Ph.D. Program in Philosophy
Graduate Student Handbook
2023–2024

BOSTON COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE STUDIES HANDBOOK

The Department offers a comprehensive program in the history and problems of philosophy, allowing for concentration in the following areas: ancient philosophy; medieval philosophy; early modern philosophy; continental European philosophy from Kant to the present; social and political philosophy; epistemology; and philosophy of science. A significant feature of the program is the extensive and diverse range of courses available to graduate students every semester.

The department offers an M.A. program and a Ph.D. program as well as a 5th year B.A./M.A. The Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Committee administer these programs. The Graduate Committee is composed of the Chairperson (or the Assistant Chair), the Graduate Program Director, the M.A. Coordinator, the Placement Director, and the Teaching Seminar Instructor. The Admissions Committee is composed of the Graduate Committee plus additional faculty members as needed. The department also offers an M.A. in Philosophy, Law, and Policy (PLP), a Joint M.A. in Philosophy and Theology, and a Joint M.A./ J.D. For these, the student should be in contact with the respective directors of the programs.

Contacts

Department Chair and Director of Joint M.A. in Philosophy and Theology

Jeffrey Bloechl
Stokes Hall, N227
617 552-4023
jeffrey.bloechl@bc.edu

Assistant Chair

Gary Gurtler, SJ
Stokes Hall, N237
617-552-3872
gurtlerg@bc.edu

Graduate Program Director and Logic Exam Coordinator

Richard Atkins
Stokes Hall, N223
617-552-1977
richard.atkinsri@bc.edu

Graduate Program Assistant

Chris Hanlon
Stokes Hall, N303
617-552-3847
hanloncm@bc.edu

M.A. Coordinator, PLP Director, and Joint M.A./ J.D. Director

Gregory Fried
Stokes Hall, N243
617-552-3973
gregory.fried@bc.edu

Placement Director

Elisa Magrì
Stokes Hall, N241
617-552-3850
elisa.magri@bc.edu

Teaching Seminar Instructor

Dan McKaughan
Stokes Hall, N351
617-552-3866
mckaughd@bc.edu

Language Exam Coordinator

Peter Kreeft
Stokes Hall N231
617-552-3871
peter.kreeft@bc.edu

The Ph.D. Program in Philosophy

Timeline

- Students are strongly encouraged to complete the Ph.D. within their allotted years of funding.
- There is an eight-year time limit for completing the Ph.D. Students who may need more time should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Advisement

- Each Ph.D. student will be assigned or may choose a faculty member as an Academic Advisor.
- Once a dissertation supervisor is chosen, the dissertation supervisor shall serve as the academic advisor.
- Students are encouraged to be proactive. They should be in touch with their Academic Advisor early and often.
- See the supplemental document "Ph.D. Program Graduate Advising Guidelines" for further information.

Requirements for the degree

- 48 credits of coursework, including one course in each of ancient, medieval, and modern philosophy (or, if a student enters with an M.A. in philosophy from another institution, 30 credits of coursework)
- Proficiency in two foreign languages
- Proficiency in logic
- Passing the Preliminary Doctoral Comprehensive Exam
- Passing, or Passing with Distinction, the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam
- Completion and oral defense of the dissertation.
- Participation in the Professional Development Curriculum
- Any student who may receive NIH/NSH funding must also complete the RSI program. Contact Director of Research Protections, Education, & Postdoctoral Affairs Erin Sibley (erin.sibley@bc.edu) for additional information.

Coursework

- Courses coded PHIL5000 and above may be applied to the fulfillment of the coursework requirement. Courses 5000–6999 are typically joint undergraduate/ graduate student courses, whereas those 7000 and above are typically graduate student-only courses.
- For students entering without an M.A.: In their first and second academic years, students should take three courses each semester, and the Teaching Seminar. In their third year, students should take two courses each semester. For students entering with an M.A. from another institution: In their first academic year, students should take three courses each semester and the Teaching Seminar. In their second academic year, students should take two courses each semester and the Teaching Seminar.

- Students who have completed one full semester of graduate work may apply for transfer credit for up to two (2) graduate courses (6 credits) taken prior to entrance to the program and not applied to another degree program, subject to approval by the Graduate Program Director. Only courses in which a student has received a grade of B or better, and which have not been applied to a prior degree, will be accepted. Contact the Graduate Program Assistant for the relevant forms.
- After approval by the Graduate Program Director, students may cross-register for (not cross-listed) philosophy-relevant courses offered in other departments at BC or in some other universities.
- By university policy, graduate students in degree programs must register each semester until they graduate. If, temporarily, they cannot attend the program, they have to apply for a leave of absence with the dean of the Morrissey Graduate School. If a student has finished their coursework but not the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam, they must register for PHIL9998 Doctoral Comprehensives. If a student has finished all requirements except the dissertation and its defense, they must register for PHIL99999 Doctoral Continuation.
- This requirement should be completed by the end of the third year.

Language Proficiency

- Proficiency may be demonstrated by:
    - Having received a grade of B or better in two semesters of a language class at the elementary college level or one semester at the intermediate college level, or
    - Receiving the grade of B or better in a language class for graduate students at Boston College (n.b., students may take language courses at Boston College at a reduced rate of tuition—contact the Graduate Program Assistant for information), or
    - Depending on the language, by passing the department's language examination (for further information on this exam, please consult the Graduate Program Director), or
    - In the case of a native foreign language, by documentation showing that the student has formally studied in this language at high school level or higher.
- All students must complete the Graduate Program Language Requirement Form for each language. Contact the Graduate Program Assistant for the form.
- Students should talk with their Academic Advisors about which languages are most suitable for their study plans. The two languages for which students demonstrate proficiency must be relevant to their academic work.
- This requirement should be completed before the end of the third year.

Proficiency in Logic

- Ph.D. students must demonstrate proficiency in logic by passing PHIL5577 Symbolic Logic with a grade of "B" or better, or by attaining a score of 80% or better on the Logic Proficiency Examination.
- This requirement should be completed before the end of the third year.

Preliminary Comprehensive Exam

- Ph.D. students take the Preliminary Comprehensive Examination at the end of their first year in the program.
- The purpose of this oral examination is to evaluate the students' competence on the materials they will teach in their Philosophy of the Person class. As a consequence, the exam is based on the syllabus the students prepare in the teaching seminar and related core texts.
- See the supplemental document "Preliminary Doctoral Comprehensive Exam" for further information
- A failed examination may be retaken only once.

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

- The Doctoral Comprehensive Exam is comprised of two parts: (1) a qualifying paper (QP) and (2) a dissertation proposal.
- The QP is to be a paper of publishable quality on a systematic question or on an author(s). It must meet the usual standards for academic publications with respect to both the form and the content. See the supplemental document "Ph.D. Qualifying Paper."
- The dissertation proposal is to state topic of the dissertation, how the student intends to study the topic of dissertation, and why the topic needs study. It should include a thorough outline of the dissertation and plan for completion, as well as bibliography. See the supplemental document "Dissertation Proposal Guidelines."
- For each part of the exam, a student will be given the mark of Passed with distinction, Passed, or Failed. In the synthesis for the registrar, a student shall receive Passed with distinction on the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam if and only if the student receives Passed with Distinction on both parts. A student shall Fail the exam if the student fails any part of the exam. Otherwise, the student shall Pass the exam.
- Students must complete all other requirements for the degree, except defense of the dissertation itself, before defending the dissertation proposal. A student attains the status of a doctoral candidate by passing the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam.
- Students must contact the Graduate Program Assistant for the relevant paperwork one month prior to the defense of each portion of the exam.
- This requirement should be completed by the end of the fourth year. Students often defend the QP in the Fall semester and the Dissertation Proposal in the Spring semester.

Dissertation Defense

- Ph.D. students are required to write a dissertation which embodies original and independent research and which demonstrates advanced scholarly achievement. The research must be carried out and the dissertation written under the direction of a tenured/tenure-track faculty from the Philosophy Department.
- Dissertations are defended in a public oral examination. A defense committee should include at a minimum: (1) The dissertation supervisor, who must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the department; (2) The second reader, who has

been appointed for the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination and involved in the writing of the dissertation, and who may be external to the department; (3) A third reader, who must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the department if the second reader is not, and may be external if the second reader is a tenured or tenure-track member of the department; and (4) The department chairperson, who serves ex officio as chair of the defense committee in view of moderating the debate (exception is made when the department chair also is supervisor, second reader or third reader.). The department strongly encourages the enlistment of one person from outside the university, selected with the approval of the dissertation supervisor and the graduate committee.

