Pittsburgh, and the spring of 2009 in France. In April, Dan gave a talk at the Descartes Centre for the History and Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities entitled “Molecular Disorder and Probability.”

Lydia Patton works on semantics and pragmatics in science, especially on the use of models in scientific experiment and theory building. Recent work focuses on Heinrich Hertz’s influence on special relativity, the discovery of electromagnetic waves and theory of electromagnetism, and the dialogue between empirical psychology, physiology, and neo-Kantianism in the 19th century. Her paper, “Signs, Toy Models and the A Priori,” is forthcoming in 2010, in *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*. Her article on Hermann von Helmholtz, a 19th century scientist and philosopher, can be found [online](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermann-helmholtz) in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermann-helmholtz>). Patton has recently given talks on “Models of Interactive Effects” at the Models and Simulations conference at University of Virginia on March 8, and at the Integrated History and Philosophy of Science conference at Notre Dame on March 13. She has been invited to visit the Center for Philosophy of Science at the University of Pittsburgh for the fall term of 2009.

Joseph Pitt has major research interests in history and philosophy of science and technology, with an emphasis on the impact of technologies on scientific change. His historical interests include Galileo, Hume, and American pragmatism. He is author of several books, most recently *Thinking About Technology*, and numerous articles in the history and philosophy of science and technology, and is currently working on a new book, tentatively titled *Seeing Near and Far: A Heraclitian Philosophy of Science*. A founding editor of the journal *Perspectives on Science*, published by MIT Press, he currently serves as editor-in-chief of *Techné: Research and Technology in Philosophy*. He is a winner of the Alumni Teaching Award and a member of Virginia Tech's Academy of Teaching Excellence, and teaches regularly at introductory, advanced undergraduate and graduate levels in philosophy of science and technology and epistemology. Professor Pitt also serves as the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

The MA Program

Requirements and Policies

Note -- some of the provisions described here are contained in the Department's Graduate Program Standards and Policies (Appendix C).

Consideration for Admission

The department makes its decisions both about admission to the program and Graduate Assistantships based on:

- Undergraduate and other graduate performance
- GRE scores
- Letters of recommendation
- Statement of Purpose
- The quality of the writing sample.

All faculty members participate in decisions concerning admissions and Graduate Assistantships.

Applicants will normally be notified of the status of their application by April 1, and usually earlier.

After Admission

Orientation

- Prior to the beginning of the Fall semester, the department holds a formal orientation meeting for all students. At this meeting, students are given, among other things, general information about departmental requirements and procedures, plans of study, office procedures and privileges, advising, thesis preparation, and timetables for meeting course requirements and completion of the thesis. The students are also introduced to the faculty and to continuing graduate students at this meeting.
- Departmental policies concerning review of student progress and expectations for adequate progress are specified at the orientation meeting.

Advising

At this time, each student meets with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to discuss the particular student's needs and plans. A provisional advisor is assigned to each student at this meeting. Subsequently, the student may choose to change his or her provisional advisor.

The Advisory Committee

- Before completing 12 credits, in consultation with his or her advisor, each student should form an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is normally composed of a total of three members, the majority of whom must come from the Department of Philosophy. The Advisory Committee is responsible for overseeing the student's program of study and thesis. The Advisory Committee is officially formed when the student completes a Plan of Study (see below). During the Spring term, Advisory Committees will normally be asked to forward to the Department Graduate Committee a statement of the student's progress (see Annual Evaluation of Graduate Students below). Advisory Committees have final approval authority within the program for recommendations of granting the MA degree in Philosophy. Advisory Committees are responsible for forwarding these recommendations to the Graduate School.

- Changes in a student's Advisory Committee will be granted only on approval of all Committee members, current and proposed, and the Department Head.

