Master of Arts in Philosophy

Program

The two-year MA program in philosophy at The American University in Cairo gives students a unique opportunity to focus on both Islamic and European philosophy in the heart of a cultural and geographical crossroads where these traditions meet. Graduate students are able to explore one of the world’s oldest and most fascinating cities, while simultaneously examining a broad spectrum of philosophical traditions that are Eastern, Western, Christian and Islamic. Students interested in Islamic philosophy are able to pursue Arabic language classes as part of the program requirements, while students with an interest in contemporary European philosophy are taught by a team of internationally recognized specialists. All students receive a high-quality, liberal arts education and emerge from the program with in-depth knowledge of the discipline. The program prepares students for careers in which critical and analytical skills are valued, prepares them to embark upon doctoral research in philosophy, and provides them with an advanced understanding of the intellectual and historical roots of the contemporary world.
Faculty and Research

Faculty members in the Department of Philosophy are leading scholars in their fields. Recognized for their contributions, many have received national and international awards, while others have been recognized by AUC through the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award and the Excellence in Research and Creative Endeavors Award. In addition, AUC philosophy professors have been invited as visiting lecturers in Europe, the United States and South America.

Research Interests

**Catarina Belo**, Associate Professor; DPhil, University of Oxford
- Islamic Philosophy and Theology
- Medieval Philosophy
- Philosophy of Religion
- Metaphysics

**Nathaniel Bowditch**, Associate Professor and Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences; PhD, Johns Hopkins University
- Ethics
- History of Ethics
- Moral Psychology

**Richard Fincham**, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy; PhD, University of Warwick
- Kant and 19th Century German Philosophy
- The influence of Humean Skepticism on Early German Idealism
Graham Harman, Distinguished University Professor; PhD, DePaul University
• Contemporary Philosophy
• Metaphysics
• Aesthetics
• History of Philosophy

Robert McIntyre, Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow and Assistant Professor; PhD, University of California, Santa Barbara
• 17th and 18th Century Philosophy
• Plato and Aristotle
• Hellenistic Philosophy
• Medieval Philosophy
• Philosophy of Mind
• Epistemology and Language

Surti Singh, Assistant Professor; PhD, DePaul University
• 20th Century Continental Philosophy
• Critical Theory
• Aesthetics
• Feminism

Steffen Stelzer, Professor; PhD, Free University of Berlin
• Metaphysics (Eastern and Western)
• Islamic Philosophy
• Philosophies of Education

Robert Switzer, Associate Professor and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Academy of Liberal Arts, and Director of Core Curriculum; PhD, Pennsylvania State University
• 19th and 20th Century Philosophy, Phenomenology
• Aesthetics, Philosophy of Music
• Ethics
Alessandro Topa, Assistant Professor; PhD, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University
- Classical Greek Philosophy
- German Idealism
- American Pragmatism
- Hermeneutics
- Semiotic Logic
- Theory of Categories
- Theory of Normativity
- Philosophy of Language
- Philosophy of History

Robin Weiss, Assistant Professor; PhD, DePaul University
- Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy, especially Stoicism and Aristotle
- Ethical and Political Philosophy
- Continental Philosophy
- American Pragmatism

Ernest Wolf-Gazo, Professor; PhD, Bonn University
- 20th Century German Philosophy
- Max Weber and the Social Sciences
- Philosophical Anthropology
- Philosophy of History
Research Facilities

The AUC Library contains an outstanding holding of more than 10,000 books and approximately 10,000 e-books on philosophy, with an emphasis on classical German philosophy, contemporary French philosophy, medieval Islamic philosophy and theology. The books are available in their original languages, as well as in translation. In addition, the electronic library offers access to a large variety of databases, providing resources and information that complement the library’s physical collection. Periodical subscriptions also offer more than 668,000 journal articles and 32,000 book reviews, while document delivery services provide access to a wide array of resources from other libraries around the world.