- At least 75 days in advance of the defense, the student must contact the Graduate Program Assistant for the paperwork to schedule the defense. The defense may not take place earlier than 30 days after a copy of the completed dissertation, approved by the supervisor and the second reader (second page of the form), has been given to the Graduate Program Assistant and made available to anybody in the department. The date of the defense must be approved by the Graduate Program Director.
- The candidate must also give the Graduate Program Assistant an abstract of the dissertation with the names of the dissertation supervisor and the readers (if a reader is outside the department, identify other Boston College department or the reader's university). The Graduate Program Assistant will send it to everybody in the department with the date, time, and place of the defense.
- The committee members must sign the "Signature Page" after the dissertation has been successfully defended. The Graduate Program Assistant will provide the form to the dissertation supervisor prior to the defense.
- After the defense, and after making corrections if the examiners asked for any, a definitive printed copy of the dissertation must be left with the Graduate Program Assistant.
- It is the responsibility of the candidate to comply with the other regulations of the Morrissey Graduate School and with the requirements of the University registrar, including the electronic submission of the dissertation (after correcting it if asked by the defense board). Students should consult the Morrissey College Graduate School website for information pertaining to formatting and submission of the dissertation as well as completion of program requirements.

Participation in the Professional Development Curriculum

- Ph.D. Students are required to participate in the Professional Development Curriculum.
- Students in their first and second years, students are required to take the Teaching Seminar. This is a course—PHIL9990—for which students must register. Students can also earn a complementary certificate by participating in the activities of the university Center for Teaching Excellence. The Teaching Seminar does not count toward the coursework requirement.
- Students in their second through fourth years are required to participate in the Writing Seminar. Students are expected to present their work in the Writing

Seminar and to provide critical feedback on the work of their fellow students. The Writing Seminar also covers topics related to research methods, publishing policies and practices, and academic integrity.
- Students in their fourth year are required to participate in the Professional Development Workshop, which prepares students for the academic job market.

Assistantships and Fellowships
- In their first year, doctoral students work as Research Assistants to earn a stipend. See the supplemental document "Research Assistant Guidelines" for more information.
- After their first year, doctoral students, building on the pedagogical techniques acquired through the Teaching Seminar, become Teaching Fellows or Teaching Assistants to earn their stipend, while they continue taking classes.
    - The class they ordinarily teach in full responsibility is the year-long undergraduate core curriculum course Philosophy of the Person.
    - Teaching fellows must comply with the policies defined by Boston College and the department regarding class cancellations, grading, students in distress, discriminatory harassment, consensual relationships, students' privacy, students with disabilities. See the supplemental document "Philosophy Department Teaching Policies and Resources." Students are required to submit their syllabi and office hours each semester that they are teaching to the Graduate Program Assistant.
    - A teaching fellowship is guaranteed only during the funded years in the program. After the last funded year (university fellowship; see below), if a student has not yet completed the degree, they are not assured to be able to teach in the department.
- The fifth year of the program students receive a University Fellowship, which is fully funded without any duty other than concentrated work on the dissertation. In order to receive this funding, a student must be a doctoral candidate (i.e., have completed all requirements for the degree except defending the dissertation).

M.A. Degree for the Doctoral Students who Enter without an M.A. in Philosophy
- Any doctoral student who entered the program without an M.A. and has fulfilled all the requirements for the Master's degree, must apply to the Morrissey Graduate School and Student Services for their Master's degree to be registered with the university.

Standing
- At the end of each year until completion of the degree, each student must turn in a written report on his/her activities and progress. The advisor(s) or dissertation supervisor (and second reader when applicable) adds comments and sends the report to the Graduate Program Director.
- Student progress will be evaluated by the program director in consultation with the department chair based on the following criteria: (1) Progress in the coursework; (2) Progress toward passing preliminary comprehensive exam or doctoral

comprehensive exam, or progress in writing their dissertation; (3) Comments from the advisor(s); (4) Teaching evaluations, when applicable.
- Upon completion of the review, students will receive either a Satisfactory, Pass with concerns, or Unsatisfactory notification.
- Any student in unsatisfactory standing must meet immediately with the Graduate Program Director, who will give specific directions for what must be accomplished to return to good standing.
- Students with three or more F's are barred from registration for further courses.
- By Graduate School policy, students are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00.
- By Graduate School policy, funding may be discontinued by the department or the Graduate School at any time during an academic year if either the academic performance or the in-service assistance is of an unsatisfactory character.
- Failure to meet academic standards is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Funding

- Ph.D. students receive funding in the forms of:
    - Tuition remission for coursework required for the degree
    - A stipend for the first four years, for serving as a research assistant, teaching assistant, or teaching fellow
    - A University Fellowship in the final year, with the expectation of completing and defending the dissertation
    - Medical insurance credit
- Ph.D. students who are on funding may not be employed full-time elsewhere without the dean's approval.
- By graduate school policy, graduate students may not receive university financial aid (stipends and/or tuition scholarships) from two schools or departments simultaneously.

Graduation

- In order to graduate, the students must have satisfied all the requirements for the degree and must notify the Graduate Program Assistant of their intent to graduate at the start of the semester they intend to graduate.
- There are three possible graduation months: May; August; and December.

Ph.D. Student Advising Guidelines

Closely mentoring the graduate students is an essential factor of their successful progression through the M.A. and Ph.D. programs. This document presents departmental guidelines in view of implementing the best practices in the student-advisor relationship. A student's Academic Advisor will help them design a sound course of studies, navigate the program requirements, assess their progress toward the degree, resolve difficulties, and elaborate plans for the future. In addition, students should not hesitate to talk to the M.A. Coordinator or the Graduate Program Director for advisement.

Regular contact between students and advisors is indispensable.

- Both students and advisors should take a proactive role in ensuring that communication is established and maintained.
- They should agree on a schedule of meetings at the beginning of each semester.

Reports

As meeting reports will help the advisee capture and remember important advice and decisions, all advising relationships should involve a formal documentation of the meetings.

- The advisee writes a short summary of the meeting so as to record what has been discussed and agreed.
- The advisee submits this summary to their advisor.
- The Academic Advisor approves or adds comments, and uploads the report in the Canvas student's advising folder.

The remainder of the present document spells out the respective roles and responsibilities of the advisee and Academic Advisor, and specifies the steps to be taken at the different stages in the program. The intention is to ensure that the expectations of all parties are established clearly at the outset and are followed up throughout the student's time in the program.

Advisor Assignments

Ph.D. students may choose their academic advisors and are welcome to contact faculty to serve in this role. In case a student does not have a faculty member they prefer to serve in this role, the Graduate Program Director shall assign an advisor. It is common for doctoral students to change advisors over the course of the program, but in the final years of the program the advisor is the dissertation supervisor.

Student's Role

The department expects that advisees will:

- Take responsibility for their research activity and learning.

- Become familiar with the program requirements and milestones, and with departmental and university regulations and policies.
- Request in due time an advisor (for the doctoral students: look in due time for a dissertation supervisor and a qualifying paper supervisor).
- Contact their advisors as soon as they know them, and keep in touch regularly for the whole time of the advising relationship.
- Expect an answer only within work days and hours.
- Attend the schedule of meetings established at the beginning of the semester, and discuss progress and objectives with the advisor regularly.
- Notify their advisor when they cannot come to a scheduled meeting, and reschedule it.
- Send written work well ahead of the meeting so that the advisor has sufficient time to read it; allow for a reasonable amount of time for getting recommendation letters, feedback on documents, etc.
- Contribute a summary of the meetings.
- Carefully consider the advice they receive and make every effort to implement it.
- Strive to achieve in a timely manner the course assignments, the goals and milestones defined in the graduate studies handbook, and the particular goals agreed upon with the advisor.
- Adapt their research to the resources the department can offer and avoid projects on topics for which they cannot be supervised competently.
- Report in a timely fashion any difficulty that may arise, to their advisor, the program director, or the chairperson.
- Contribute to the program community, for example by attending other students' presentations, providing feedback and generally being supportive of other students' research activities and efforts.
- In doctoral students' cases, attend the activities organized in the professional development curriculum, where they can also receive advice.

Academic Advisor's Role

Students may expect to receive quality mentoring throughout their program of study.

General Responsibilities: In all advising relationships, Academic Advisors will:

- Make themselves available at the request of the advisee, during work periods and within reasonable limits; expect similarly a response of the advisee during work days and hours.
- Get in touch with their advisee and make sure that regular communication is maintained.
- Establish a schedule of the meetings at the beginning of each semester.
- Check the meeting reports sent by the student and upload them in the Canvas advising folder.
- Inform the advisee and the Graduate Program Director about any extended period of absence.

