ὁ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ.

“The unexamined life is not worth living for a human being.”

— Socrates, Apology, 38a
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Philosophy at the University of Dallas

At the University of Dallas (UD), philosophy is pursued as a rational investigation into those principles of being, thinking, and acting the knowledge of which is thought to make us wise. This quest for philosophic wisdom is supported, shaped, and challenged by the distinctive claims to wisdom made by Christian revelation.

Within philosophy as a whole, the area of expertise shared most widely by our faculty is in the medieval period. This is not surprising given the Catholic character of UD. Along with courses focusing on such thinkers as Augustine, Anselm, Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, the department offers courses in medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy, which is indispensable to an understanding of medieval Christian thought, as well as being of significant interest in its own right.

The department's horizons extend well beyond the medieval period. It has particular strengths in ethics (including contemporary ethics), philosophy of science, early modern philosophy, German philosophy from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, postmodernism, and analytic philosophy. Because many of the challenges of the contemporary world have compelled philosophers to engage in a recovery of ancient thought, Plato and Aristotle serve as common points of reference for the entire faculty.

Philosophy at the University of Dallas as a Catholic University

The relationship between Christian revelation and the philosophical tradition has always been intimate. Since the time of the Church Fathers, the history of Catholic thought has been punctuated by periods of intense assimilation of non-Christian sources. The dialogue between "Athens and Jerusalem" has continued to the present day, as demonstrated by the emergence of movements such as Transcendental Thomism, Analytical Thomism, Christian personalism in phenomenology, or Radical Orthodoxy. While the Philosophy Department at UD is not collectively committed to any of these movements, it is deeply interested in the perennial dialogue between philosophy and the Christian faith. As part of this dialogue, it respects the independence of the philosophical quest, as well as the deeply held beliefs of all those working and studying at the University of Dallas.

Philosophy at the University of Dallas as a Part of the Institute of Philosphic Studies

Neither the quest for wisdom nor a special relation to the Christian faith is limited to the Department of Philosophy. Rather, these commitments shape all three of the PhD-granting liberal arts programs at UD: Philosophy, Literature, and Politics. These three concentrations form the Institute of Philosophic Studies (IPS). It is part of the mission of the university as a whole and the IPS in particular not only to revive the Western heritage of liberal education but also to recover the Christian intellectual tradition. To these ends, all candidates for the PhD in these three disciplines take part in a chronological series of IPS core courses over a three-year period: Vergil and Homer; Plato and Aristotle; Augustine and Aquinas; Dante and Milton; Hobbes and Rousseau; and Hegel, Nietzsche, and Dostoevsky. In addition, students are required to take a course in the Bible. During the first two years of coursework, a normal course load consists of three or four courses per semester, including the IPS core course and possibly a language course.
Philosophy: The PhD Curriculum

Leaving aside the IPS core courses, there are few required courses. For that reason, it is especially important that students select courses within Philosophy that will prepare them for their comprehensive exams, discussed below. To that end, the faculty has recently revised the curriculum, according to the following plan:

- **Proseminar.** A ten-week seminar concerning many of the professional skills required for success as graduate students and future professors and scholars. This course is now required of all PhD students.

- **5000-level courses.** 5000-level courses include a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students, including some undergraduates with majors other than philosophy. In addition, some undergraduate courses are cross-listed as graduate courses, designated by the numbers from 5301 to 5310, in which the instructor provides additional requirements for the graduate participants. Only two such courses may count toward completion of PhD requirements. There is no such limit for courses numbered 5311 and higher, which include courses such as Philosophy of Law, Philosophy of History, and Philosophy of Technology—though graduate students should remember, again, that these courses may include undergraduate non-majors.

- **Historical courses.** Courses offered at the 6000 level are historical in orientation. Those designated as “text seminars” are particularly helpful as guides to advanced study of the history of philosophy. Text seminars covering six historical periods (Antiquity, Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, the Later Middle Ages, Early Modernity, Later Modernity, and Postmodernity) are offered on a three-year cycle; each seminar covers one or more important works from the relevant period and prepares students for independent study of the period as a whole. Although the historical courses are not sufficient to prepare for the comprehensive exam, they are an especially important element in that preparation.