Course work

A minimum of 24 credit hours are required for the Master of Arts in philosophy. Eight courses must be taken and a thesis (PHIL 5299 Research Guidance and Thesis (no cr.)), of which at least six must be 5000-level philosophy courses. Students are required to follow the philosophy graduate core, a series of advanced 5000-level seminars that are open only to master’s students. Two such 5000-level seminars are taught each semester. The department also offers a select number of undergraduate courses, known as electives that may also be taken at the 5000 level.

Required Core Courses:
PHIL 5201 – Classical Western Philosophy (3 cr.)
PHIL 5202 – Advanced Seminar in Islamic Philosophy (3 cr.)
PHIL 5203 – Kant and Idealism (3 cr.)
PHIL 5204 – Advanced Seminar in Phenomenology (3 cr.)

Electives:
PHIL 5100 – Independent Study in Philosophy (1-3 cr.)
PHIL 5111 – Metaphysics (3 cr.)
PHIL 5112 – Advanced Seminar in Aesthetics (3 cr.)
PHIL 5113 – Current Trends in Philosophy (3 cr.)
PHIL 5114 – Philosophical Masterpieces (3 cr.)
PHIL 5115 – Philosophical Figures (3 cr.)
PHIL 5116 – Advanced Ethics (3 cr.)
PHIL 5117 – Dimensions of Language in its Philosophical Reflection (3 cr.)
PHIL 5119 – Advanced Seminar in Political Philosophy (3 cr.)
PHIL 5120 – Advanced Seminar in Feminist Philosophy (3 cr.)
PHIL 5121 – Philosophical Logic (3 cr.)
PHIL 5199 – Selected Topics in Philosophy (3 cr.)
Thesis

Before commencing work on the thesis, students are required to write a thesis proposal. The department conceives of the thesis as a research paper of approximately 15,000 words in length, which should demonstrate the student’s ability to conduct research and write critically about a given subject. There is also a final defense of the finished thesis. The philosophy graduate program director organizes a series of noncredit seminars at the beginning of every academic year. All graduate students are expected to attend these seminars in order to ensure that they possess the research and academic writing skills required for tackling the thesis (PHIL 5299). This training is reinforced by the department’s graduate core courses, in which students are required to locate and engage with relevant secondary literature, and write papers on these topics in a professional manner.

Admission Requirements

The Master of Arts in philosophy is aimed at any holder of a bachelor’s degree with a background in the study of philosophy.

The MA requires a standard AUC application for graduate studies, including the required English-language test scores. In addition, applicants must submit a writing sample of at least 1,000 words, demonstrating critical thinking.

For more information on admission, visit the AUC website: http://www.aucegypt.edu/admissions/graduate

Funding Opportunities

The University offers a number of competitive fellowships for graduate students who display superior performance in their academic endeavors, in addition to scholarships, teaching assistantships, funding for Arabic courses and work-study programs.

For more information on financial affairs, visit the AUC website: http://www.aucegypt.edu/admissions/fellowships
Testimonials

“Throughout the MA program I gained indispensable skills which I apply in my professional and personal life. Professionally, I landed myself a new position in asset management within a multinational company. The skills that I acquired and apply in my job encompass critical thinking, logical analysis and effective communication. Personally, I gained the ability to raise questions and uncover assumptions; to analyze and formulate arguments; and to grasp the different angles to any problem and deconstruct to provide viable solutions. The MA program equipped me with irreplaceable skills, and prepared me for many potential careers such as business, writing and public service.”
Mai Abdel Kader ’04 ’10 ’16

“The philosophy MA program will challenge your whole perspective about life.”
Sherif Salem, Philosophy MA Candidate

“The philosophy graduate program has provided me with a wide array of courses that allow me to stretch my scope of interest. The professors exhibit the highest level of scholarship and care for their students.”
Heba Youssef ’07 ’09 ’16

“The Master of Arts in philosophy is intellectually stimulating. It prepares professionals for careers in communication, marketing, economic development, management, public administration, and of course, education. I have had an immensely satisfying career in project management, leadership and international cooperation, and it was my undergraduate study degree in philosophy that got me through the door.”
Marwa Adel ’03 ’16
For more information on faculty, research, course descriptions and applications, visit the department of philosophy website: www.aucegypt.edu/huss/phil
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The Department of Philosophy
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