- Monitor the advisee's attainment of the milestones and provide all the necessary guidance in view of the timely completion of the program.
- Check whether the advisee is aware of the university and departmental regulations and policies, regarding such topics as degree requirements, academic integrity, teaching responsibilities when applicable.
- Pay special attention to international students, who have stringent time limits because of their visa (the advisor should be familiar with the requirements implemented by the Office of International Students and Scholars), and who might struggle with language or cultural differences.
- Provide guidance regarding research methodologies and resources, and best practice in studying and learning.
- Suggest any useful additional resource (e.g., seminars, workshops, and conferences in or outside the department, Career Center, counseling, etc.)
- Motivate the student.
- Check on the student's general well-being.
- Alert the Graduate Program Director or the Chair as soon as an academic problem is detected, a worry arises, or when the advisee does not attend the advising meetings.
- Alert the relevant BC services when non-academic problems are detected (such as psychological crisis, harassment, sexual assault).

Specific Responsibilities of Academic Advisors of Ph.D. Students, Years One through Three:

- Academic Advisors should meet with their advisee(s) frequently and at a minimum twice in each semester (e.g., beginning and last third). The first meeting of the academic year should take place in the first week of the first semester.
- If the advisee is at the same time research assistant of the faculty member, meetings specifically for the advising should be planned.
- The Academic Advisor and the Graduate Program Director are responsible for reviewing student progress in the student's annual report, and they should review the student's progress against the objectives of the program. The advisor will:
    - Advise the student about which courses to take.
    - Make sure that the student has a clear view of the successive stages of their development in the program; devise with them a strategy for the coming years.
    - Ensure timely completion of the program requirements at the pre-dissertation stage (e.g., logic, languages, exams, etc.).
    - Check whether the student is falling behind regarding coursework and grades.
    - Provide guidance for the preparation of the preliminary doctoral comps (end of year 1).
    - In the next years, assist the student in the first steps towards the doctoral comps (orientation for the qualifying paper; choice of the qualifying paper supervisor; orientation for the dissertation area; choice of the dissertation supervisor, which must be effective by the end of year 3 in the program).

- Encourage and help the advisee to prepare publications, participate in colloquia, seminars and conferences, and more generally prepare their insertion in the profession.
- Mentor the advisee regarding the best practices in all aspects of the profession (from responding to emails to academic mores to standards in research and publication).
- Explain to the advisee how to build a career plan.
- Provide advice when the student has teaching responsibilities and visit her/him in class in coordination with the teaching seminar instructor.
- Evaluate the advisee's progress in the student's annual report.

Specific Responsibilities of Dissertation Supervisors, Years Four and Five:

- From the moment a faculty member has accepted to supervise a student's dissertation, that faculty member becomes the student's primary mentor. This should be decided no later than the end of year three.
- The student must inform of this the Graduate Program Director and her/his former advisor if he/she is a different person.
- The dissertation supervisor and the Graduate Program Director will review the student's progress until completion of the doctoral degree.
- The supervisor will make sure that the advisee is properly informed about the process of writing and defending the dissertation. The supervisor will establish, in co-operation with the advisee, the framework for the student's work, i.e., the means by which the supervisor and the student will communicate, and how and when they will arrange meetings and monitor progress.
- The dissertation supervisor and the student will then agree on a schedule to narrow down the topic of the dissertation, make preliminary research, and write a dissertation proposal.
- The dissertation proposal will be defended at the latest the Spring semester of the student's fourth year. A second (and perhaps third) reader will be appointed at that time.
- Supervisor and advisee will establish a clear project with a good prospect of completion within the required time scale, and identify the initial stages and early objectives of the project. A reasonable and detailed timetable for the writing of the dissertation, with regular submission of thoroughly written chapters, will be agreed upon, and attainment of the successive stages checked.
- They will also identify the skills, knowledge and aptitudes (e.g., languages, paleography, etc.) that are required for the successful completion of the research program.
- Finally, they will identify appropriate resources (e.g., documentation, a specialist in another department, etc.) to support the research project and how these are to be accessed.
- From the preparation of the dissertation proposal to the completion of the dissertation, the supervisor should meet with the advisee at a minimum twice a semester, with written record of the meetings. The schedule of the meetings should be established at the beginning of the year. It may happen that, on some occasions,

there is little to report or no written work is submitted for comment; regardless, maintaining regular contact is key to the progression of the student's research.
- If the advisee is away (e.g., during the University Fellowship year), and if video or phone meetings cannot be arranged, an email schedule will be established.
- The supervisor has a right to expect that the advisee will communicate written work or research results well ahead of the meetings.
- The supervisor should provide prompt feedback and comments (within a month) to the student when the student submits written work.
- Besides the comments on the pages submitted, the supervisor should provide the student with a regular evaluation of her/his overall progress.
- With the agreement of the dissertation supervisor, the advisee will regularly submit written parts of the dissertation to the second reader.
- Especially when the second reader is chosen in another department because of his/her expertise in an aspect of the dissertation topic, the supervisor will coordinate the guidance and ensure that respective tasks are clear both to the second reader and to the student.
- The supervisor should ensure that the dissertation is completed and submitted to the department and all the readers at least one month before the defense.
- The supervisor should encourage and help the advisee to publish, participate in colloquia, seminars and conferences, and more generally mentor her/him and prepare her/his insertion in the profession.
- As the supervisor will later write a decisive recommendation letter when the student is on the job market, the supervisor will visit the advisee's classes in coordination with the teaching seminar instructor and write a report, in order to be able to comment on the student's teaching abilities in said letter. When the supervisor has too many advisees for visiting each of them every year, the supervisor will ask another faculty member (e.g., the second reader) in coordination with the teaching seminar instructor, or will ask the instructor to find another faculty member.

Specific Responsibilities of the Qualifying Paper Supervisor

- As soon as a faculty member has agreed to supervise a qualifying paper, the faculty member should establish with the student the framework for the research and writing, a schedule for progress towards the completion of the paper, and a schedule of meetings.
- The supervisor will help the advisee to plan the research, define the topic, identify the specific steps to take, identify the relevant literature, databases and other relevant resources.
- More generally, the paper supervisor will guide the student in the writing of a paper of publishable quality (e.g., have a state-of-the-art bibliography, tailor the paper to the requirements and the standards of publication, etc.).
- The paper supervisor will provide prompt feedback and comments, normally in writing, to the advisee when the student submits drafts of the paper, partial or whole.

- The paper supervisor will discuss with the student strategies and opportunities for publication.
- The paper supervisor will regularly inform the dissertation supervisor about the student's progress.
- When the paper has been entirely drafted, the supervisor will establish with the student the complementary reading list that will be used for discussion at the defense of the paper.
- The supervisor will help the student find a third person for the defense board (the dissertation supervisor being the second one), and prepare the defense. Readers must have the paper and the reading list at least two weeks before.

Immigration Regulations and Policies for International Students

Contact Information

Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS)
Hovey House
258 Hammond Street
617-552-8005
www.bc.edu/oiss
Hours: Mon–Fri, 9:00–4:00 p.m.

OISS Advisor for Philosophy

Susan Shea, Associate Director OISS, sheasc@bc.edu

Walk-in advising hours

Please check their website

Note on visa type

The following section of the guide pertains to students on F-1 or J-1 student visas. Very occasionally, a student may be studying as dependent of spouse working in the U.S. or with another visa type. Please consult with OISS in that case.

Timeline to complete the degree

Immigration regulations state that students are required to be making "normal progress towards the degree" and finish in that time frame. OISS issues the immigration form (called an I-20 for F-1 student and a DS-2019 for J-1 students) for the length of time determined to be the normal length of study by the department and the GSAS Dean's Office. This is how long students may remain in the U.S. to finish their degree in most cases.

- M.A. Degree: Two Years, from August of the first year to May of the following year, including the Comprehensive Exam or Qualifying Paper. Master's students are generally expected to take 5 courses each year for a total of 10 courses. They will therefore have two semesters with only 6 credits (see full-time requirement, below).
- Ph.D.: between 5 years and 8 years.

- Note: Immigration extensions cannot be given for incompletes or failures. It is important that students and their advisors take action on any failure or incomplete prior to the end of the allowed period.