- **Topical courses.** Courses at the 7000 level are topically oriented. Courses addressing the central topics of contemporary philosophical inquiry—Epistemology, Ethics, Philosophical Anthropology, Philosophy of God, Metaphysics, and the Nature of Tradition—are offered on a regular basis. Other topical courses, such as Aesthetics, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Science, are offered from time to time; many of these courses are offered at other times as cross-listed undergraduate courses (see the discussion of 5000-level courses above). The 7000-level courses are also an important element in the preparation for comprehensive exams.

- **Research seminars.** These seminars are usually limited to doctoral students, and they reflect current faculty research interests. They are offered at the 8000 level. Although all graduate courses aim to prepare the student to engage in independent scholarship, these courses especially encourage writing for publication.

The Language Requirement

The language requirement is that you achieve at least reading knowledge of two languages, one modern and one ancient. The goal of the requirement is to enable the student to read philosophical texts in their original languages as well as secondary literature from outside the Anglophone world. The languages usually accepted are French or German and Latin or Greek; they should be chosen judiciously on the basis of the student's interests. Relatively rare exceptions are made by substituting a different modern or premodern language that the student needs to write the dissertation. (Imagine a student wishing to work on Kierkegaard, for example.) Students meet this requirement either by taking and passing with a B or better a 3000 or higher level course (not a special reading course) in the given language, by passing the exam for a special reading course, or, in the case of classical languages, by passing an examination drawn up in consultation between the Graduate Director and the Institute Director or Graduate Dean.

The Qualifying Examination

Although students are admitted to pursue the PhD in Philosophy, to proceed beyond the Master’s degree they need to take the qualifying examination in Philosophy after their third semester of full-time coursework. In the written portion of this exam, students are asked to explicate, interpret, and comment upon a selection from a work of philosophy, written by an author they may or may not know. In addition, they provide a brief paper written for one of their courses. Finally, a faculty committee drawn from the three concentrations examines them orally about both their written exam and their paper. This is a pass/fail exam.

The Comprehensive Examination

After the completion of coursework (and no more than one semester after completing coursework), the student must take the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examines the student over both the PhD and the IPS reading lists—though it is worth noting that there is substantial overlap between these lists. In addition, the comprehensive examination gives the student some opportunities to answer questions connected to his or her areas of specialization, including an extended essay on a text chosen by the student well in advance of the examination. The exam is divided into three four-hour parts on three separate days: the first day is the core exam, the second is the philosophy concentration, and the third is on the text selected by the student in consultation with the Graduate Director and other advisors. Like the qualifying examination, there is an oral component of the comprehensive examination in which a faculty committee drawn from the three concentrations pursues further issues addressed or not addressed in the student's written exam.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The PhD Reading List in Philosophy</th>
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<td><strong>Parmenides</strong></td>
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| **Plato** | Republic  
Apology  
Crito  
Phaedo  
Symposium  
Theaetetus |
| **Aristotle** | Categories  
Posterior Analytics 1.1–6, 18, 34–5; 21–2, 8–11, 19  
Physics I–3.3  
On the Soul  
Metaphysics I–9, 12  
Nicomachean Ethics |
| **Epictetus** | Discourses 1–2 |
| **Plotinus** | Enneads (selection by A. H. Armstrong, 1953) |
| **Augustine** | Confessions  
City of God 8 and 19 |
| **Pseudo-Dionysius** | Mystical Theology  
The Divine Names |
| **Anselm** | Monologion  
Proslogion |
| **Avicenna** | The Metaphysics of “The Healing” (trans. M. Marmura), 1.1–7; 5; 8.3–7 |
| **Averroës** | The Incoherence of the Incoherence (trans. S. Van Den Bergh), 4th, 5th, and 13th Discussions |
| **Maimonides** | Guide of the Perplexed, Introduction to First Part, 1.50–2.31, 3.8–24 |
| **Bonaventure** | The Itinerary of the Mind into God  
The Reduction of the Arts to Theology |
| **Aquinas** | Summa theologiae I.1–13, 75–89, I–II.1–5, 90–97  
De ente et essentia |
| **Duns Scotus** | Ordinatio 1, dist. 2, qu. 1; 1, dist. 3, qu. 1; 2, dist. 3, part 1, qu. 1–6 |
| **William of Ockham** | Ordinatio 1, dist. 2, qu. 4–8  
Questions on the Physics 1, qu. 132–36, and Quodlibet 1, qu. 1 |
| **Descartes** | Meditations on First Philosophy  
Discourse on Method |
| **Leibniz** | Discourse on Metaphysics  
Monadology |
| **Locke** | Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Introduction; 1.1; 2.1–13, 19–28, 31–33; 3.1–3; 4.1–4, 9–11, 18–19 |
| **Hume** | An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion |
| **Rousseau** | First Discourse: Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts |
| **Kant** | Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals  
Critique of Pure Reason |
| **Hegel** | Philosophy of Spirit (Part 3 of the Encyclopedia of Philosophic Sciences) |
| **Kierkegaard** | Fear and Trembling  
Concluding Unscientific Postscript |
| **Mill** | Utilitarianism  
On Liberty  
The Subjection of Women |
| **Nietzsche** | Genealogy of Morals  
Thus Spake Zarathustra |
| **Bergson** | An Introduction to Metaphysics |
| **Husserl** | Ideas I, section 2: “The Fundamental Phenomenological Outlook”; “Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity” (Vienna Lecture, in the appendix to Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology) |
| **Wittgenstein** | Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus  
Philosophical Investigations |
| **Heidegger** | Being and Time  
“What is Metaphysics?”  
“The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking” |
The PhD Thesis or Dissertation

