Chairperson  
Robert Crease, Harriman Hall 209 (631) 632-7585

Doctoral Program Director  
Anne O'Byrne, Harriman Hall 211 (631) 632-7577

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Assistant to the Chair  
Alissa Betz, Harriman Hall 211-A (631) 632-7590

Graduate Program Coordinator  
Nathan Leoce-Schappin, Harriman Hall 216 (631) 632-7580

Department Secretary  
Ann Marie Monaghan, Harriman Hall 213 (631) 632-7570

Degrees Awarded  
M.A. in Philosophy; Ph.D. in Philosophy; Advanced Graduate Certificate in Art and Philosophy

Description of the Philosophy Department

The Department of Philosophy, in the College of Arts and Sciences, offers programs leading to the Master of Arts in Philosophy and to the Doctor of Philosophy.

The doctoral program offers a rare opportunity to integrate the study of the history of philosophy with an exploration of contemporary philosophical methods and to apply an interdisciplinary approach to the framing and treatment of philosophical problems. The Philosophy Department is sponsor of Transatlantic Philosophical Collegium that offers advanced students opportunity for extended study at the University of Köln and Wuppertal. Departmentally based, funded exchanges with the University of Tübingen and the University of Paris give students further opportunity to study abroad.

There are three general aims of the doctoral program:

1. To cultivate and make explicit the values and principles of the principal contemporary styles of philosophical reasoning.
2. To investigate the areas between philosophy and other disciplines that involve methodological, conceptual, and historical exchanges between philosophy and these other disciplines.
3. To provide an understanding of the history, major figures, and diverse problems of philosophy.

M.A. Degree in Philosophy with a focus on the Arts and Aesthetics

Many of the questions that occasioned Plato's reflection on art are still with us: What is the relationship between art and truth? Is the task of the artist to represent already existing things or to create altogether new things? Is the spectator of art to be regarded as a mere witness or as an active participant? What is the role of emotion in the experience of art? What are the most salient differences between the various arts?

Other questions have arisen with increasing urgency in more recent times: What does psychoanalysis have to teach us about the place of art in our lives? How are class, race, and gender pertinent to the production and enjoyment of art? Do we need to reconceive aesthetics in view of a global electronic culture?

This master's program offers an open and informal setting in which to explore such questions in seminars and lectures taught by renowned philosophers of art. Practicing artists will also participate in an intensive discussion of issues in the philosophy of art that are of enduring as well as contemporary interest.

M.A. in Philosophy Curriculum and Degree Requirements

For the master's degree, a student must take 30 course credits, i.e., the equivalent of 10 courses. Many of these courses are listed below, the full list is subject to revision. Of the 30 credits, six can be taken as independent study. An M.A. thesis option is available.

Advanced Graduate Certificate (AGC) in Art and Philosophy (ArtPHIL)

For information on this advanced certificate program, go to http://ms.cc.sunysb.edu/~hsilverman/ArtPHIL/ArtPHIL.htm

Admission to the Ph.D. and M.A. Programs in Philosophy

For admission to the doctoral and master's programs in philosophy, the following are normally required:

A. A bachelor’s degree with a major in philosophy.

B. Some knowledge of the history of philosophy and of contemporary modes of thought is highly desirable. Deficiencies in these areas may require the student to undertake special work.

C. An official transcript of undergraduate record and of any work completed at the graduate level.
D. Letters of recommendation from three previous or current instructors.
E. Submission of a philosophical essay (which may be a paper written for a previous course).
F. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores.
G. Acceptance by both the Department of Philosophy and the Graduate School.

Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree in Philosophy

The doctoral program is designed to be completed in five years of full-time work. The Graduate School regulations prescribe a minimum of two semesters of full-time enrollment. In addition to the minimum degree requirements of the Graduate School, the following are required:

A. Seminars

Seminar coursework will be required from the following three areas: history of philosophy, interface studies, and contemporary philosophy. Each of the three areas has a minimum number of required courses. The student will also take at least two additional seminars in one of the three areas to fulfill the concentration of studies requirement.

1. Three seminars in the history of philosophy from four groups of courses concentrating on ancient philosophy, medieval/Renaissance philosophy, modern philosophy, and 19th-century philosophy. These courses will feature an intensive writing component. For those students wishing to pursue a concentration of studies in the history of philosophy, a minimum of two additional courses may be taken from these areas or from seminar studies directed to special topics in the history of philosophy (which draw upon specific authors, texts, themes, or problems from the history of philosophy).