Full-time study requirement

- Students on student visas are required to be considered full-time students during the academic semesters. OISS reports their full-time status to the U.S. Government every semester. Students must register every semester of their allowed period.
- Any graduate student registered for under nine credits in a semester will be flagged as less than full-time in the University System. Those students will receive an email from OISS and will be asked to follow up with their department. (n.b., for the Ph.D. program exception to this rule, see below).
- The University System will not let students drop below full-time status or register less than full-time without OISS permission to Student Services. This is a safety in place to ensure students stay in immigration compliance. Please contact OISS for any help registering a student for less than full-time.
    - M.A. students: Since M.A. students have some semesters with six credits only but are approved as full-time by the department (given that they have, for instance, to write a qualifying paper in addition), OISS will need a brief email verification from the department stating that the student is considered full time by department with six credits. If the student has trouble registering for less than nine credits in the system, please contact OISS.
    - Ph.D. Students: Ph.D. students with assistantships will automatically be classified as full-time in the University System. Doctoral Continuation also classifies the student as full-time. However, there are sometimes glitches in the system. If this is the case, contact OISS and they will contact Student Services. Ph.D. students are expected to be in contact with their advisors about the dissertation progress in order to maintain their immigration status.

Other Immigration Approved Reasons for a Reduced Course Load (must be approved by OISS):

- Academic Difficulties (typically for the first semester only), such as initial difficulties with the English language; unfamiliarity with American Teaching Methods; improper course placement. This will require documentation from the department for justification.
- Documented illness or medical condition up to 12 months total during the degree.
- Students are allowed to be less than full-time in their last semester if they are taking their last required class to finish. No documentation is needed.

Additional Resources for Advisors

Student Distress

- If you have concerns regarding the psychological or physical well-being of a student, contact the Student Outreach and Support Team, at 617-552-3470 or through the online Student of Concern Reporting Form.

- If you have an urgent concern after 5:00 p.m. or on weekends or holidays, contact BC Police Department at 617-552-4440. They will be able to access appropriate assistance for you.
- If the situation is an emergency (immediate threat to safety), call directly BCPD at 911.
- If a student is open to receiving psychological help, direct the student to University Counseling Services, Gasson Hall 001. Phone: 617-552-3310 (same day consultation possible).

Non-emergency questions

Caroline Davis, Associate Dean of Students
caroline.davis.2@bc.edu
617-552-3470

Sexual misconduct

- If you have knowledge of a sexual misconduct case, by law (Title IX) you must report it to TitleIXCoordinator@bc.edu, 617-552-3334. You should tell the student who discloses the case that you are under legal obligation to report it. Students should also be encouraged, but not pressured, to utilize university resources such as the Sexual Assault Network hotline, BC Police, or University Counseling services. It is up to the student to pursue these options, but support for the student for doing so can be helpful.

Discriminatory Harassment

- The following are considered discriminatory harassment.
    - Conduct that, by reference to the race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status of a member or members of the University community, intentionally or recklessly abuses, mocks, or disparages a person or persons so as to affect their educational performance or living or working environment at Boston College.
    - Offensive sexual behavior whenever toleration of such conduct or rejection of it is the basis for a personnel or academic decision affecting an individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating a hostile or stressful living, learning, or working environment. Examples of behavior that may constitute sexual harassment include sexual advances, any form of retaliation or threat of retaliation against an individual who rejects such advances, sexual epithets, jokes, or comments, comment or inquiry about an individual's body or sexual experiences, unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, and displaying sexually suggestive images. A full description of BC policy may be found online.
- If you witness a hate crime or a bias related incident, you should report it. Contact BC Police Department at 617-552-4440.

- If a hate crime or a bias-related incident is reported to you, assist the student to identify the most appropriate path. The Hate Crimes and Bias-Related Incidents Protocol may be found online.

Privacy Policy

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants four specific rights to a postsecondary student:
    - to see the records that the institution is keeping on the student.
    - to seek amendment to those records and in certain cases append a statement to the record.
    - to withhold the disclosure of a student's educational records except for situations involving legitimate educational interest or as may be required by law.
    - to file a complaint with the FERPA Office in Washington.
- A full presentation of FERPA may be found online.
- A University employee has a legitimate educational interest in access to information when that information is appropriate for use in connection with performing a task that is related to the student's education (which is your case).
- Responsibilities under FERPA:
    - As a general principle, you may not disclose student information in oral, written, or electronic form to anyone except BC staff and faculty who need the information to perform their university functions and have a legitimate educational interest.
    - You have a legal responsibility to protect the privacy of the student educational records in your possession, which are classified as confidential information under BC's Data Security Policy. You may not access educational records for personal reasons.
    - You may not release lists or files with student information to any third party outside your college or departmental unit.
    - Student information stored in an electronic format must be secure and available only to those entitled to access that information. Student information should not be stored on laptops or home computers unless it is encrypted. Personal digital assistants used to read confidential data should be password protected.
    - Student information in paper format must be shredded before disposal or placed in a locked disposal.

Preliminary Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

Ph.D. students take the Preliminary Comprehensive Examination at the end of their first year in the program. The purpose of this oral examination is to check the students' competence on the materials they will teach in their Philosophy of the Person class. Accordingly, the exam is based on the syllabus the students prepare in the teaching seminar. On the grounds that instructors should know more than what they actually teach, however, a student may be examined on more than the selection of readings for a given text in their syllabus. In case they choose to teach excerpts of a given work (for instance only Book I of Plato's *Republic*), they should be knowledgeable about, and will be examined on, the whole work, as well as about the general background of the work and the main ideas of the author's philosophy.

The students are primarily examined on the works that are in the mandatory list for Philosophy of the Person, and on two 19th–21st century works and two "diversity" works that the students will have chosen in a pre-established list (see below). Time permitting, the board may also ask about their overall conception of the course (the goals they are trying to achieve, the means they choose, etc.) and on how additional texts the students may have included fit within this conception.

A failed examination may be retaken only once.

Preliminary Comprehensive Exam Reading List

Mandatory Reading List

- Plato's *Apology*
- (1) Plato's *Meno* and *Gorgias* or (2) Plato's *Republic* (whole)
- Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*
- (1) Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* or (2) Augustine, *Confessions* or (3) Augustine, *On the Free Choice of the Will*
- Aquinas, *Sum of Theology*, Part I, qq. 1-15 (knowledge about God), qq. 75-88 (soul/body, knowledge); Part II.1, and qq. 90-96 (divine, natural, and human laws)
- Descartes, *Meditations*
- (1) Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Introduction, Part I, chs. I, II, X, XI, XIII, XIV; Part II, chs. XVII-XIX or (2) Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* or (3) Rousseau, *Social Contract* or *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* or (4) Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* or (5) Marx, *Paris 1844 Manuscripts* and *Communist Manifesto*, or *Capital* I Book I, Parts I-III
- Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*
- Mill, *Utilitarianism*

19th-21st Centuries Selections (Select Two Bulleted Options)

- G.F.W. Hegel, (1) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Introduction, A. Consciousness, B. Self-Consciousness or (2) *The Philosophy of Right*, Introduction and Part III
- Søren Kierkegaard, (1) *Fear and Trembling* or (2) *Philosophical Fragments*
- Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*

- Friedrich Nietzsche, (1) *Genealogy of Morals* or (2) *Beyond Good and Evil*
- William James, (1) *Pragmatism* or (2)*The Will to Believe* Chs. 1–3, 5, 6 or (3) *Principles of Psychology* Chs. 4, 6, 9, 10, 15, 19, and 24.
- Charles Sanders Peirce, (1) *Illustrations of the Logic of Science* or (2) *Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of Right Thinking* (aka Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism, 1903)
- Sigmund Freud, (1) *The Future of an Illusion* or (2) *Civilization and Its Discontent*
- Edmund Husserl, (1) *Cartesian Meditations* or (2) *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy*
- Henri Bergson (1) *Time and Free Will* or (2) *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*
- Edith Stein, *The Problem of Empathy*
- Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*
- Maurice Blondel, *Action*
- Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*
- Martin Heidegger, (1) *Being and Time* (Intro., Part 1, Division 1) or (2) *Basic Writings from* Being and Time *(1927) to* The Task of Thinking *(1964)*, ed. D.F. Krell (revised and expanded ed., 1993)
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*
- John Dewey, (1) *Experience and Nature* or (2) *Art and Experience*
- Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*
- Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*
- Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*
- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Parts I & III
- Michel Foucault, (1) *Discipline and Punish*, or (2) *History of Sexuality*, Vols. 1 and 2
- Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*
- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*
- Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*
- Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*
- Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*
- John Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, Part I., chs. 1-3, and *Political Liberalism*, chs. 2, 6-8
- Jacques Derrida, (1) *Speech and Phenomena* or (2) *Writing and Difference*
- Paul Ricœur, (1) *Time and Narrative*, Vol 3 (= part IV) or (2) *From Text to Action*
- Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*
- Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: 'Throwing Like a Girl' and Other Essays*
- Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol.1, chs 1-4 and *Between Facts and Norms*, chs 1, 3, 5, and 9
- Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*
- Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language. A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*
- Alasdair MacIntyre, (1) *After Virtue* or (2) *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*
- Martha Craven Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*
- Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*