The Plan of Study

- All Graduate Students must submit an approved (signed) [Plan of Study](http://www.phil.vt.edu/ma/programofstudy.pdf) (or “Program of Study”; <http://www.phil.vt.edu/ma/programofstudy.pdf>) before completing 12 credit hours at this university. Prior to the development of the Plan of Study, each student must select an advisory committee (see above). The Plan of Study must meet the minimum required for the designated degree, and must be approved by the student's advisor and advisory committee in consultation with the DGS, and, in addition, the department head, and the Graduate School. (If the DGS requests a tentative plan of study, it should be turned in to the DGS.)
- Students are responsible for completing the Plan of Study form and for obtaining the required signatures, then submitting the form to the graduate coordinator (Terry Zapata) before the deadline noted above.
- Any change in the Plan of Study must be approved by the student's department head, advisory committee in consultation with the DGS, and the Graduate School. Once a course on the plan of study is taken for a grade, it must remain on the plan of study.

Annual Evaluation of Graduate Students

Early in the Spring semester of each year, the Graduate Committee will meet in order to make general evaluations of all students. This evaluation will be based on a consideration of the student's grades, reports from the course professors, the annual evaluation by the student's Advisory Committee, reports on the student's work as a Teaching Assistant, if applicable, a student self-assessment letter (to be sent by students to their advisors by April 1 each year), and any other material the student wishes to submit. The evaluation will be shared with the Department.

The student will be notified of the results of this evaluation by the DGS, or may contact the DGS for any desired feedback.

Appeals

1. Appeals of the outcome of the evaluation must be made in writing to the Department Head within two weeks of the written notification of the evaluation.
2. In the event of an appeal, the Department Head will appoint an *ad hoc* committee, composed of three faculty members. Members of the student's advisory committee and the DGS are not eligible to serve on this committee. The *ad hoc* committee will reevaluate the materials and make a recommendation regarding the claims in the appeal to the Department within two weeks of being appointed. The Department Head will render the final evaluation of the student in these cases.

Forms

To ensure completeness of our records, students are required to submit originals of *all completed* forms by the appropriate deadlines (e.g., Selection of Advisory Committee Members, Program of Study, etc.) to the departmental graduate coordinator (Terry Zapata). Forms are available online at <http://www.phil.vt.edu/HTML/forms/gradforms.html>. Students should retain a copy for their personal files, noting the date of submission. Letters of self-evaluation go directly to the DGS.

Requirements for the MA Degree

The MA degree requires a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate-level coursework (with the exception that up to 6 of these hours can be from 4000-level courses in cases where the areas in question are not covered at the 5000 or 6000 level). Students may complete the degree by selecting either a *Thesis* or a *Non-thesis* track. Students who wish to pursue the thesis option must petition to do so after consultation with their advisors. This should take place *by the end of the second semester of study*, so that a plan of preliminary independent research can be set up for the summer and a draft of the thesis proposal can be presented to the student's advisor by early fall of the second year. Late petitions may be considered after the summer, at the faculty's discretion, but generally *not after the first month of the fall semester of the second year*.

Requirements for the two tracks:

- Thesis track students must include 6 hours of Research and Thesis toward their 30 hours, and may enroll in up to 12 hours of Research and Thesis (PHIL-5994), but *no more than 6 of those hours may be counted toward the 30 hour requirement*. There will thus be a minimum of 24 hours of regular coursework (including any independent studies) for the thesis track. Students on this track must submit and orally defend a thesis proposal in the academic term preceding the semester in which the thesis is to be submitted. The completed thesis will be evaluated by the student's advisory committee and must be successfully defended before that committee in an oral examination (see details below).

Note: For Thesis Track students the Graduate School requires that at least 20 of these hours represent graded coursework (i.e., not pass/fail independent studies, etc.). There is a maximum of 6 credits total in 5974 and 5984 courses.

- Non-thesis track students may enroll in up to 12 hours of Project and Report (Phil 5904), but at least 27 of the 30 hours required for the degree must consist of ordinary coursework (including independent studies). Students on this track must successfully pass a comprehensive examination consisting of exams in each of the core areas (see details below).

Note: For Non-Thesis Track students the Graduate School requires that at least 24 of these hours represent graded coursework (i.e., not pass/fail independent studies, etc.). There is a maximum of 9 credits total in 5974 and 5984 courses.