The following overview is drawn from the document "After the Comprehensives," which is provided to all IPS students upon the successful completion of their comprehensive examinations:

The PhD dissertation is written under the direction of a dissertation committee and in close collaboration with the dissertation director. Toward the end of your coursework, the student should have visited with the concentration director, the dean or IPS director, and various members of the faculty with a view toward identifying a viable dissertation topic and qualified prospective director.

Remember that a dissertation is written under the direction of a faculty member. Don't think of it as a free-lance operation for which one later seeks endorsement. Practically speaking, this means the topics ought to be ones of interest to the directors and ones in which they have special competence. Therefore, in the earliest stages of considering a dissertation proposal formulate the thesis and its development in consultation with a professor you hope will be your dissertation director. This collaboration is more likely achieved if you have prepared the way in previous coursework, term papers, and serious discussion on the topic with members of the Institute faculty.

Once you have identified your dissertation director, you should consult about the other two readers, perhaps in conjunction with the dean or IPS director.

You should write your proposal under the direction of your dissertation director.

The proposal should state the thesis to be developed, outline the basic argument of the dissertation, and indicate the general direction and/or key areas of research. It should include a complete bibliography of primary source material and a substantial selection of relevant secondary references. In length, the narrative of the proposal should be no shorter than four or five (1 ½-spaced, typed) pages.

In addition, Fr. James Lehrberger has written the following brief guide to the writing of a dissertation prospectus or proposal. This advice is very thorough and serves as a standard or ideal. It is not necessary that every prospectus address all of the following points.

1. The aim (or “thesis”) of the thesis/dissertation

The principal point of the study should be clearly stated and sufficiently elaborated in such a way that the thesis statement itself, the broad outlines, major themes, and key lines of inquiry are manifest.

2. The significance of the study

Two points should be developed in this part of the prospectus: the need or importance of the proposed study, and its originality. Why is the thesis worth doing? What contribution to knowledge will this dissertation make? Again, the researcher should ask himself: What is new here—whether it is by way of the thesis itself, the evidence advanced, the line of argumentation, etc.?

3. The sources and method of inquiry

The researcher needs to be clear on the suitability of the methods he uses to the aim or end of the investigation. Different methods and varied sources or kinds of sources will be appropriate to different topics and theses. Thus genetic, analytic, comparative, phenomenological, etc. methods will be appropriate in different studies. The researcher should ask himself: in order to establish my thesis, should I explicate a single text or kind of evidence, synthesize evidence from several sources, trace a trajectory through several texts and/or authors, compare and contrast more than one text or author, analyze the argument(s) of the source(s), uncover the latent suppositions of the author(s), etc.? In sum, the researcher needs to reflect upon the way he will approach the thesis.