"Diversity" Selections (Select Two Bulleted Options; n.b.: an author selected in the 19th-21st list cannot be selected again in this list)

Women Philosophers in the History of Philosophy

- Hildegard of Bingen, *The Book of the Rewards of Life* (transl. Bruce W. Hozeski. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- Christine of Pisan, (1) *The Book of the City of Ladies and Other Writings* (ed. Rebecca Kingston and Sophie Bourgault, transl. Ineke Hardy. Cambridge: Hackett, 2018) or (2) *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (transl. Sarah Lawson. London: Penguin Classics, 2003).
- Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila,* Vol. 2 (transl. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez. Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1980).
- Mary Astell, *Political Writings* (ed. Patricia Springborg. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Margaret Cavendish,:*The Blazing World and Other Writings* (London: Penguin Classics, 1994).
- Emilie du Châtelet, *Selected Philosophical and Scientific Writings* (ed. Judith P. Zinsser, transl. Isabelle Bour and Judith P. Zinsser. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women and A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- G. E. M. Anscombe: "Modern Moral Philosophy", "Knowledge and Reverence for Human Life", "Good and Bad Human Action", and "Murder and the Morality of Euthanasia", in G. E. M. Anscombe, *Human Life, Action, and Ethics* (Imprint Academic, 2005).
- Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018).
- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Introduction (trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Vintage, 201) AND *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (trans. Bernard Frechtman. New York: Open Road Media, 2018).
- Philippa Foot, (1) "Moral Arguments", *Mind*, 67(268), 1958: 502–513 and "Moral Beliefs", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 59(1), 1959: 83–104 [these two essays also available in: *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*, second edition (first edition 1978), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 96–109 and 110–131] or (2) *Natural Goodness*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Martha Nussbaum, *Anger and Forgiveness*: *Resentment, Generosity, Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
- Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of* Difference (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

Non-Western Writers in the History of Philosophy/Inter-Religious Dialogue

- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid, *The Alchemy of Happiness* (trans. Claud Field. Eastford: Martino Fine Books, 2017).
- *The Bhagavad Gita* (transl. Laurie Patton. London: Penguin Classics, 2008).

- Confucius, *The Analects* (transl. Raymond Dawson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- Gautama the Buddha, *Sayings of the Buddha. New Translations from the Pali Nikayas* (transl. Rupert Gethin. Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2008).
- Gautama the Buddha, *The Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection* (transl. Juan Mascaro. London: Penguin Classics, 1973).
- Ibn Tufayl, AbuBakr, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan: A Philosophical Tale* (trans. Lenn Evan Goodman. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).
- Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed: Abridged* Edition (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995).
- Mo Zi, *The Book of Master Mo* (trans. Ian Johnston. London: Penguin Classics, 2014).

Race

- Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (Issues of Our Times Series. New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).
- W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: With "The Talented Tenth" and "The Souls of White Folk"* (London: Penguin Classics, 1996).
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2005).
- Tommie Shelby, *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007).

Feminism

- Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*.
- Nancy Fraser, *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* (New Directions in Critical Theory. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).
- Carolyn Merchant, *Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper One, 1990).
- Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and Other* Essays (Studies in Feminist Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Colonialism

- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (50th anniversary ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).
- Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* ((trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2005).
- Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003).

Ph.D. Qualifying Paper

Nature, Committee Composition, Length, and Format

- The Qualifying Paper (QP) is a research paper in addition to any paper written for coursework, although it may be derived from a class paper.
- The defense is oral, with a board of three members composed of the paper supervisor, the future supervisor of the dissertation, and another faculty member (or two members, if the same person is the paper supervisor and the future dissertation supervisor). All board members must belong to the department faculty.
- The defense is based on the paper and on a reading list of 6 to 10 authors and/or texts (primary sources) from the history of philosophy (as broadly as possible) that raise significant questions or challenges for the thesis of the paper.
- The reading list is to be established ahead of the defense with the paper supervisor, and sent in due time (at least two weeks before the defense), with the paper, to the other board members. The paper, the list, the date of the exam, and the composition of the board, must also be given to the graduate program director.
- The length of the paper is to be determined in consultation with the QP supervisor. The QP supervisor is to be chosen in consultation with one's Academic Advisor, and the QP supervisor must agree to serve in this role.
- The student must follow the formatting instructions which are at the end of this document.

Defense Timeline

- The QP should be written at the end of year three and over the summer, under the supervision of a faculty member of the department (who need not be the future dissertation supervisor), and normally defended in the Fall semester of the fourth year.

Grades

- The grades, in descending order, are Pass with Distinction, Pass, and Fail.
- Students must receive at least a Pass or Pass with Distinction to satisfy the requirement.
- Students must pass the QP before they can advance to the examination of the dissertation proposal. The first part of the result form must be given to the Graduate Program Assistant.
- In case the examination of the paper is failed, the paper may be resubmitted after improvement and defended again, only once, and (by Graduate School policy) not sooner than the following semester. The board decides when exactly the paper can be resubmitted and defended again.

Evaluation Criteria

- The standard is a publishable research paper that demonstrates clarity of writing, solid argumentation, and knowledge of the relevant primary and secondary sources.

- The department recognizes that papers may reflect a plurality of philosophical styles and methodologies (historical, hermeneutical, phenomenological, analytical, textual criticism, and so on). Nevertheless, a Qualifying Paper should have the following qualities, and will be evaluated accordingly:

1. Form
   1.1. The prose is clear and precise. The flow, pacing, and wording are very good.
   1.2. The essay's structure is easily discernible: the paper stays focused on the objective stated in the introduction; the way in which the middle sections develop and support the paper's thesis is manifest; the progression of ideas is plain (i.e., the thinking moves logically from one paragraph to another and throughout the paper); a clear outcome is reached in the conclusion (even if a negative one—for example: "It is impossible to establish that…").
   1.3. The bibliographical information and mode of citation of the sources are consistent and conform to a standard system (e.g., Harvard, Chicago, APA).
   1.4. The paper is preceded by a 200-word abstract and keywords.
   1.5. The length of the paper is appropriate (to be determined with the Qualifying Paper Mentor, as it depends on the topic, the approach, etc.). Writing samples in PhD applications are typically between 15 and 20 double spaced pages long. The maximum length is set at 7,000 words, all inclusive.
2. Content
   2.1. The intent of the paper is clearly formulated at the outset.
   2.2. The methodology is appropriate to the topic (e.g., historical research, hermeneutical approach, phenomenological analysis, literature review and critique).
   2.3. Presuppositions are made explicit.
   2.4. The key aspects of the topic are addressed.
   2.5. The pertinent philosophical concepts are clearly defined and explained, and they are correctly employed.
   2.6. The primary and secondary sources are pertinent and satisfactory.
   2.7. The summaries or interpretations of the sources are accurate. The quotations and paraphrases supporting the interpretation or the point being made are suitable.
   2.8. The paper makes a good case for its central claim(s): it offers appropriate evidence in support and addresses possible objections with fairness.

Formatting

- Every paper should use a 12-point serif font (Cambria, Times New Roman, or other typical font), with standard 1-inch margins, and double-spaced.
- The paper page should begin with (a) the Title, (b) a 200-word Abstract, and (c) Keywords.
- Every paper must have a bibliography formatted according to a standard style. Templates for common entries are as follows:

For a BOOK:

Author's last name, author's initials [followed by: ed., eds. in the plural, if it is an edited volume]. (Year published). *Title: And Subtitle if there is one*. Place of publication, usually city and state: Publisher.

For a Book with a TRANSLATOR:

Author's last name, author's initials. (Year published). *Title: And Subtitle if there is one* (Name of translator, Trans.). Place of publication, usually city and state: Publisher.

For an ARTICLE in print (even if accessed online):

Author's last name, author's initials. (Year published). "Title: And Subtitle If There Is One." *Journal Title.* Volume number (issue number): page range.

For an ARTICLE in a web-only publication:

Author's last name, author's initials. (Date of posting, if available). "Title: And Subtitle If There Is One." *Website or Online Publication Title.* Volume number (issue number): page range. Retrieved from [provide the URL].