The P/F option for graduate students is available only for courses outside of the major, and may not be used for courses counting toward the 30 hour degree requirement (except for independent studies, research and thesis hours, project and report hours, etc., which are all P/F but can count up to the limits given above.)

Virginia Tech undergraduate honors students seeking combined Bachelors and Masters degrees in five years may "double count" up to four courses as part of their undergraduate major and/or minor and as part of their Philosophy Masters program of study. That is, up to four courses taken for credit toward the undergraduate major or minor in Philosophy at Virginia Tech may also count toward the Masters Degree in Philosophy, provided that they are taken to meet graduate level requirements. In all instances, the student's program of study must be approved before the end of the junior year by the Director of Graduate Studies. Such approval will be given only after consultation with the appropriate faculty to ensure that relevant 4000-level courses were or will be taken as graduate-level courses.

Logic Requirement

All students, whether thesis or non-thesis track, must either take 5505 (logic) in the fall of their first year, or place out of the logic requirement by getting a 'B' or higher on a special exam offered before the start

of classes in August. Those who take 5505 must either pass it with a 'B' or better, or sit in on the course (or relevant parts of it) the following fall and take the comprehensive exam in logic--preferably at the end of the fall semester. Note that thesis track students, who do not generally have to take comprehensive examinations, may thus have to take this one if they do not place out or get a 'B' or higher in 5505.

Basic Requirements

Students must complete all course requirements listed below.

To be eligible to continue in the Master's Program, a student must maintain a minimum QCA of 3.0 (B average). Students whose QCA falls below this level may be placed on academic probation for one semester. After this semester, the student's QCA must remain 3.0 to remain in the program.

Curriculum

All students must complete the Core [see (a) below] and take a minimum of twelve semester hours from a list of approved courses [see (b) and (c) below]. Students will be encouraged to take appropriate courses in cognate disciplines with the prior approval of the Graduate Program Director. Students should be aware that not all courses are offered every year.

a. The Core

(1) **LOGIC:** *PHIL 5505 (Symbolic Logic)*

(2) **METAPHYSICS, EPISTEMOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE:** Courses from **TWO** of the following three core areas:

(a) *Metaphysics: PHIL 5214G (Intermediate Metaphysics)*

(b) *Epistemology: PHIL 5224G (Intermediate Epistemology)*

(c) *Philosophy of Science : PHIL 5614G or PHIL 5604G (Phil. of Biology) or PHIL 5305/6 (Themes in Phil. of Science and Technology) or PHIL 6334 (Adv. Topics in Phil of Science)*

(3) **HISTORY:** **TWO** of the following courses (not both focusing on the same figure):

PHIL 5204 (Topics in History of Phil.)

PHIL 5344 (History of Ethics)—note that this has not been offered recently

*PHIL 6204 (Adv. Top. in Hist. of Phil.)**

PHIL 6314 (Hist. of the Phil. of Science)

(4) **VALUE THEORY:** **ONE** of the following courses:

PHIL 5324 (Metaethics)

PHIL 5334 (Normative Ethics)

PHIL 5344 (History of Ethics) —note that this has not been offered recently

*PHIL 6324 (Adv. Top. in Ethics/Political Phil.)**

***NOTE:** The same "Topics" course number (e.g., Phil 6204) may be used twice to satisfy a core area requirement provided that the content is different for the two courses. Also, Phil 6014, and certain courses in STS and ASPECT may be substituted where appropriate, *subject to approval by the Graduate Program Director.*

b. Additional Courses

PHIL 5204G Intermediate Philosophy of Mind

PHIL 5214G Intermediate Metaphysics

PHIL 5224G Intermediate Epistemology

PHIL 5304G Intermediate Topics in Social and Political Philosophy

PHIL 5604G Intermediate Philosophy of Biology
PHIL 5614G Intermediate Philosophy of Science

(NOTE: the above 5000G-level courses are conjoint courses that overlap with corresponding 4000-level courses for class meetings.)