4. The scope and limits of the inquiry

The above listed points must be complemented by restrictions on the investigation; while the study must be thorough, it also must be focused. The researcher asks the relevant and only the relevant questions; the sources must be approached with suitable methods so that the thesis alone is developed. Concretely, which topics—however interesting and important and related to the researcher's topic—are, properly speaking, not part of the inquiry, and so are to be excluded? Why is it necessary and possible to address the theme without developing the related issues? What methodological assumptions does the researcher make which enable him to limit his treatment to the specific thesis, arguments, and evidence selected? So to speak, the researcher must ask himself what questions he will not treat because they do not belong to his inquiry no matter how closely related. (It goes without saying that such a scope and limit cannot be arbitrary; it cannot be used to evade difficulties that the thesis itself demands be faced.)
5. **The questions that will guide the thesis/dissertation’s research**

   In order to attain the end through the most appropriate means, the researcher must know the kinds of questions he has to answer and difficulties he will have to face. What questions arise from a study of the source which must be addressed in light of your topic and thesis? What questions guide your study of the source? What are the principal difficulties that seem to stand in the way of establishing your thesis? These problems must be addressed directly.

6. **The order of presentation of the thesis/dissertation**

   The structure of the thesis/dissertation should be indicated. Since the inquiry intends to argue some point, the very structure of the thesis should embody or exemplify that order. Thus each chapter should advance the argument in its own way; and each should also build upon the previous chapter and prepare the way for the following chapter. At the end of the thesis/dissertation, the chapters should constitute an articulated whole, a complete work from which nothing may be taken and nothing changed. In short, the ratio or ordering principle of the thesis/dissertation should be indicated.

7. **A bibliography of the most essential works should be appended to the prospectus.**

8. **The points noted above need not—indeed should not—be reproduced in a by-the-numbers mechanical way in the prospectus.**

   The point, rather, is that these should be included in the prospectus in some fashion, for they throw into relief the research to be undertaken.

9. **The points mentioned above should also be included in the Introduction of the thesis/dissertation.**

   At that point they should be more fully developed than in the necessarily short prospectus. Two points especially need to be developed in the thesis/dissertation proper. First, the need and importance of the study should be significantly expanded by an evaluation of the state of the question. Who has written on this topic? What does the researcher think the strengths and weaknesses of the scholarship to be? In what way does the thesis/dissertation support, contradict, supplement, etc. the existing scholarship? In short, the researcher should situate his study in the midst of the other studies on his chosen topic. Secondly, the thesis—and especially the dissertation—will wish to expand the prospectus’s treatment of source and methods by analyzing the relevant contexts for a study of the text (assuming that it is a “textual” study). What are the historical and intellectual contexts which must be understood to grasp adequately the meaning of the text? What kind of literature is it? Who is the “ideal” reader? Who is the “expected” reader? What questions, authors, and problems is the text itself addressing? In general, the researcher must ask himself, What are the historical, philosophical, theological, and literary situations out of which and into which the text addresses itself?
Preparing for Life after UD

UD’s doctoral program often attracts students whose career goal is to teach at the kind of liberal-arts college which UD itself exemplifies: student-centered, devoted to the recovery of the Western intellectual tradition (or to a curriculum of Great Books), and Christian in character. Our Ph.D. program has an excellent record of placing its graduates in precisely this type of environment. Other students, however, do envisage careers at more research-oriented types of institution. Graduates of UD’s Ph.D. program have succeeded in securing positions at larger universities as well, even though the University of Dallas clearly has a firmer reputation in the world of Christian liberal-arts colleges.

It is advisable for any student to establish a network of connections with the larger academic community—not only because this enhances one’s career opportunities, but also because philosophy is larger than the circle of faculty and students at or around UD. Such a network of professional contacts can be built in a variety of mutually reinforcing ways: by joining and being active in a professional organization, such as the American Philosophical Association or the American Catholic Philosophical Association; by attending and presenting one’s work at relevant academic conferences; and by seeking to polish one’s work until it is strong enough to be presented to the larger philosophic community through publication in journals and books. In fact, these days entry-level jobs at many colleges and universities do require a list of conference presentations and publications.

American Philosophical Association
apaweb.org

American Catholic Philosophical Association
acpaweb.org

North Texas Philosophical Association
ntpa.net

The Dallas Philosophers Forum
philosophersforum.org