2. Two interface seminars in interdisciplinary areas between philosophy and another discipline pertaining to the natural sciences, to the social sciences, or to the humanities. This requirement may be met either by taking seminars interdisciplinary seminars team-taught by philosophy faculty with faculty from another discipline or by taking regular graduate courses in another discipline. Two additional courses from this category may be taken to fulfill concentration requirements.

3. Five seminars in contemporary philosophy are required. Two seminars in the preeminent styles or modes of philosophy are required: one in continental philosophy (PHI 630) and one in analytic philosophy (PHI 631). These two seminars will explore the methods, presuppositions, and operational modes of the contemporary philosophy involved. Two additional seminars, chosen from a list of subjects, must be taken to fulfill the basic requirement. Two more seminars from the contemporary category may be taken to fulfill concentration requirements.

4. A practicum in the teaching of philosophy. This involves a supervised teaching seminar, along with additional teaching experience in the undergraduate program.

5. A prospectus seminar taken in the spring semester of the third year. The primary goal will be to produce a dissertation experience in the undergraduate program.

6. An overall average grade of B or better is required, with no more than six credits of B- grades counting toward the degree.

B. General Requirements

1. The student must pass an examination in the history of philosophy. Although the student may take the exam any number of times prior to the deadline, the examination must be passed by the end of the second year. The history of philosophy examination is constructed and read by the faculty History of Philosophy Committee.

2. The student must submit an essay, judged acceptable by a committee, in one of the areas of contemporary philosophy.

3. The student must submit an essay, judged acceptable by a committee composed of at least one Philosophy faculty member and a faculty member from the relevant second discipline, in one area of interface studies.

General reviews of student progress based upon a portfolio (courses taken, courses completed, grades, faculty evaluations of seminar work sample papers, teaching evaluations and performance in the above general requirements) will be undertaken at the end of the first and third years and in the second year after the deadline for passing the history of philosophy examination. The second-year review is the milestone requirement of the program. These reviews will assess the progress of students and determine qualifications for continuance or non-continuance in the program.

The graduate program director will guide students in planning their program of studies to assure that general requirements are completed prior to their advancement to candidacy.

C. Ph.D. Candidacy

Official Ph.D. candidacy is attained when, in addition to the requirements listed above, a student fulfills the following competency requirements:

1. Competence in symbolic logic. Sufficient knowledge of concepts and notations of first-order logic for understanding and applying them to problems in philosophy. A grade of B or better in an undergraduate symbolic logic course is normally adequate evidence of competence.

2. Competence in a foreign language. This is shown by translating a previously untranslated philosophical article (or the equivalent).

3. Competence to undertake a dissertation project. This is shown by (a) a prospectus (10-15 pages) outlining projected study, expected findings, and relevant arguments and evidence (e.g., bibliography), and (b) an oral defense of the projected study before a faculty examining committee.
Upon the recommendation of the examining committee and the graduate program director that the dissertation project be initiated, the student becomes a candidate for the Ph.D.

D. Dissertation

After advancement to candidacy, the student will concentrate on a dissertation (the written results of specialized study and research) under the supervision of a dissertation committee. After the dissertation is completed, it is read by a committee of four members, consisting of the director, two other members of the philosophy faculty, and one faculty member from outside the department who has specialized in related areas. Before final approval can be granted, the student must present the results of the dissertation research at an oral examination convened for that purpose by the department and open to interested faculty members and graduate students. If the dissertation defense is successful, the candidate is recommended to the University for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Doctoral students may be awarded the M.A. degree upon completion of the minimum coursework of 30 graduate credits of graded coursework.

Course Requirements

Requirements for the Doctoral Program in Philosophy

I. History Courses

Three of the four history courses marked with an asterisk (*) are required, plus two additional courses for a concentration in the history of philosophy. History courses will feature an intensive writing component.

II. Interface Studies Seminars

Two seminars, selected from either team-taught interface seminars or graduate seminars in another discipline, will fulfill the basic interface requirement. For a concentration in Interface Studies two additional seminars must be taken (from among team-taught or approved non-philosophy graduate seminars).