Philosophy 5204 (Topics in the History of Philosophy)
Philosophy 5305-6 (STS 5305-6) (Main Themes in the Philosophy of Modern Science and Technology)
Philosophy 5324 (Contemporary Metaethics)
Philosophy 5334 (Contemporary Normative Ethics)
Philosophy 5344 (History of Ethics)
Philosophy 5506 (Symbolic Logic)
Philosophy 5904 (Project and Report)
Philosophy 5974 (Independent Study)
Philosophy 5984 (Special Study)
Philosophy 5994 (Research and Thesis)
Philosophy 6014 (Special Topics in Philosophy)
Philosophy 6204 (Advanced Topics in the History of Philosophy)
Philosophy 6314 (STS 6314) (History of the Philosophy of Science)
Philosophy 6324 (Advanced Topics in Ethics and Political Philosophy)
Philosophy 6334 (STS 6334) (Advanced Topics in Philosophy of Science)
Philosophy 6504 (Advanced Logic)
Philosophy 6514 (STS 6514) (Cognitive Studies of Science and Technology)

(ALL COURSES ARE SUBJECT TO DEPARTMENT REVISION).

Equivalent Courses

1. Virginia Tech undergraduates admitted to the MA program in Philosophy who have already taken a required course and obtained a grade of B or better will not be required to repeat the course to satisfy the core requirement. The course may not, however, count toward the 30 hour requirement, i.e. it may not be 'double counted' for that purpose (except as allowed in cases involving the 5-year BA/MA program). Any student may petition to have courses taken at other institutions satisfy the requirement for a specific required course provided he or she presents adequate information on the course to the Graduate Committee. The Graduate School limits transfer credits to 20% of the total credits required; this means a maximum of six credits for the Philosophy Masters.
2. Specifically designated graduate courses in Metaphysics, Epistemology, or Philosophy of Science may be taken instead of Philosophy 4214, 4224, and 4614, respectively.

Substitutions

1. Substitutions for required courses may be granted only with the approval of the Student's Advisory Committee in consultation with the DGS and the Department Head.

In those cases where there is no Advisory Committee for the student, substitutions may be granted only with the approval of the Advisor, the DGS, and the Department Head. The DGS will coordinate appropriate consultations.

2. In order to make course substitutions, a student will usually fill out a Course Substitution Form. In cases where no substitution form is employed, the student should have some written indication of this substitution entered into his or her file.
3. Incoming students with a strong background in logic have the option of taking an exam, the passing of which will allow the requirement of Phil 5505 to be waived. Those wishing to pursue this option should arrange with the DGS to take the exam *prior to the first week of classes*.

Students who have taken *both* Phil 3505 and Phil 3506 at Virginia Tech, and passed with a 'B+' or better, are exempt from the 5505 requirement. Students who have taken 3505 but not 3506 may wish to consider taking the preliminary exam to waive the requirement for 5505.

Note: The Department wishes to encourage breadth in philosophical training. Course substitutions that significantly diminish achieving this objective are discouraged.

Preparing a Thesis

The following sections apply to all students who exercise the Thesis Option.

Prior to embarking on the major thesis project, the student must have a **Thesis Proposal** approved by the student's Advisory Committee (see Appendix A). When the student begins to work on a proposal for the Master's Thesis, the membership of the Advisory Committee may need to be altered at this time to reflect the student's thesis topic, subject to the above procedures (see Advising).

It is the responsibility of the student to work with his or her Committee Chair and Advisory Committee to coordinate the approval of a Thesis Proposal, communicate with the Committee members, and to arrange the date of the Thesis Defense. The student should also realize that the first person to contact on all matters pertaining to the process should be the Chair of the student's Advisory Committee.

A suggested Timetable for progress on the Thesis is outlined in Appendix B.

Thesis Defense

Each candidate for a master's degree must pass a final examination. This examination will take the form of an oral defense of the thesis.

The date of the Thesis Defense will be determined by mutual agreement among the members of the student's Advisory Committee and the student. The scheduling of the Defense will be understood by the student and his or her Committee to indicate that the written draft is substantially complete and significant revisions are not anticipated. The purpose of the Defense is primarily to ensure the student's working familiarity with the details and implications of the thesis project. However, other topics may be explored in the Defense, within reason and at the discretion of the Committee Chair. The Student must be registered during the semester in which the final examination is administered and the degree requirements completed.

