

MA PHILOSOPHY Graduate Program Handbook 17-18



BROCK UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Master of Arts in Philosophy

Fields of Specialization

Contemporary Continental Philosophy

Eastern Philosophy

Comparative Philosophy

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THE MA PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

Welcome to the Master of Arts in Philosophy graduate program at Brock University. This MA is designed to provide for the development of students who have solid academic and research orientations. In order to help you better understand the program we have prepared this handbook for you to consult as you progress with your studies. The primary purpose of the handbook is to provide information concerning the steps current students must take for the successful completion of the MA program in Philosophy. It is expected that all current students and faculty in the program will keep this handbook as their major source of reference regarding the program's design and procedures. Please note that all departmental guidelines reflect the policies and procedures outlined by Brock's Faculty Handbook. In the event of any conflict between the two policies, the Faculty Handbook takes precedence. Please see: <https://brocku.ca/university-secretariat/facultyhandbook>

Our program at Brock University is unique and distinctive in Canada. It is the only graduate program to offer specializations in Contemporary Continental Philosophy, Eastern Philosophy, and Comparative Philosophy. Since its inception nearly five decades ago, the program has sought to acquaint graduate students with a global philosophical heritage drawn from both the West and the East. The natural outgrowth of this approach has been a deepening appreciation for Comparative Philosophy. Over the years, our faculty of accomplished and recognized scholars has been happy to host, teach, and guide hundreds of graduate students through our program. The diversity of interests spawned by the interaction of philosophical traditions has produced a dynamic environment that continues to attract students from all over Canada and abroad. If you have any questions about the program, please do not hesitate to contact the Graduate Program Director.

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1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The MA program focuses on two areas: recent and contemporary European and Asian thought. The program also accommodates the rise in importance of post-structuralist/postmodern continental thinkers (mainly French and German philosophers). Such inclusions indicate the type of dynamic rapport the department wishes to keep with the wider philosophical community. Consequently, the majority of courses offered in any one year will be selected from:

I. Contemporary Continental Thought and its Legacy: Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Marx, Freud, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Buber, Scheler, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer, Levinas, Foucault, Deleuze, Bataille, Kristeva, Irigaray, poststructuralism, or post-phenomenological thought.

II. Eastern Studies: Indian and Upanishadic Philosophy: texts from the six orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, especially Vedanta, Early Indian Buddhist traditions, especially Madhyamika schools; Bhakti traditions, Gandhi; Chinese Philosophy, especially Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese Buddhism.

III. Comparative Studies: Comparison of Eastern and Western traditions with respect to problems of being, knowledge, person, values, and philosophical method.

1.1 Philosophy Qualifying Program

Applicants who do not meet the Department's requirements for admission to the MA program may be considered for admission to the Philosophy Qualifying Program (PQP). Normally such applicants will have at least a minor in philosophy. A qualifying program will normally consist of 8 courses taken over two terms. The specific courses the applicant will be required to take along with other considerations (e.g., GPA) will be determined on a case by case basis and by the Graduate Program Committee. The program conditions will be noted at the time the Department recommends to the Faculty of Graduate Studies that the applicant is to be admitted to the (PQP).

Successful completion of the Philosophy Qualifying Program automatically entitles the student to proceed to enter the MA program.

1.2 The Program Committee

The Philosophy graduate Program Committee is responsible for oversight of the Philosophy MA program. These responsibilities include progress evaluations for current graduate students, revisions of this graduate program handbook and the yearly graduate calendar submission (to the Dean/Associate Dean of Humanities), curricula and course offering decisions, and approval of staffing for

supervisory and Examining Committees. Full-time faculty eligible for this committee include the Graduate Program Director, Philosophy Department Chair (*ex officio*), and any Philosophy Department faculty currently teaching Philosophy graduate courses and/or supervising graduate student Major Research Paper or Thesis projects. The number of faculty members sitting on this committee is minimally five: The committee is composed of the Graduate Program Director, the *ex officio* Philosophy Department Chair (or designate), and at least three other eligible faculty members.

The three-year directorship of the Philosophy graduate program will be decided by a vote of the Philosophy Department, and will be subject to the procedures in the current *Brock University Faculty Association Collective Agreement*.

The Graduate Program Director will hold the following responsibilities:

- (a) to ensure the orderly and efficient operation of the Philosophy graduate program;
- (b) to oversee the administration of the graduate program in consultation with the Graduate Program Committee;
- (c) to designate a deputy and advise the Dean of Graduate Studies and Department Chair accordingly in the event of an absence for a period longer than ten (10) working days;
- (d) to chair (or designate a representative to do so) Graduate Program Committee meetings, which includes circulating an agenda prior to the meetings, and arranging for minutes to be kept by one of the other committee members;
- (e) to represent the graduate program's interests within the University (such as sitting on the Graduate Council);
- (f) to recommend to the Department Chair the graduate courses to assign to full-time faculty members who are participating in the graduate program;
- (g) to convene meetings of the Program Committee at least once per term (or 3 times per year) for the purpose of reviewing (and if necessary revising) the program's policies and procedures (significant policy changes and innovations shall be made in consultation with all full-time members of the graduate program who are not on sabbatical);
- (h) to review the end of term progress of each graduate student (see section 3.2 below);
- (i) to provide the Graduate Program Director designate with information and documents necessary to prepare to assume the directorship.

2. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Students will consult with the Graduate Program Director when planning their programs of study. In order to complete the degree requirements for the Master of Arts in Philosophy, there are two paths from which to choose:

1. **The MA Thesis option**, which requires the successful completion of four half-credits in the philosophy program and a Thesis; or
2. **The Major Research Paper option**, which requires the successful completion of six half-credits as well as a Major Research Paper.

The Major Research Paper option is the default route for each graduate student. To follow the Thesis route graduate students are required to successfully defend their thesis proposal by the end of their first term of studies (see section 5.1 below). Thesis candidates are limited to a maximum of one half-credit tutorial; Major Research Paper candidates may take up to two one half-credit tutorials. The Graduate Program Director of the Department must approve the course selection for individual graduate students.

There are time limits for completing the Philosophy MA graduate degree:

1. **Full-time students:** Full-time MA candidates must complete all degree requirements within three years from the date of first registration.
2. **Part-time students:** Part-time MA students must complete all degree requirements within five years from the date of first registration.

The Philosophy MA Program is designed to be normally completed in one year (twelve months) of full-time studies. (See: https://brocku.ca/university-secretariat/facultyhandbook/section3#B_7.) Full-time students receiving financial support should not expect such assistance to extend beyond the first year.

2.1 Courses

Graduate courses are one term in duration, and normally meet three hours per week. Some courses will also be offered as a directed reading course. This means that the student and the instructor agree upon a selected topic—one not listed among the formal offerings of that year—and the student completes the assigned reading, engages in regular meetings with the directed reading supervisor, discusses the topic, and prepares suitable essay(s). Together, these activities comprise the earned grade in the directed reading course. No student is allowed more than two directed reading courses for credit.

All courses, including the directed reading tutorials, will have a syllabus. The

syllabus will indicate the grading scheme, readings and course assignments for that particular course.

Note: Not all courses are offered every semester. Students must consult with the Graduate Program Director regarding course offerings and course selection. In addition, students must have their course selections approved by the Graduate Program Director each term. Refer to the Timetable for scheduling information: <http://www.brocku.ca/registrar/guides/grad/timetable/terms.php>

Course Descriptions

Students must check to ensure that prerequisites are met. Students may be deregistered, at the request of the instructor, from any course for which prerequisites and/or restrictions have not been met.

PHIL 5F80

Major Research Paper

A research project involving the preparation of a major research paper which shall demonstrate capacity for independent work and original research and thought.

PHIL 5F90

Thesis

A research project involving the preparation and defence of a thesis which shall demonstrate capacity for independent work and original research and thought.

PHIL 5P01

Advanced Studies in Political Philosophy

A critical examination of either a particular thinker or problem in political philosophy. Political thinkers may include Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, J. S. Mill, Rawls and Nozick. Problems may include liberty and political organization, justice and equality, human nature and order, civil disobedience, participation and consent, liberalism, anarchism, socialism and conservatism.

PHIL 5P02

Sartre

A study of the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre as discussed in his literary and philosophical works.

PHIL 5P03

Merleau-Ponty

Examination of perceptual and cognitive issues in the moral, aesthetic and phenomenological philosophy of this French thinker. Critical exploration of his reception in the post-structuralist and post-analytic traditions.

PHIL 5P04

Foucault

A study of the earlier and later works of Michel Foucault. Themes discussed may include archaeology, genealogy, discipline, power, knowledge, subjectivity and sexuality.

PHIL 5P05

Nietzsche

A study of the philosophical ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche.

PHIL 5P06

Critical Theory: Frankfurt School

A consideration of Frankfurt School Critical Theory through an examination of its core thinkers, including, but not limited to: Benjamin, Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Fromm, Habermas, Honneth. Themes discussed may include: instrumental rationality, domination, Freudo-Marxism, authoritarianism, constellations, ideology, fragmentary discourse, politics and aesthetics.

Note: Completion of this course will replace previously assigned grade in PHIL 5V04.

PHIL 5P07

Husserl and Transcendental Phenomenology

Basic issues and methods of phenomenological philosophy will be studied and explored with reference to some of the major works of Husserl.

PHIL 5P08

Simone de Beauvoir

A study of the philosophical ideas of Simone de Beauvoir.

PHIL 5P09

Habermas

An examination of the philosophical ideas of Jürgen Habermas as found in Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Truth and Justification, and Post-Metaphysical Thinking.

PHIL 5P15

Heidegger

A study of Martin Heidegger's Being and Time and selected later works on themes such as fundamental ontology, analytic of Dasein, truth, language and art.

PHIL 5P16

Merleau-Ponty and Nagarjuna

Critical development of comparative philosophical analysis. Examination of issues in phenomenology, existentialism and soteriology.