Dissertation Proposal Guidelines

Nature and Committee Composition

- A dissertation is a piece of research, and so a dissertation proposal is the statement of a plan for a piece of research.
- The defense is oral, with a board of three members composed of the future supervisor of the dissertation, another faculty member from the department, and a third reader who may be external to the department. All must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members. The composition of the committee should be determined in consultation with the dissertation supervisor.

Defense Timeline

- The dissertation proposal should be defended in the Spring semester of the fourth year.

Grades

- The grades, in descending order, are Pass with Distinction, Pass, and Fail.
- Students must receive at least a Pass or Pass with Distinction to satisfy the requirement.
- Students must pass the dissertation proposal before they proceed with dissertation. The second and third part of the result form must be given to the Graduate Program Assistant.
- In case the examination is failed, it may be resubmitted after improvement and defended again, only once, and (by Graduate School policy) not sooner than the following semester. The board decides when exactly the paper can be resubmitted and defended again.

What should go into a dissertation proposal? (Advice from Arthur Madigan, S.J.)

The proposal should contain the following elements:

- The question or problem (or set of questions or problems) to be resolved in the dissertation. This part of the proposal answers questions like "What do you intend to find out in the course of researching and writing the dissertation?" "What do you hope to learn by doing this dissertation?" Some questions are mainly historical; others are mainly systematic; and many questions have both an historical and a systematic dimension. Questions may be of different types: Yes/ No questions ("Is Aristotle's conception of substance in the Categories compatible with his conception of substance in the Metaphysics?"), but also more open questions '("What did philosopher A think about issue X, and why?", "What is the best solution to problem Z?").
- An indication of why this question or problem is of interest or significance, why someone should go to the trouble of researching and writing a dissertation about it. This answers the questions "Why bother?" and "What makes this topic so important?"

- An indication of why the question or problem needs the concentrated attention that goes into a dissertation. This answers the questions "What's so difficult about that?" and "Isn't the answer obvious?"
- An account of the state of discussion and literature on the question or problem to date, telling how much or how little has been said or written on the question or problem, sketching the main positions that have been taken, outlining the grounds on which these positions are based, and indicating why and how it is appropriate to contribute something further (the dissertation) to the discussion and the literature. This answers the question "Hasn't that been done already?" and addresses the possible reaction "Oh, No, not another dissertation on...."
- An indication of the principal data or sources of data relevant to solving the question or problem. This answers the question "Where do you intend to look for an answer to your question or problem?"
- An indication of the method you propose to follow in using the data to solve the question or problem. This answers questions like "How do you intend to handle your data?" and "Once you have located your data, what do you intend to do with them?" Examples: studying a text from a "mainstream" point of view or from a Marxist point of view or from a Straussian point of view; studying a problem from a Thomistic point of view or from a phenomenological point of view or from an analytic point of view. It is often appropriate to offer a brief explanation or defense of your method.
- A frank statement of your assumptions. These are matters that you will invite your reader to grant or concede at the outset, so that you don't spend the dissertation (or the defense) arguing for them. There are various types of assumptions. Some have a bearing on the set of data, e.g., the assumption that a given text is the authentic work of a certain author. Some have a bearing on method, e.g., the (highly debatable!) assumption that what Socrates says in a Platonic dialogue is identical with what Plato thinks. This section answers questions like "What are you asking us to buy at the outset?" "What do you want us to grant you so that you can get on with your work?" and "Are you sure you're not just begging the question?" As with the method you propose to follow, it is often appropriate to offer a brief explanation or defense of your assumptions, to show that they are at least plausible. One aim of this part is to head off people saying things like "It's clear that a lot of work went into this dissertation; it's a shame that it rests on untenable assumptions." It is important that your initial assumptions do not by themselves dictate your conclusions; if your assumptions dictate your conclusions, that throws into question the value and significance of your research.
- A statement of your working hypothesis or hypotheses. This answers the questions "As of now, what kind of solution do you think you will come up with?" and "How much of an idea do you have about where you are going to end up?" Leave plenty of room for the possibility that the data will lead you to modify your working hypotheses or even to discard them in favor of others. One test of a good question is whether you are still interested in the question after the facts have forced you to give up what you thought was the right answer.

Much of the above can be summarized in the advice to distinguish carefully between questions and answers, between data and interpretations of data, between data and assumptions. The above suggestions are, of course, no substitute for the most important activity in the formulation of a dissertation proposal: discussion with one's supervisor.

Research Assistant Guidelines

Each first-year Ph.D. student will serve as a Research Assistant (RA). The student shall work for 20 hours per week in this capacity. That time shall be divided among two, and no more than two, faculty members.

Assignments of RAs

- RAs shall be assigned to faculty members, first, to the Chair, Assistant Chair, DGS, and DUS, and then based on the rank of the faculty member and the nature of the work to be assigned. Full professors who have research-intensive projects shall receive preference, followed by associate professors who have research-intensive projects, and finally assistant professors who have research-intensive projects.

The Role of an RA

The role of RA is characterized both positively and negatively.

- *Positively:*
    - RAs are research assistants, and as such tasks assigned to them should be relevant to research projects.
    - Such tasks should improve the RAs' research-related skills or raise their awareness of the contemporary state of the profession. Examples of such tasks might be (a) proofreading articles or presentations, (b) indexing a book, (c) formatting a book or an article, (d) finding articles and books on a theme, (e) building a bibliography, (f) reading articles or books and reporting on their contents, (g) building a database of philosophers who work in an area, (h) building a database of terms and definitions in a corpus of writings, (i) organizing, or assisting with the organization of, a conference, (j) organizing, or assisting with the organization of, talks or panels, (k) translating a passage, if the student has the requisite skills, and (l) assisting with writing or managing grants.
- *Negatively:*
    - RAs are neither teaching assistants nor personal assistants.
    - As such, tasks assigned to an RA should not be the sorts of tasks ordinarily assigned to teachers or to personal assistants. Examples of tasks which should not be assigned to RAs are (a) grading assignments, (b) writing assignments or exams, (c) teaching classes (unless they are tasked with teaching a class when the professor is at a conference and provided it does not conflict with the RA's course schedule), (d) running errands (unless they are directly related to a research project, such as organizing a conference), (e) completing household chores, (f) photocopying books, articles, or class materials (professors are encouraged to use Interlibrary Loan and to distribute course materials via Canvas), (g) babysitting or pet sitting, and (h) driving professors to the airport (though RAs might drive conference speakers to and from the airport).

Work Responsibilities

- RAs are not permitted to work more than twenty hours per week (Monday through Friday), except by *mutual* agreement with the professors, motivated by particular circumstances, *in which case RAs will be required to work less during another week by the same amount of hours*. Those twenty hours are evenly divided between two professors, for ten hours each. When RAs have reached their maximum hours for the week, they should communicate this to faculty when necessary (e.g., "Sorry, since I've reached my maximum hours this week. I'll have to get started next week.")
- RAs are not penalized if they work less than 20 hours per week, but hours that will not be used in a given week can be reallocated to the other professors by agreement of the professor to whom the RA is assigned. It is entirely the prerogative of faculty members who request an RA to ensure they are sending work to that RA; it is not the prerogative of the RA to ensure this happens.
- Unused hours from a given week do not accrue to the next week. For example, if an RA works only 6 hours for a professor one week, the RA is not required to work for 14 hours the next week or any subsequent week.
- RA duties begin on the first day of classes for each semester and end on the last day of classes for the semester. RAs are forbidden from working over the holiday breaks, including Thanksgiving, Spring Break, and Easter Break. It is the RA's responsibility to contact these professors at the start of the semester and to arrange a meeting with them, during which faculty members should tell RAs the tasks they expect the RA to complete and to work out a schedule with the RA.
- Faculty should assign tasks *at least* 24 hours in advance whenever possible and within normal working hours. Tasks that will require a significant amount of time to complete should be assigned with an appropriately long lead time.
- Email communication (rather than phone) is encouraged to communicate tasks.
- In general, all tasks should be such that they can be completed on campus. Exceptions to this rule might be visits to research centers or tasks related to organizing a conference.
- RAs are to maintain a careful record of time committed each week to each faculty member. On a monthly basis, faculty members should sign this record, and the RA will deliver it to the Graduate Program Director. Every sort of required activity should be recorded, whether it be research in the library, organizational support, or mandatory attendance at the faculty member's courses (i.e., attendance at courses the student is not already taking for credit as part of his/her own program of studies). RAs cannot be asked to grade.
- Due credit is to be given to RAs who contribute to a project.