The oral defense is scheduled through the Graduate School. The student is responsible for scheduling the oral defense and obtaining all necessary forms and permissions. Forms are available at the Graduate School's website: www.grads.vt.edu. Requests to schedule a Defense should be received **at least two weeks** before the date requested. Students shall obtain the examination card from the Graduate School on the day of the Defense, and return the signed card to the Graduate School office as soon as possible after the Defense.

To pass a Thesis Defense the student is allowed at most one dissenting vote from the members of the Committee.

A copy of the draft of the thesis must be given to all members of the Thesis Committee and a copy must be placed on deposit in the Department of Philosophy Office **at least two weeks** prior to the date of the Defense. It is the student's responsibility to make and distribute all copies of the thesis.

If a student fails the Defense, there must be a lapse of one full semester (a minimum of 15 weeks) before rescheduling the examination. The student is allowed no more than two opportunities to pass the Thesis Defense.

The defense of the thesis will be open to the faculty, and faculty members are encouraged to attend and participate in such meetings.

Following a successful defense the student is responsible for seeing that one hard bound copy of the thesis is deposited in the Department of Philosophy library, and that a properly formatted electronic copy of the thesis (ETD) is submitted to the Graduate School, along with the accompanying forms and archiving fee.

The Non-Thesis Option

It may be in the best interest of some students to forego the writing of a thesis in order to pursue additional course work. In lieu of writing a thesis, students exercising the Non-thesis Option must successfully pass a set of written exams covering the core areas.

Declaration of Option:

The Non-Thesis Option must be officially declared before the student completes 27 hours of course work at the graduate level in Philosophy. The decision to pursue the Non-Thesis Option must be made in consultation with the student's Advisor and Advisory Committee, and must be approved by the student's Advisor and Advisory Committee. It is suggested that this option be discussed with the Advisor by early Summer between the second and third semester, since this is when preparation for work on a Thesis usually begins.

A Master's degree candidate is allowed to change from the Thesis to the Non-Thesis option (or vice versa) once.

If the Non-Thesis option is exercised, Research and Thesis hours (5994) will *not* be included in the Program of Study. **It is therefore imperative for students to be sure they have sufficient *regular* course hours to meet the degree requirement if they think they may wind up switching from a thesis to a non-thesis track.**

Exam Administration: The Comprehensive Exam will normally be given in the spring semester, in time for the successful student to apply for graduation that term. The student must be registered during the semester in which he or she takes the exam.

Examining Committee:

The DGS will solicit exam questions from the faculty who taught the core courses taken by the student, and these faculty will make up the examining committee and will be responsible for grading the exam. If you plan on requesting any substitutions for your core courses, be sure to get this approved by the DGS well ahead of time, and make sure in any case that the DGS is aware of which courses will be satisfying the core so that exam questions can be solicited from the appropriate faculty on the appropriate topics.

Exam questions will cover the major areas of the core: Ethics (Ethical Theory, contemporary or historical); History of Philosophy (questions on at least two different figures in the History of Philosophy); Epistemology or Metaphysics or Philosophy of Science (choice of two of these three topics), and Logic. The logic portion of the exam, however will be *waived* for those who either passed 5505 with

a 'B' or higher, or placed out of the 5505 requirement by getting a 'B' or better on the preliminary logic exam, or by getting a 'B' or higher in both 3505 and 3506 (for those who were VT undergrads).

There is one section for each core area being tested, with 1 ½ hours allotted per section and a choice of one out of two questions to answer. The exam is given over two days (typically 3 sections the first day and 2 the following day).

Grading:

To pass an exam, a student must have a favorable vote from a majority of the Examining Committee, with no more than one failing vote.

Results of the exam will be made available in a timely manner.

If a student fails the exam, there must be a lapse of one full semester (a minimum of 15 weeks) before rescheduling the Examination.

The student is allowed no more than two opportunities to pass the Exam.