PHIL 5P20

Kant and the 18th Century

Historical study of the thought of Immanuel Kant in the context of the 18th-

century enlightenment, focusing primarily on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.

PHIL 5P21

Modern Philosophical Studies: Hegel and the 19th Century

Historical study of the thought of Georg W. F. Hegel in the context of the 19th century.

PHIL 5P71

Merleau-Ponty: The Art of Perception

(also offered as HUMA 5P71 and SCLA 5P71)

Merleau-Ponty's treatments and analyses of the visual (painting and film) and literary arts, seen as products, explorations and distortions of human perception and embodied subjectivity, which shed light on our cultural and pre-cultural experiences of the world.

PHIL 5P91

Directed Reading I

Research course with directed study and regular meetings with a faculty member, covering topics not offered in a designated course.

PHIL 5P92

Directed Reading II

Research course with directed study and regular meetings with a faculty member, covering topics not offered in a designated course.

PHIL 5V00-5V09

Studies in Contemporary Philosophy

Topics may include a contemporary philosophical genre such as French Feminism or be focused more narrowly on a single contemporary philosopher, for example, Merleau-Ponty or Deleuze.

PHIL 5V20-5V29

Advanced Studies in Comparative Philosophy

Focuses primarily on the comparison of philosophical figures, concepts, and problems from both contemporary continental thought as well as eastern thought (e.g., Buddhism, Vedanta, Taoism).

PHIL 5V20

2017-2018: Nietzsche and Buddhism

Examines Nietzsche's concepts of will to power and self-overcoming in light of early (Theravada) Buddhism.

PHIL 5V30-5V45

Advanced Studies in Eastern Philosophy

Concentrated critical and interpretive study of selected texts in the areas of: Advaita Vedanta, Yoga, Madhyamika and Yogacara schools of Buddhism, or Chinese Philosophy.

PHIL 5V50-5V59

Advanced Studies in Contemporary Philosophy

Examination of current trends in philosophy and cultural issues. Topics may include 21st century aesthetics, artificial intelligence and phenomenology, or socio-environmental challenges.

The Philosophy graduate program will ensure that a graduate advisor/supervisor and supervisory committee are designated for each graduate student completing a required Major Research Paper or Thesis. The graduate supervisor in consultation with the graduate student will propose the supervisory committee composition. The committee composition must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and must be in place and operational by no later than the late fall proposal stage of the Thesis.

A Thesis supervisory committee must at minimum comprise three members, the graduate supervisor (from the Philosophy Department) and two additional faculty members. At least one of the latter two must be a full-time Brock University faculty member of the Philosophy Department's Graduate Program. A Major Research Paper supervisory committee must at minimum comprise the graduate supervisor and a second reader (usually a faculty member within the Philosophy Department).

If a student's graduate supervisor leaves Brock University during the student's program, the Graduate Program Director has the responsibility to ensure that the student can exercise one of the following options:

- i) Remain at Brock and change supervisor and perhaps Major Research Paper or Thesis topic.
- ii) Remain at Brock and complete the existing Major Research Paper or Thesis even though the appropriate expertise may not be available at Brock for supervision. In this case, the supervisory committee may seek advice from experts off campus, or may arrange for the student to continue their work off campus. It will be the responsibility of the supervisory committee (augmented, if necessary, by outside expertise), to advise the student on all matters regarding the Major Research Paper or Thesis preparation. The student is not precluded from seeking advice from the former Brock faculty member, but the former Brock faculty member has no privileged position with respect to the Major Research Paper or Thesis. The supervisory committee will take precedence in all cases.
- iii) Apply to transfer to the university to which the student's former supervisor has moved.
- iv) Any special arrangements described in ii) or iii) above must be approved by the Faculty Dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Reasons for change must be so serious that a continuation of the relationship would be next to impossible. All

requests for change must be in writing and forwarded to each party involved (supervisor and student) and also to the Graduate Program Director of the Philosophy MA program; a final decision will be rendered by the Graduate Program Director after consultation with the supervisor, student and the Dean of Graduate Studies or designate. As such, both students and faculty should be reminded that such a change, if granted, could entail an addition of considerable time for completion of the Major Research Paper or Thesis (which may require payment of one or more re-registration fees).

2.2 Student Responsibilities

All MA students are urged to read carefully the sections of the graduate calendar that explain university regulations governing MA studies at Brock University, as well as Brock University's policies on Research and Academic Misconduct. Graduate students are held to a higher standard than undergraduates in these matters. The Department of Philosophy is bound by all university-wide academic regulations adopted by the Brock University Senate. All graduate students must read these sections of the Faculty Handbook and adhere to the policies laid out in the Graduate Calendar. <https://brocku.ca/university-secretariat/facultyhandbook>

While the Department Chair and Graduate Program Director are there to assist students and answer their questions, it is the responsibility of the students, not the department, to ensure that their courses of study meet all university requirements for the degree sought. The purpose of this handbook is to clarify departmental policy regarding certain matters that fall under departmental jurisdiction and are of concern to our graduate students.