Philosophy Department Teaching Policies and Resources

Class Cancellation Policy

- Each time that you cancel a class for any reason, you are required to inform both the Philosophy Department Undergraduate Program Assistant and the Graduate Program Assistant in addition to the students in your class.
- If you anticipate being absent for multiple days, you must state the length of time that you anticipate being out and update the department with any changes.
- Missed classes should be made up as much as possible.

Assignment Grading Policy

- Except in exceptional circumstances, all student coursework should be graded and returned promptly and no later than three weeks after it is submitted.

Student Concerns

- If you have concerns of any sort about a student, please contact the Student Outreach and Support Team at Office of the Dean of Students (DOS) at 617-552-3470 or through the online Student of Concern Reporting Form.
- If you have knowledge of a sexual misconduct case, by law (Title IX) you must report it to TitleIXCoordinator@bc.edu, 617-552-3334.
- If you have an urgent concern after 5pm or on weekends or holidays, contact BC Police Department at 617-552-4440. They will be able to access appropriate assistance for you.
- If the situation is an emergency (immediate threat to safety), call directly BCPD at 911.
- If a student is open to receiving psychological help, you can direct her/him to University Counseling Services, Gasson 001 **|** Office Hours: Monday–Friday 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. **|** P: 617-552-3310 (same day consultation possible) **|** *bc.edu/offices/counseling.html*
- If a student has challenges managing time, sleep, alcohol, or food, you can refer the student to the Office of Health Promotion (OHP), which offers Individual and Group Health Coaching appointments with a trained Health Coach. Also, the student can go to Gasson 025 and talk with a staff member.
- To report concerns about academic progress, contact the Office of the Dean of Students, Maloney Hall, Suite 445, 617-552-3470, student.support@bc.edu
- The Connors Family Learning Center can provide academic support. The English department has a Writing Center open to all undergrads.
- For indicators of distress and for how to respond, download the brochure of Counseling Services from their web pages.
- For students in distress or crisis (non-emergency) questions, contact Caroline Davis, Associate Dean of Students, caroline.davis.2@bc.edu, 617-552-3470.

Discriminatory Harassment Policy

As a University dedicated to fostering the dignity of each person, Boston College strives to provide an environment that is free of discriminatory harassment, in which each member of the University community is respected as a person, without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, or other legally protected status. All members of the University community, especially faculty and other individuals who exercise supervisory authority, have an obligation to promote this environment.

- If you witness a hate crime or a bias related incident, you should report it. Contact BC Police Department at 617-552-4440.
- If a hate crime or a bias-related incident is reported to you, assist the student to identify the most appropriate path. See the "Hate Crimes and Bias-Related Incidents Protocol" from the Office for Institutional Diversity.
- Recognize that the student may be experiencing a wide range of emotions including shame, anger, fear, and denial. Counseling is available through University Counseling Services, Gasson 001 **|** Office Hours: Monday–Friday 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. **|** P: 617-552-3310 (same day consultation possible).

Definition of Discriminatory Harassment

Discriminatory harassment may occur in numerous forms, many of which are also violations of federal and state laws. Direct harassment is person to person; indirect harassment is the creation of a hostile environment. For the purposes of this policy, the following are considered discriminatory harassment.

(1) Conduct that, by reference to the race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status of a member or members of the University community, intentionally or recklessly abuses, mocks, or disparages a person or persons so as to affect their educational performance or living or working environment at Boston College.

(2) Offensive sexual behavior whenever toleration of such conduct or rejection of it is the basis for a personnel or academic decision affecting an individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating a hostile or stressful living, learning, or working environment. Examples of behavior that may constitute sexual harassment include sexual advances, any form of retaliation or threat of retaliation against an individual who rejects such advances, sexual epithets, jokes, or comments, comment or inquiry about an individual's body or sexual experiences, unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, and displaying sexually suggestive images.

(3) In addition to constituting a violation of this policy, sexual harassment is unlawful. The most severe forms of such harassment, including assault and violence, are also criminal activities that may subject perpetrators to arrest and criminal prosecution as well as being subject to the procedures outlined in this policy. If you have knowledge of a sexual misconduct case, by law (Title IX) you must report it to *TitleIXCoordinator@bc.edu,* 617-552-3334.

Prohibition of Consensual Relationships between Faculty and Students

The University strives to foster an environment that is respectful, fair, and free of harassment and discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, and to avoid potential conflicts of interest, favoritism, coercion, abuse, and breaches of professional standards, the University prohibits any faculty member, employee, graduate assistant, or undergraduate teaching assistant from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship or in any romantic or sexual conduct with any individual whom he or she supervises, teaches, advises, evaluates, counsels, or coaches. Furthermore, the University prohibits any faculty member or other employee from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship or in any romantic or sexual conduct with any student currently enrolled as an undergraduate at Boston College. The University also prohibits any faculty member from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship or in any romantic or sexual conduct with a graduate student who is enrolled in any academic program or department in which the faculty member participates.

This policy is not intended to apply to: (a) relationships between spouses in cases in which the spouse of faculty member or employee enrolls as a student in a University course or program; or (b) relationships between undergraduate students, provided in each case that the relationship described in (a) or (b) does not involve individuals who are otherwise associated through supervisory, teaching, advisory, or evaluative roles. Requests for exceptions to this policy may be considered on a limited, case-by-case basis by the Vice Provost for Faculties (in cases involving faculty or students) or the Vice President of Human Resources (for all non-faculty employees). Questions about the application or effect of this policy to an existing or potential relationship should also be directed to the Vice Provost for Faculties or the Vice President of Human Resources.

This policy is intended to be an addition to existing University policies and does not alter or modify any existing policies, including, without limitation, the University Statutes, the Discriminatory Harassment Policy, and the Professional Standards and Business Conduct Policy. If any complaint of harassment or discrimination is made, the existence of a consensual relationship in violation of this policy shall not be a defense in any University process or response.

Members of the University community who violate this policy (meaning, in each case, the individual with greater authority who engages in a relationship or conduct prohibited above with a student or employee with less authority) will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Any member of the University community who becomes aware of any conduct prohibited by this policy should report the conduct to the Vice President of Human Resources or his or her designee (if the involved individual is a staff member) or the Provost or his or her designee (if the involved individual is a faculty member, graduate assistant, or other student). The responsible office, working with other University administrators, will investigate the report and determine the appropriate response.

Students' Privacy Policy (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants four specific rights to a postsecondary student:

- to see the records that the institution is keeping on the student.

- to seek amendment to those records and in certain cases append a statement to the record.
- to withhold the disclosure of a student's educational records except for situations involving legitimate educational interest or as may be required by law to file a complaint with the FERPA Office in Washington.
- For a full description of FERPA please contact the Office of Student Services

Your Responsibilities Under FERPA

- You may not disclose personally identifiable information from educational records to persons other than the student in question and a University official who has a legitimate educational interest. A University official has a legitimate educational interest in access to information when that information is appropriate for use in connection with: performing a task that is related to the student's education; providing a service or benefit relating to the student or student's family, such as housing, health care, counseling, job placement, or financial aid; performing a task related to the discipline of a student; maintaining the safety and security of the campus; or otherwise performing a task related to the effective functioning of the University. As a general principle, you may not disclose student information in oral, written, or electronic form to anyone except BC staff and faculty who need the information to perform their university functions.
- You have a legal responsibility under FERPA to protect the privacy of the student educational records in your possession, which are classified as confidential information under BC's Data Security Policy. You may not access educational records for personal reasons.
- Student information stored in an electronic format must be secure and available only to those entitled to access that information.
- You may not release lists or files with student information to any third party outside your college or departmental unit.
- Student information should not be stored on laptops or home computers unless it is encrypted. Personal digital assistants used to read confidential data should be password protected.
- Student information in paper format must be shredded before disposal or placed in a locked disposal bin.

Students with Disabilities

Rights and Procedures

- Students are considered to have a disability if they have either a physical or a mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- Students with disabilities have a right to special accommodations. They provide the Disability Services office with appropriate documentation; the nature of their disability, however, is not disclosed to faculty unless the student chooses to disclose this information or gives written permission to share this information.

- Notification letters will be sent electronically to professors. Please either save them electronically or print copies for your records, as they apply to accommodations throughout the entire semester. Students will be encouraged to meet with each of their professors to explain and answer any questions regarding the requested accommodations.
- Students will continue to be responsible for reminding professors of their need for accommodations for quizzes and exams in order to make arrangements for test-taking in an alternate location. Students are asked to speak to their professors to request alternate testing accommodations at least three days prior to the exam date.
- If you have questions, contact Disabilities Services, disabsrv@bc.edu, 617-552-3470.
- Whereas some disabilities, like being in a wheelchair, are obvious, some others are not. See examples below.