Ph.D. in the STS Program - Philosophy Track

Students who wish to continue their studies in philosophy at the Ph.D. level should consider the Graduate Program in Science and Technology Studies - Philosophy Ph.D. Track (STS/Philosophy). The STS program is a cooperative venture of the departments of Philosophy, History, Sociology, Political Science, and the Center for Science and Technology Studies. Students taking the STS/Philosophy Track complete basic courses in the STS core (see below) and then can devote the remainder of their studies to philosophical topics. Additional requirements include knowledge of a foreign language, preliminary examinations and a dissertation. For more information see the STS website.

Degree requirements for STS Philosophy Track Ph.D.

- I. **STS Core Requirement - 18 Credits**
 - 5305, 5306: Main Themes in the Philosophy of Modern Science and Technology
 - Select four from:
 - STS 5105, 5106: Contemporary Issues in Science and Technology Studies
 - STS 5205, 5206: Main Themes in the History of Science and Technology
 - STS 5614: Introduction to Science and Technology Policy
- II. **STS Track Requirement - 6 Credits**

Select 2 courses from the following list:

 - STS/PHIL 6314: History of the Philosophy of Science
 - STS/PHIL 6334: Advanced Topics in Philosophy of Science
 - STS/PHIL 6514: Cognitive Studies of Science and Technology
 - STS/PHIL 6634: Advanced Topics in Natural Philosophy
 - Any STS course classified by instructor as a history course (may be taken more than once)
- III. **Other Track Requirements - 12 Credits**

Select 4 courses in philosophy, including 1 course in history of philosophy, 1 course in ethics, and 1 course in either metaphysics or epistemology
- IV. **Elective Courses - None**

- V. **Additional STS Requirement - 6 Credits**
 - One additional STS course not in II. (any field)
 - STS capstone seminar
- VI. **Exit Requirement**
 - Logic (by exam or coursework)
- VII. **Research and Dissertation**
 - STS 7994

Office Procedures

Offices and Phones

All graduate students will be provided with office and desk space (given availability) as well as access to internet connections. Priority in the daily use of offices will be given to Teaching Assistants meeting with their undergraduate students.

Otherwise, graduate students are welcome to use office space for study and other class related activities and are free to enter the building at any time (keys are provided). Offices and other department facilities (computer lab, copy room, etc.) must be kept locked when not occupied.

Copying and Computer Printing

Students are given access to the department's copy machine as well as laser printers connected to computers in Graduate Student offices. **Students are asked to use laser printers sparingly and only for class or research related material.**

Mail

All students are assigned mailbox space and can send and receive professional mail through the department. A bin for outgoing mail is located in the main office. Personal mail should not be sent through university facilities. On-campus mail may be sent with the department's or individual's name and the four-digit on-campus mail code on a regular envelope or on an inner-campus envelope available through the main office. The on-campus mail code for Philosophy is 0126. The departmental address is:

Department of Philosophy (0126)
229 Major Williams Hall
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Computers and Computer Lab

Graduate students have access to the facilities of the department Computer Lab. The computers in the graduate lab and graduate offices are shared. Student files not in use should be removed by the person creating them and not left to clutter the machine. The computers are also not on a backup system. It is up to each student to provide a backup system (CD, flash drive, etc.) for their own materials. Over the summer, older lab and office computers are often replaced and contents may not be transferred.

Appendix A

Guidelines for the Structure and Form of a Thesis Proposal

Individual work plans should be discussed with the student's advisor, but a Thesis Proposal be turned in and defended early in the semester *prior* to the semester in which the student expects to finish the degree. For most students, this will be the fall of the second year. Therefore, the summer between the first and second year should be set aside for independent research and background reading in preparation for the writing of a Thesis Proposal.

Proposal Contents: The proposal should include a description of the specific program of study or research to be undertaken. It should also include a review of the relevant literature and, in addition, explain the relationship of the current project to the work of other scholars in the same area.

The proposal should indicate clearly the significance of the study and the contribution it will make to the field, as well as a plan of work and a timetable, indicating the dates and times to be spent on the various aspects of the project. While this timetable will be only an estimate, it will give the student and the committee a measure of the manageability of the project within the time period designated.