Full-time study implies that a maximum total of ten hours per week be devoted to part-time employment; this limitation is a university rule enforced by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. [Occasionally extra hours of work are permitted for students in very good academic standing. However, those seeking approval for more than ten hours per week of on-campus work must submit the appropriate form to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval: [Request for Approval of Extra On-Campus Employment Hours](#). However, the Department strongly recommends that so far as possible students should not undertake any additional part-time work over and above their standard TA duties while attempting to complete their Major Research Paper or Thesis.] Students should be aware that interference from part-time employment might occasion deficiencies with respect to the timing, volume or quality of work. It is important to make every effort to avoid such conflicts. Success depends on giving top priority to completion of the Major Research Paper or Thesis.

To increase the likelihood that students remain on schedule, students are expected to reside in St. Catharines or the immediate area throughout the writing and research process during the period from April to August inclusive. Note that permission for off-campus study for longer than four weeks in any

given term must be sought through the completion of the appropriate form: [Application for Full-Time Study Off Campus](#). Students must be geographically available and able to visit the campus regularly. Without forfeiting full-time status, a graduate student, while under supervision, may be absent from the university (e.g. visiting libraries, doing field work, attending a graduate course at another institution, etc.) provided that, if any such absence exceeds four weeks in any one term, written approval of the student's absence by the Graduate Program Director is forwarded to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies (or designate); see <https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/student-forms>.

Students will enter into regular contact with their supervisors beginning no later than the last week of April after their courses end, and from that point they are expected to follow a reasonably firm time-line for the main steps towards completion of the Major Research Paper or Thesis. Scheduling lapses will probably jeopardize the goal of finishing the writing, submission, grading and proofreading process by the end of August. Thus, the supervisor will work with the student to establish a practical time-line reflecting both the particularities of each individual student's Major Research Paper or Thesis, and the schedule of that professor's other activities (for instance, conferences, research, travel, and annual vacation). This time-line will also take into account the schedule of the proposed committee members. Additionally, for the agenda to function smoothly, students must appreciate such logistical concerns as the turn-around time required for comment and advice on the work that is submitted. Students can contribute to overall efficiency by promptly submitting whatever documentation their supervisors require for the most effective monitoring of their progress: this may entail email attachments, hard copies or disk copies of written work, hard copies of research materials, or whatever the supervisor judges to be necessary.

Students who do not complete their Major Research Paper or Thesis by the end of August may submit their work beyond that time; *however, they will be required to pay a re- registration fee for the next term*. That fee allows extension of the submission date. It is, overall, very desirable to complete the work on time. Moreover, while it is theoretically possible to use such an extension to finish a Major Research Paper or Thesis at a distance (for example, from one's home city), doing so is likely to be fraught with difficulties, and will not obviate the requirement to pay the re-registration fee.

2.3 Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors will provide students with discussion and guidance on their evolving Major Essays or Thesis, including advice on such matters as starting-points for research, narrowing of the topic, refinement of the thesis, and steps to be taken in the writing process. Supervisors and committee members will provide feedback both on the quality of their students' work and progress towards

completion. When the supervisory committee is satisfied that a Major Research Paper or Thesis is ready for second reading, he or she will arrange with the Graduate Program Director for that to take place within a reasonable time. However, supervisors will quite possibly not be able to facilitate prompt second reading of a Major Research Paper or Thesis if the final draft is submitted late.

The supervisor, in consultation with the individual student, will establish the basic schedule for work on each Major Research Paper or Thesis. After that, supervisors will rely on students to follow the agreed upon time-line (or to negotiate changes if justified, within the limits of the supervisor's ability to accommodate them), to prepare appropriately for scheduled meetings, and to request additional meetings as necessary on their own initiative. Because various commitments may take supervisors away from Brock for periods of time during the spring-summer period, they will arrange a time-line for meetings and for submission of work that takes account of such absences.

It is recognized that when faculty members agree to supervise a graduate student, they thereby assume a number of responsibilities. Major research paper and thesis Supervisors are expected to be actively engaged in scholarly activity and linked to a wider scholarly network. The student has the right to expect from the Supervisor scholarly expertise, accessibility and assistance with the design, planning and conduct of feasible research projects. The following non-exhaustive list details specific responsibilities:

1. Be reasonably accessible to the student for consultation and discussion of academic progress and research problems and give timely response to written work with constructive suggestions for improvement.
2. Offer supervision and advice appropriate to the stage of the student's work (proposal stage, research stage, analysis and writing stage, oral defense stage if necessary and if appropriate, with the publication of results).
3. Help the student establish and maintain a suitable timetable for completion of the various stages of the major research paper/thesis requirements (i.e., selection of Supervisory Committee, approval of Major Research Paper/Thesis Proposal*, preparation for defense if required, etc.).
4. Review the student's progress in preparation for the mid-December, mid-April and mid-August progress reports (form can be found in the Appendix I below).
5. Conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism in the supervisory role.
6. Make a suitable alternative arrangement for supervision when on extensive leave or absence from the university.
7. The Supervisor, as an active member of a research community within Brock University and beyond, necessarily serves as a role model for students, and

must be prepared to devote the time required to share his or her knowledge and skills with students and other colleagues. In order to ensure this, the Supervisor must undertake to be available as a resource person for students interested in his or her areas of expertise, and endeavor to attend academic and social activities organized by the program.