Additional Types of Disabilities

- Psychiatric Disabilities: Individuals with a psychiatric disability have a diagnosable mental health issue which causes disturbances in thinking, feeling, relating, and/or functional behaviors that may result in a diminished capacity to cope with daily life demands. A psychiatric disability is a hidden disability; it is rarely apparent to others. However, students with a psychiatric disability may experience symptoms that interfere with their educational goals.
- Visual impairments: Students may experience several types of visual impairments: partial sight, low vision, legal blindness, and total blindness. In addition to the services provided at the Vision Resource Center in O'Neill Library, students may digitally download recording from Learning Ally, electronic texts, scanned textbooks, tape class lectures, or work with readers and scribes to assist them in their academic program.
- Chronic illness: Chronic health-related illnesses affect an individual for at least three months and are likely to continue in the future. Chronic illnesses include cystic fibrosis, Chron's disease, cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, and lupus. These illnesses are typically invisible, so students rarely self-report even though the effects of their illness pose challenges to the activities of daily living. Students may experience pain or fatigue, or accumulate absences due to hospitalizations, therapies, and adjustments in medication.
- Hearing impairments: Functional hearing loss ranges from mild to profound. People who have very little or no functional hearing often refer to themselves as “deaf.” Those with milder hearing loss may label themselves as “hard of hearing.” When these two groups are combined, they are often referred to as individuals with “hearing impairments,” with “hearing loss,” or who are “hearing impaired.” When referring to the Deaf culture, "Deaf" is capitalized.
- Please visit the Disability Services website for full details.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE DOCTORAL STUDENTS' PROGRESS

ACADEMIC YEAR 20__–20__

To be returned by May 1, 20__

NAME:

YEAR YOU ENTERED THE PROGRAM: **TOTAL NUMBER OF FUNDED YEARS:**

I. – COURSES (*If you have not yet completed the coursework requirements, please list the courses you have taken, from your first year in the program to this year, following the model given below; when you have satisfied the logic and the languages requirement, please also report it. If you are all done and have passed the doctoral comps, no need to report anything, delete the example and just write "Comps passed in …".*)

(example)
2018-2019
Title of the course:
Grade:
2019-2020:
Title of the course:
Grade:
etc.

II. – RESEARCH ACTIVITY

1. Progress toward doctoral comps, or dissertation progress:

2. Participation to conferences or workshops, talks, papers published or submitted for publication, etc. (please be specific):

III. – DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITY (*Attendance at lectures in the department, help with organizing conferences, service to the graduate students association, and all the ways in which you contributed to the life of the department*)

IV. – EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (*Anything that has contributed to your education and professional training*)

V. – PLANS FOR THE COMING SUMMER AND THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR (*E.g., summer research, summer programs or seminars, language learning, courses you plan to take next year, details about dissertation writing plans, qualifying paper and dissertation proposal for the doctoral comps, etc.*)

VI. – YOUR ADVISOR NEXT YEAR (*Specify who your advisor will be, whether you are continuing with the same or have just chosen a dissertation supervisor; or request one to be assigned for next year*)

VII. – RSI (*Have you completed the RSI requirement—provide date of completion)*

VIII. – ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY (*Additional information, comments and remarks, complaints or praises, reflections on circumstances that have aided your progress or impeded it, etc.*)

IX. – ADVISOR'S, OR DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR'S AND SECOND READER'S COMMENTS

Boston College
Philosophy Department

Graduate Program Language Requirement Form

Name: _____ **Eagle ID**: _____

Please select one of the following options to document your required language proficiency. A transcript is required for options 1 or 2. Please send this form to the Graduate Program Assistant

1. ***College level language coursework completed**. Satisfied by receiving a grade of B or higher in 2 semesters of a language class at the beginner level or one semester at the intermediate level.

   _____
   Language course(s) and level

2. ***Native language (other than English) proficiency** (approval contingent upon documentation that the student has formally studied in this language at high school level or higher).

   _____
   Language studied

3. ****Department administered language exam(s)**.

   _____
   Date(s) taken.

   _____
   Language(s)

**Graduate Program Director or *Graduate Assistant signature required

Date: _____

Doctoral Comprehensive Examination
Result Forms

Student's Name: _____

Eagle ID Number: _____

The present form is composed of **one ballot for each part** of the exam, **and a synthesis** for the Registrar Office ("Examination Report").

When the **qualifying paper** has been examined, **only the ballot for the first part should be completed**. You may have the form signed electronically if your defense takes place online. Electronically signed forms should be sent to the program assistant.

A candidate cannot proceed to the defense of the dissertation proposal if the examination of the paper is failed. The board decides when the paper can be resubmitted and defended again (only once).

When the **dissertation proposal** has been defended, **the synthesis for the registrar should be completed together with the ballot for the second part**. The synthesis should be signed by the members of the second board, but not necessarily by the members of the first board (except the board chair person—the future dissertation supervisor—, who is present in both parts.) The signed form(s) must be sent to the Graduate Program Assistant upon completion.

In each of the two parts, the decisions "Passed with distinction", "Passed" and "Failed" must result from a majority decision.

In the synthesis for the Registrar Office,

The decision "Passed with distinction" shall result from "Passed with distinction" in each of the two parts of the examination;

"Passed" shall result from "Passed" in one of the parts and "Passed with distinction" in the other, or from "Passed" in both;

"Failed" shall result from "Failed" in one of the parts.

If the board decides to attach any conditions or stipulations to its decision, they should be added in writing to this report.

Doctoral Comprehensive

Part I — Qualifying Paper Result Form

Student's Name and Title of the Paper:

_____

_____

Date of the Examination: _____ /_____ /_____

In the view of the examination committee, the student has:

☐ **Passed the examination with distinction.**

☐ **Passed the examination.**

☐ **Failed the examination.**

_____

(Chair of the Examination Committee)

_____

(Examination Committee Member)

_____

(Examination Committee Member)

Doctoral Comprehensive

Part II — Dissertation Proposal Result Form

Student's Name and Title of the Dissertation Proposal:

_____

_____

Date of the Examination: _____ /_____ /_____

The examination committee judges that the student has:

☐ **Passed the examination with distinction.**

☐ **Passed the examination.**

☐ **Failed the examination.**

_____(
Chair of the Examination Committee)

_____(
Examination Committee Member)

_____(
Examination Committee Member)

BOSTON COLLEGE
OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR
CHESTNUT HILL, MA 02167

DOCTORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION REPORT

DATE:_____

Examinee :_____ **BCID#:**_____

Department:_____

The above examinee has completed the comprehensive examination. The board having considered and evaluated the totality of the examination judges that the examinee has:

Passed this examination with distinction_____

Passed this examination_____

Failed this examination_____

Therefore the examinee should/should not be promoted to the status of doctoral candidate.

Signatures:_____**(Chairperson)**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

N.B. To qualify, the examinee must be "passed" by a majority of the board.

The expressions "passed", "passed with distinction" indicate achievement in an ascending order of worth. The board's selection among these expressions should result from a majority decision.

If the board decides to attach any conditions or stipulations to its decision, they should be sent in writing along with this report.

PhD DISSERTATION DEFENSE PREPARATION (Form A)

Name: _____ **Date**: _____

A. Approval of the Composition of the Defense Committee

_____

Name of the dissertation supervisor (first reader):

_____

Name of the second reader **Institution**

_____

Name of the third reader **Institution**

_____

Name of the fourth reader **Institution**

1. Approval of the Defense Committee:

_____

Signature of the Graduate Program Director **Date**

2. Filing with the MCAS Graduate Dean's Office:

_____

Signature of the Graduate Program Assistant **Date**

PhD DISSERTATION DEFENSE PREPARATION (Form B)

Name: _____ **Date**: _____

B. Submission of the Dissertation to the Department

1. Approval of the dissertation by the first and second readers:

_____

Reader 1 Signature **Date**

_____

Reader 2 Signature **Date**

1. Date of the defense:

_____

(Must be a minimum of 30 days after submission of Dissertation to the department)

3. Submission to the Department:

_____

Signature of the Graduate Program Assistant **Date**

_____

Signature of the Graduate Program Director **Date**

BOSTON COLLEGE

The _____ of _____,

whose ORCID is _____,

entitled

submitted to the Department of _____

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of _____

in the _____

has been read on _____ _____ _____ and approved by the Committee:

Role	Print Name	Signature
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____