The proposal should include a bibliography, comprised of a list of articles and books, with complete citations, which are the basis for the research project.

Thesis Proposals should not exceed 20 pages, and may be shorter.

Appendix B

Suggested Timetable for Completion of Master's Thesis

The dates below reflect a suggested window of activity. Each student/advisor will work out an optimal procedure and schedule. The starred dates are set by the Graduate School, and as listed here are only approximate, as they vary from year to year. Students should consult the Graduate School's webpage at http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/index.html for a current schedule of deadlines. The schedule below is offered for you to get a sense of the timeframe involved.

Spring Semester

Final Date for Submission of final version of the Thesis to Graduate School or formal completion of paperwork:

April 25 in order to participate in the university commencement.

May 23 in order to be a member of the spring class.

Oral Defense

should be early enough to allow two weeks for final revisions and document preparation (defense cannot occur more than two weeks prior to submission of thesis in ETD format to Graduate School)

April 15

Submission of final draft to Committee

(allowing two weeks for full Committee examination of the thesis)

April 1

Submission of full draft to Chair (or full Committee, depending on the agreed on work pattern) allowing two weeks for Chair/Committee to read and comment

March 17

Last Day to Apply

(submit an "Application for Degree" form to the Graduate School)

February 28*

Appendix C

Graduate Program Standards and Policies

Department of Philosophy

What follows is the Department's official Standards and Policies on file with the Graduate School. *This document is pursuant to Presidential Policy Memoranda 126/152 (April 27, 1992, April 3, 1995).*

I. Statement of Non-Discrimination

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, religion, or political affiliation.

The University is subject to titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Vietnam Era Veteran Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Federal Executive Order 112146, Governor Allen's State Executive Order Number Two, and all other rules and regulations that are applicable. Anyone having questions concerning any of those regulations should contact the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office.

II. Faculty Roles and Duties

1. The Director of Graduate Studies will serve as liaison with appropriate college deans. In his/her absence, the Department Head will serve in this capacity.
2. Advising. All faculty with Ph.D. degrees are eligible to serve on student advisory committees and thesis committees. The responsibilities of particular members of advisory and thesis committees will be negotiated among the members of the committees and the student, in consultation, when necessary, with the Department Head and Director of Graduate Studies. All faculty with Ph.D. degrees are expected to make themselves available to serve on advisory and thesis committees, but the department makes every effort to ensure that no faculty member is over-burdened with advising duties. Any questions regarding the make-up or procedures of advisory committees should be referred to the Department Head (or, if necessary, to the Director of Graduate Studies).

III. Admissions Procedures and Requirements

1. The department requires that all applicants to the Graduate Program supply the following materials: (i) Completed Graduate School application form; (ii) Undergraduate transcripts; (iii) Three letters of recommendation; (iv) Graduate Records Exam (GRE) scores; and (v) One writing sample.

Materials listed under ii-v may be waived at the department's discretion in special cases.

2. Applications requesting financial assistance in the form of a Graduate Assistantship should be received by March 1, though in special circumstances the Department will consider applications submitted at a later date. Applications for admission to the program without financial support may be considered at any time prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student wishes to enter the program.

The Department makes its decisions both about admission to the program and Graduate Assistantships based on undergraduate and other graduate performance, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, the student's answers to particular questions on the graduate application, and the quality of the writing sample. All faculty participate in decisions concerning admissions and Graduate Assistantships.

IV. Orientation

1. Prior to the beginning of the Fall semester, the Department holds a formal orientation meeting for all students. At this meeting, students are given, among other things, general information about the following: Departmental requirements and procedures, plans of study, office procedures and privileges, advising, thesis preparation, and timetables for meeting course requirements and completion of the thesis. The students are also introduced to the faculty and to continuing graduate students at this meeting.

Departmental policies concerning review of student progress and expectations for adequate progress are specified at the orientation meeting. At about this time, each student meets with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss the particular student's needs and plans. A provisional advisor is assigned to each student at this meeting. Subsequently, the student may choose to change his or her provisional advisor.