9. Ensure the student is aware of University and Faculty requirements and standards for the graduate program as available in this document and in the Graduate Studies Calendar. Ensure that regulations on Intellectual Property are followed before a student is permitted to begin working in any research capacity associated with the University. See web pages: <http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/forms/>, <http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/knowledge-transfer/>.

* The Supervisor should be aware that full-time students *receive a significant reduction in fees* if both the Supervisory Committee and Graduate Program Director agree that the write-up of a major research paper or thesis is at a stage that could be considered a "first draft." (See section 2.4 below)

One of the major responsibilities of a graduate student's Supervisor will be to complete the student's Progress Report. The Progress Report for a full time student is submitted to the MA Program Committee in mid-December, mid-April, and mid-August. The Progress Report is then reviewed. The progress of part-time students is reviewed annually in mid-August. Each student and Supervisor is given feedback in the form of a de-briefing by the Graduate Program Director (or the Department Chair in the case of the Graduate Director serving as a student's supervisor). *Progress deemed to be unsatisfactory may result in a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies that the student be withdrawn from the program.* If the Dean concurs, the Dean will send a notice of termination to the student.

In general, the supervisor's goal is to create a work environment in which students can function as mature, independent academic researchers and writers with access to guidance. Students can rely on their supervisors for expert advice and encouragement; supervisors, in turn, will expect their students to take responsibility for the day-to-day progress of their own work.

Supervisory Committee Members are expected to follow the *guidelines laid down for the primary Supervisor* with the exception that they do not have primary responsibility for the student (see above). It will be the responsibility of the Supervisory Committee Members to:

- i. Offer advice appropriate to the stage of the student's work.
- ii. Meet with the Supervisor and student at least once to attend a formal proposal presentation by the student and, if satisfied, to sign the Proposal Approval Form indicating that they have approved the proposal and that the student can proceed.

- iii. Committee members should use the proposal defense to suggest improvements and to record their ideas about the work before it is undertaken. The formal research is not to proceed until the Proposal Approval Form is signed.
- iv. Review the student's progress and sign the mid-December, mid-April and mid-August progress reports.
- v. Approve the final draft of the thesis and participate as a member of the Examining Committee (see below).

2.4 Final Stage Status

Students approved for Final Stage Status by their graduate program must have completed all course work, and must have a complete draft of their Major Research Paper or Thesis, that their supervisory committee agrees requires no further research or additional chapters/sections. Students approved for Final Stage Status must be able to complete their exit requirement within the subsequent term. Final Stage Status may be awarded only once and for only one term.

2.5 Graduate Research Proposals

Graduate students completing a Major Research Paper or Thesis must submit and have approved by their Supervisory Committee a proposal of research in accordance with the Philosophy graduate program's procedures (see below).

2.6 Graduate Documents: Major Research Paper and Theses

MA Thesis and Major Research Paper documents must adhere to the minimum format requirements outlined on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website. Specific regulations regarding Thesis format standards for the Philosophy graduate program are outlined in this program's procedures (see below). All thesis documents must be submitted and deposited according to the regulations specified in FHB III. B. 9.5 All Major Research Paper documents must be preserved and deposited for public display in the Philosophy graduate program's office.

3. MA MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

The Major Research Paper is a substantial scholarly project with a clear thesis which demonstrates the extent of the student's research, understanding, and thinking about a topic of interest within the discipline of Philosophy, and which requires a significant investment of time and effort for the research, note-

taking, drafting, discussion, reflection and revision which are necessary for a good-quality essay. The Major Research Paper is to be written by the student himself/herself and supported by critical commentary that addresses both primary source materials and major themes in the scholarly literature.

It should be clear that given the full-time regime of normal participation in the Philosophy graduate program, students are advised that timely completion of the Major Research Paper will only be possible on the basis of a very serious commitment to this task over the spring and summer months immediately following the end of course-work of the regular academic year.

3.1 Content

The essay should convince the supervisor committee that the student has read adequately on a topic in the student's chosen area, has understood and deliberated on the relevant theories and the major concepts and issues, and has developed a sense of the history of present issues or debates in the chosen area. The student is therefore *expected to do more than give an accurate recount of everything that has been read*. The student's selection of source material, emphasis, and comments should show an in-depth critique of relevant literature and that *the work will be positioned within the academic conversation relating to the salient issues/debates in the literature* of the chosen topic.

The essay should have a focus tying together the student's rendering of research, theory, and conclusions from different sources and your own reflections. The focus may be a personal position on the issue(s) or some point of enquiry worthy of exploration. This focus should govern aspects of the student's chosen reading and experience to include in the essay.