III. Contemporary Philosophy Seminars

The two seminars marked with an asterisk (*) are required. Three additional seminars chosen from the remaining list of contemporary philosophy seminars must be taken to fulfill the basic requirement. Two more seminars may be chosen to fulfill concentration requirements.

IV. Independent and Directed Studies

Courses

Detailed course descriptions for the doctoral program are available from the Philosophy Department office each semester. Please refer to the current undergraduate and Graduate Class Schedules for specific semester offerings.

Distinguished Professors

Casey, Edward S., Ph.D., 1967, Northwestern University: Aesthetics; phenomenology; philosophy of psychology.

Ihde, Don, Ph.D., 1964, Boston University: Phenomenology; philosophy of technology; hermeneutics.

Distinguished Service Professor


Distinguished Teaching Professor

Grim, Patrick, B. Phil., 1975, University of St. Andrews, Scotland; Ph.D., 1976, Boston University: Logic; ethics; computer modeling; contemporary analytic philosophy.

Professors

Allison, David B., Ph.D., 1974, Pennsylvania State University: Contemporary European philosophy.

Crease, Robert, Ph.D., 1987, Columbia University: Philosophy of science; aesthetics.

Dilworth, David, Ph.D., 1963, Fordham University; Ph.D., 1970, Columbia University: East Asian languages and cultures.

Kittay, Eva, Ph.D., 1978, City University of New York: Philosophy of language; philosophy and literature; feminism.

Kuspit, Donald B., D.Phil., 1960, University of Frankfurt, Germany; Ph.D., 1971, University of Michigan: Art criticism; 20th-century art; northern Renaissance art.


Miller, Clyde Lee, Ph.D., 1974, Yale University: History of philosophy.

Silverman, Hugh J., Ph.D., 1973, Stanford University: Continental philosophy (hermeneutics, deconstruction, and postmodern theory); Aesthetics and cultural theory; Contemporary European philosophies, literatures, and cultures.

Simpson, Lorenzo9, Ph.D., Yale University: Contemporary continental philosophy (hermeneutics and critical theory); philosophy of the social sciences; philosophy of science and technology; neopragmatism and post-analytic philosophy; philosophy and race.

Spector, Marshall, Ph.D., 1963, Johns Hopkins University: Philosophy of science; philosophy of technology; environmental issues.


Welton, Donn10, Ph.D., 1973, Southern Illinois University: Phenomenology and epistemology; philosophical psychology; Contemporary German philosophy.

Williams, Peter3,5, Ph.D., 1973, Harvard University: Philosophy of law; ethics.

Associate Professors
Cormier, Harvey J., Ph.D., Harvard University: American philosophy; William James and pragmatism; philosophy and culture.

De Laurentis, Allegra, Ph.D., 1982, University of Frankfurt: Greek philosophy; Hegel.

Edwards, Jeffrey B., Ph.D., 1987, Universitat Marburg, Germany: History of philosophy; Kant; modern philosophy.

Manchester, Peter2, Ph.D., 1972, Graduate Theological Union: Greek philosophy; Heidegger.

Mar, Gary8, Ph.D., 1985, University of California, Los Angeles: Logic; philosophy of mathematics; contemporary analytic philosophy; philosophy of religion.

O’Byrne, Anne, Ph.D, 1999, Vanderbilt University: 20th-century and contemporary European philosophy.

Rawlinson, Mary C., Ph.D., 1978, Northwestern University: 19th-century philosophy; Hegel; aesthetics and literary theory; philosophical psychology; philosophy of medicine.

Assistant Professors
Craig, Megan, Ph.D., 2006, New School of Social Research: Ethics; aesthetics; pragmatism; phenomenology; Levinas.


Number of teaching, graduate, and research assistants, fall 2011: 27

1) Joint appointment, Department of Art
2) Joint appointment, Department of Comparative Studies
3) Joint appointment, Community and Preventive Medicine
4) Recipient of the State University Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1977
5) Recipient of the State University Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1978
6) Recipient of the State University Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1980
7) Recipient of the State University Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1988
8) Recipient of the State University Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1993
9) Recipient of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Outstanding Faculty Award, 1990; University of Richmond’s Distinguished Educator Award, 1984
10) Recipient of President’s and Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity, 2005

NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.