Welcome to the Department of Philosophy

Villanova’s Department of Philosophy has offered a doctorate degree since 1994. In this short time, the graduate program in Philosophy has risen to prominence in the field. Focal areas in the program are the history of philosophy and continental philosophy, including phenomenology, existentialism and post-modernism. Our history of philosophy faculty work in metaphysics and epistemology, social and political philosophy, and ethics.

Why should you choose Villanova?

• We offer graduate assistantships with tuition remission and a stipend through five years.
• You will experience our extensive teacher training program.
• You will study with internationally recognized faculty.
• Villanova is affiliated with the Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium (GPPC) which allows students to take courses at other doctoral granting GPPC schools. Currently, these include University of Pennsylvania and Temple University.
• Villanova sponsors a regular program of speakers and visiting professors. Previous speakers include Seyla Benhabib, Robert Bernasconi, Rêmi Brague, Jacques Derrida, Thomas Flynn, Nancy Fraser, Rodolphe Gasché, David Krell, Sonia Kruks, Jean-Luc Marion, Miklos Veto, Edith Wyschogrod, Yirmiyahu Yovel and Slavoj Žižek. The department has hosted the Heidegger Circle, the Society for Ancient Philosophy and the Society of Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy.
• The Philosophy Graduate Student Union (PGSU) is a vibrant part of the department. PGSU sponsors the Philosophy in Progress Series, an annual graduate student conference, and a variety of reading groups.
• You will have access to travel funds if you are presenting papers at a conference.

Philosophy Program Curriculum and Requirements

Full details on course offerings, program requirements and policies are available by contacting the graduate program director, and online at philosophy.villanova.edu, please click on the “Doctoral Program” link in the left navigation bar.

Course Work

Students are required to complete 48 graduate credit hours (16 courses), including at least one course in four areas: Ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary philosophy. These must be completed by the end of your third year. Students in the interdisciplinary philosophy and theology program must complete 54 graduate credit hours (42 in philosophy and 12 in theology).

Language Requirements

Students must pass two language exams in French, German, Greek or Latin. We offer regular reading groups in these languages. The first exam must be taken before the end of the second year of study. A number of our students have been awarded DAAD fellowships and other grants.

Exams

The doctoral program requires two major exams. The first, called the MA Qualifying Portfolio and Oral Exam, requires that no later than one week before the fall semester of the third year, full time students must present the director of graduate studies a portfolio of four papers submitted to satisfy the requirements for seminars taken in their normal course of study in the previous four semesters. The second, called the Preliminary Exam, is given to students who have completed all course work and passed both language exams. The Preliminary Exam tests knowledge of a central figure, question or theme in philosophy, as well as the relevant historical context for dissertation work.

Dissertation

Students who pass the Preliminary Exam qualify to begin writing a dissertation. This begins with the defense of a proposal to the department and ends with a public defense of the dissertation.
Teacher Training Program

Teacher training is an integral part of graduate philosophy and a special strength of our department. Graduate assistantships involve students in a progressive series of assignments, culminating in the assumption of full teaching responsibilities in the fifth year. The Villanova Institute for Teaching and Learning (VITAL) is a resource for graduate assistants; it offers workshops, consultations, and services such as course evaluation and class videotaping.

In the first year, graduate assistants serve as tutors in the University Writing Center and the Learning Commons. These tutorials offer a unique opportunity to work one-on-one with different student populations and their needs.

In the second and third years, graduate assistants work closely with faculty members in Philosophy, Ethics, and the Augustine and Culture Seminar, as teaching assistants comment on drafts of papers, hold office hours, facilitate study sessions and teach for one or two weeks each semester. Faculty and students meet together to discuss strategies and techniques, course content and related issues.

The fourth year generally focuses on doctoral research and students are not required to teach during that year. However, students are required to be present for and participate in a 4-5 all-day intensive teacher training seminar, coordinated by VITAL and the coordinator of the Teacher Training Program. This intensive seminar emphasizes syllabi preparation, book orders, teaching the core philosophy course in our program, but also the use of cutting edge techniques and technologies designed for effective pedagogy.

In their fifth year, provided the M.A. has been completed, students are assigned two courses per semester.

Available courses include Introduction to Philosophy, Ethics, Logic or sections of the Augustine & Culture Seminar program. Faculty mentors assist with course planning and pedagogical issues. All graduate instructors are observed in class by faculty mentors and participate in the University's standard course evaluation form. At this level, students begin to assemble a teaching portfolio for use in placement.

If they wish to teach, students in their sixth year and beyond are eligible to teach as many as two courses in each semester.

Available courses typically include Introduction to Philosophy, Ethics, Logic, and sections of the Augustine & Culture Seminar. The department also awards special topics classes on a competitive basis to advanced dissertation students.

Graduate Faculty

Sarah Vaughan Brakman, PhD  
*Rice University, ’94  
Ethical Theory, Healthcare Ethics*

Walter A. Brogan, PhD  
*Duquesne University, ’81  
Ancient Greek Philosophy, Continental Philosophy*

Thomas W. Busch, PhD  
*Marquette University, ’66  
20th Century French Philosophy (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur), Body and Politics*

John M. Carvalho, PhD  
*Duquesne University, ’87  
Contemporary Critical and Cultural Theory, Ancient Greek Philosophy, Aesthetics*

William J. Desmond, PhD  
*Pennsylvania State University, ’78  
Hegel, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion, Ethics, Philosophy of Art, German Idealism*

John A. Doody, PhD  
*Notre Dame University, ’74  
Social and Political Philosophy, Critical Theory*

John Immerwahr, PhD  
*University of Michigan, ’72  
acting chair  
Modern Philosophy, Public Policy*

Julie R. Klein, PhD  
*Vanderbilt University, ’96  
Early Modern Philosophy (Descartes and Spinoza), Medieval Philosophy, Continental Philosophy*

Helen S. Lang, PhD  
*University of Toronto, ’77  
Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, History of Ancient & Medieval Physics*

Chaone Mallory, PhD  
*University of Oregon, ’06  
Environmental Philosophy, Feminist Theory, Critical Race Theory*

James J. McCartney, OSA, PhD  
*Georgetown University, ’81  
Bioethics, Clinical Ethics, The Philosophy of Law, The Philosophy of Medicine*

Stephen Napier, PhD  
*Saint Louis University ’04  
Epistemology, Bioethics, and Philosophy of Religion*

Gabriel Rockhill, PhD  
*Emory University, ’06  
University of Paris VIII, ’05  
Contemporary French Thought, Social and Political Philosophy, Aesthetics, Film, Sociology of Knowledge, Historiography*

Sally J. Scholz, PhD  
*Purdue University, ’93  
Feminist Theory, Social and Political Philosophy*

Georg Theiner, PhD  
*Indiana University, Bloomington ’08  
Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Cognitive Science, Metaphysics, Phenomenology, Philosophy of Language and Linguistics*

Annika Thiem, PhD  
*U. of California, Berkeley ’09  
U. of Tubingen, Th.D. ’04  
director of graduate studies  
Critical Theory, Philosophy of Religion, Ethics and Political Philosophy, 19th & 20th Century German-Jewish Thought, Feminist Theory*

James R. Wetzel, PhD  
*Columbia University, ’90  
Medieval Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, Modern Philosophy and Religious Thought, Augustine and the Augustinian Tradition*

For more information:
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philosophy.villanova.edu

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