3.2 References

Advisedly, the student must show that he or she has read and reflected on a minimum of 15 to 20 sources depending on the topic and in consultation with the supervisory committee. All scholars and/or studies cited in the essay must appear in the bibliography at the end of the essay. Acknowledgement of cited sources and the list of references should conform to one standard set of conventions; e.g., APA (American Psychological Association, 5th edition) or Chicago Manual of Style, etc.

3.3 Length and formatting

The Major Research Paper should be approximately 40-50 pages; printed on letter-size paper; double-spaced for the body and triple spaced for headings/subheadings; Times New Roman font size 12; left margin 1.5 inches, all other margins 1 inch. Students may use the services of a professional proofreader for their completed Major Essay. If a professional proofreader is used, the final

submission of the Major Research Paper must include a statement by the proofreader regarding the extent of the corrections and comments provided to the author. A title page is required for your Major Research Paper. A sample may be found at: https://brocku.ca/webfm_send/1476.

3.4 Submission date

The final completion date of the Major Research Paper is in August as specified by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (this includes second reader's decision/comments, revisions and proof of proofreading). For specific dates of the various drafts, consult your individual supervisor.

3.5 Evaluation Procedures for Major Essays

A. Overall Assessment Procedure

The Major Research Paper will be read by the student's supervisor and, at least, one other faculty member (second reader). Each will assess the Major Research Paper independently. The second Reader's responsibility is to read the penultimate draft and to provide a brief (up to 1 page) evaluation of the Major Essay. Copies of this report on the Major Research Paper will be given to the student and the supervisor, and a third copy will be placed in the student's graduate file. The supervisor will provide formative feedback throughout the supervisory process and will make an assessment after the student has taken action on any advice from the second reader, indicating any additional minor amendments that are required; one copy of this report on the Major Research Paper will be provided to the student and a second will be placed in the student's graduate file. The student will consult with his or her supervisor as to how to incorporate any advice from the second reader on how to improve the Major Essay.

Following the assessments by both the second reader and the supervisor, and once the supervisor is satisfied that the student has executed all necessary revisions; the supervisor and second reader will assign a passing or failing grade. All such changes must be carried out before the final copies of the Major Research Paper are submitted to the department. The supervisor will then complete a Grade Report Form that will be submitted to the Graduate Program Director who will then sign and submit the form to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

B. Grading Foci

The following three areas will be considered in assessing the Major Essay; all three foci below are important and a Major Research Paper seriously deficient in any one of them will *not receive a passing grade*:

1) Global organization and originality of the Major Essay

Strength and clarity of the thesis of the Major Research Paper as a whole; effectiveness in demonstrating the relevance of all sections of the Major Research Paper to the guiding thesis, including precision in formulating critical questions to drive the thesis forward; evidence of relevant reading; creativity in terms of the treatment of the topic and/or of the argumentative point of view.

2) Effectiveness of step-by-step argumentation

Logic and explicitness in linking scholarly evidence (quotations or paraphrases) to the details of the ongoing argument; richness of paragraph development; logic and explicitness in developing conclusions from evidence; care in anticipating objections and in considering alternative evidence and/or conclusions.

3) Mechanics of academic style

Observation of the usual linguistic norms of academic style (appropriate vocabulary choice; effective use of complex grammatical structures; maintenance of a consistent style and tone); linguistic correctness; readability; proper adherence to referencing conventions.

C. Holistic Grading Criteria

All three foci above are important and a Major Research Paper seriously deficient in any one of them will *not receive a passing grade*. Nevertheless, in assessing the mark for a Major Essay, foci 1 and 2 will carry more weight than focus 3.

Essays assigned A-level marks (80% or above) will (1) demonstrate a clearly defined and thoroughly argued overall thesis, discussed in a way that reflects not only a precise synthesis of ambitious scholarly reading but also a creatively critical viewpoint that clearly goes beyond well-organized summary towards innovative new insights or problem-solving. More locally, they will (2) present scholarly information with excellent attention to the need for detailed explanation, sensitivity to the subtleties of the subject matter, and explicit expression of logical connections. And in terms of mechanics (3) they will be written in linguistically accurate and stylistically appropriate prose that elegantly promotes the concerns addressed by foci 1 and 2, with very precise conformity to citation conventions.

Essays assigned B-level marks (70-78%) will fall short of the above in one or both of the following ways: (1) although well-organized around a clear and reasonably effective thesis, they may offer a valid and well-supported synthesis that nonetheless falls short in terms of innovativeness; (2) although argued in a basically logical and explanatory manner, they may demonstrate limited

awareness of potential counter-arguments, alternate perspectives, or other nuances of the subject matter. On the level of academic style (3), however, although not necessarily as elegant as the above, their language will definitely remain accurate and on the whole stylistically appropriate, and their references consistent with the chosen reference methodology.

4. MA THESIS GUIDELINES

The MA Thesis is an original research document that should result in a contribution to the field. It demonstrates the ability to conceive and develop a research problem; to express it theoretically; to develop alternative methods for testing logically generated hypotheses; to gather, compile and analyze data; to make rational decisions regarding the resolution of the research problem; and to make recommendations for future research. The Thesis should be an *original* study, and not just a summary of existing research; however, it can also consist of a meta-analysis of scholarship.

4.1 Thesis Entry Route

General qualifications for writing a Thesis are the following: proven ability—through coursework and other academic achievement—to undertake a major research project; and sufficient time to complete a Thesis (which can only be determined in conjunction with the student's Thesis Supervisor). A student who applies for the Thesis route must, on application, present a *statement of research interests* as part of the admission documents that will be reviewed by the proposed supervisor and Graduate Program Director. If the research statement is acceptable (please note: Thesis-route admission will be immediately denied if no Thesis Supervisor is available or willing), the student may register for two or more courses in his/her first term of study, but is not allowed to register formally for the thesis guidance course (PHIL 5F90) until the student's *Thesis Supervisory Committee* gives permission (see below). The permission to register for PHIL 5F90 can only be given after the completion of the student's first term (D2) of enrolment, and the preparation of an acceptable *Thesis proposal*. The student will then complete his/her course work in the second term (D3) while beginning to lay further foundations for the Thesis. However, if the results of the Thesis proposal defense (by December in term D2 of the first year of study) indicate that the student is unlikely to be successful, he or she will be re-assigned to the Major Research Paper route, which is an equally rigorous program of study (see above). In addition, if a student at any point along the Thesis route encounters insurmountable difficulties, he/she can opt to change to the Major Research Paper route, with the attendant extra costs and time and the realization that he/she has entered into this change of his/her own accord.

4.2 Steps for Successful Completion of the Thesis

The process of writing a Thesis involves the undertaking of the following steps:

A. *Thesis Proposal*: A Thesis proposal must be approved by the end of the first term (D2) of course work (December). Students, with the advice and direction of their supervisor and Thesis committee, will need to write a Thesis proposal that meets academic standards within the discipline of Philosophy. The Thesis proposal must include the following:

- (a) rationale for the proposed research;
- (b) initial research questions and/or hypothesis;
- (c) a preliminary review of related research;
- (d) a description of the research methodology
- (e) a bibliography of research consulted to this point;
- (f) a time line indicating steps toward completion of the project

B. *Approval of Thesis Proposal*: The Thesis supervisor and the student will establish a Supervisory Committee: this committee is composed of the supervisor (a faculty member from within the Philosophy Department) and two other faculty members who shall serve as readers for the thesis. The second reader must be from the Philosophy department. The Thesis supervisor will provide the student with discussion and guidance throughout the Thesis process, and will have the same responsibilities as outlined for the Major Research Paper (see above). The Supervisory Committee will meet with the student and discuss the Thesis proposal, and if all agree, sign the Proposal Approval Form that will be forwarded to the Graduate Program Director. In the event that the majority of the committee is not in agreement that the Thesis proposal is adequate, the supervisor may request additional meetings until the proposal has been approved or may request to have the student re-assigned to the Major Research Paper route.

C. *Thesis Evaluation*: All members of the Supervisory Committee must agree that the Thesis is (at least minimally) acceptable before an External Examiner can be approached. The Thesis will then be assessed by an Examining Committee which will consist of at least the Graduate Program Director or his/her designate, the Dean of Humanities or his/her designate (who will also chair the committee), the External Examiner, and the members of the Supervisory Committee, including the Thesis Supervisor. All members of the examining committee should be given copies of the thesis prior to the oral examination so that they have sufficient time (three weeks prior) to be able to review the work. The External Examiner must be someone who is sufficiently knowledgeable of the field and the methodology to be able to adequately assess the work. The approval of the external examiner is the responsibility of the Dean of Humanities. (With the special approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies and the academic Dean of Humanities, the external examiner may be external to the candidate's graduate program but internal to Brock University.) The External Examiner will be appointed by the Dean of Humanities, or his/her designate,

from the list forwarded by the Graduate Program Director.

The External Examiner will write a report (typically 2 pages), in which he/she makes clear whether or not the thesis can go to oral defense. A decision by the External Examiner that the Thesis is not ready for defense is binding. There are formal means to redress this judgment if the student believes that he or she has been unfairly assessed by the External Examiner. A change of External Examiner for a Thesis, in exceptional circumstances, must be justified in writing to the Faculty Dean or designate. If the External Examiner indicates that the thesis is not ready for defense, the student must revise the thesis in response to the External Examiner's comments. The thesis will then be resubmitted to the External Examiner.

The External Examiner's report will be shared with the Examining Committee *and* the graduate student *at least a week* prior to the defense. The External Examiner's report should also indicate the examiner's option as to whether the thesis should be submitted for internal or external thesis competitions. *External Examiners must be informed of this policy with receipt of the thesis document.*

D. *Thesis Defense*: Typically, a Thesis defense will occur four to six weeks after the External Examiner's receipt of the Thesis document. External Examiners shall submit their written report no later than one week prior to the defense.

Graduate thesis defenses will normally be open defenses. A request for a closed defense must be approved by the Faculty Dean and Dean of Graduate Studies and will be based on certified medical or compassionate grounds. The arrangements for a thesis defense will commence once all members of the Supervisory Committee have indicated in writing their approval that the Thesis is ready for defense. The Examining Committee of a Thesis defense will normally comprise the Supervisory Committee and an External Examiner.

The recommended format and procedures for a Thesis defense are outlined in the Faculty Handbook: <https://brocku.ca/university-secretariat/facultyhandbook>. The Philosophy graduate program's Thesis defense procedures have been approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Faculty Dean or designate will chair Theses defenses.

Approvals for extraordinary exceptions to these Thesis defense procedures must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

E. *Thesis Defense Procedures*: the Chair of the Examining Committee directs the proceedings of the Thesis defense. Normally the Chair is the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Humanities.

1. The Chair of the Examining Committee confirms there is a quorum. The quorum for an Examination consists of a minimum of two Supervisory Committee Members plus the External Examiner and the Chair of the Examining Committee. The oral defense will remain open until the point of deliberation by the

Examining Committee.

2. The Chair introduces himself/herself, the Candidate, the External Examiner, the Supervisory Committee and the Supervisor.

3. The Candidate will present an outline of his/her thesis (preferably limited to 20 minutes, but not to exceed 30 minutes).

4. The Examining Committee's examination will follow a standard sequence of questioning: External Examiner, Supervisory Committee Members, and then Thesis Supervisor. (The Thesis Supervisor can waive the right to ask questions.) This sequence may involve two or three rounds of questions.

5. The Chair of the Examining Committee will then open up the oral examination for questions from the audience (time permitting).

6. The Candidate and attendees of the open exam will then be asked to leave the room and the Examining Committee will discuss and decide on the acceptability of the Thesis and the defense. In addition to voting on the outcome, the committee must discuss any required revisions to the thesis itself.

7. The candidate will be recalled and informed of the result.

F. *Decisions open to the Examining Committee.* Theses will be graded on a pass-fail system. Theses grades for all MA programs are reported to the Faculty of Graduate Studies as either a Pass or Fail grade. All aspects of the *written work* as well as the *student's performance* during the defense must be taken into consideration when determining the grade. Normally, if all but one member of the committee agrees on a decision, the decision shall be that of the majority, *except* when the single dissenting vote is that of the External Examiner. If this happens, it must be reported to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who, in consultation with the Faculty Dean, will determine an appropriate course of action.

The Examining Committee will have the following options open to them:

1. ***Accepted:*** Thesis and Defense Satisfactory

2. ***Accepted with Modifications:*** Defense Satisfactory. Thesis Requires Minor Modifications (in which case the Thesis Supervisor single-handedly usually approves these minor revisions).

3. ***Accepted Conditionally:*** Defense Satisfactory, but Thesis Requires Major Modifications.

4. ***Decision Deferred:*** Defense Not Acceptable. Thesis Requires Major Changes.

5. *Failed*: Defense and Thesis Unacceptable

If major revisions are necessary (option 3), the Examining Committee will specify the areas for revision and the date by which the revised, typed Thesis is to be completed. This date will normally be within three months of the examination or within six months if additional research is required. The Examining Committee may also determine whether the revisions require acceptance by the supervisor or by both the supervisor and the External Examiner. Students should typically be given two to four weeks to complete minor revisions which are to be approved by the student's supervisor, and four to twelve weeks to complete major revisions which are to be approved by the supervisor (and any of the other members of the Examining Committee as is deemed necessary).

In the instance of a failed defense (see above F.4-5), the student may, at the discretion of the Examining Committee, be permitted a second and final Thesis submission and defense. This will be scheduled for no later than one calendar year after the original presentation and defense. In the preparation of the Thesis for re-submission, the student will be guided by the written criticisms of members of the Examining Committee. Under normal circumstances the composition of the Examining Committee of the second thesis defense will be identical to that of the original Examining Committee. A fee may be charged for re-examination. If a failing grade is again awarded for a Thesis after re-examination, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

G. *Grading System*. Neither the defense nor the Thesis receives a numerical grade. The Thesis defense is either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The options open to the Committee for grading the Thesis are Pass or Fail. The criteria for these grades are also specified in the *Faculty Handbook*:

i) *Pass* grade will be awarded in all circumstances (see above F.1-3), except those described below in ii).

ii) *Fail* grade will be awarded if more than one-third of the Committee finds the Thesis unacceptable or if the External Examiner does not approve the Thesis (see above F.4-5). If the re-examination of the Thesis ends with the same evaluation, the graduate student will be withdrawn from the program.

Appeals relating to the procedures followed in a Thesis Examination, or to the grade assigned, shall be considered by the Senate Committee on Graduate Studies.

H. *Thesis Submission*: A candidate submitting a Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements governing the award of advanced degrees must deposit the required number of copies of the approved thesis with the University Library before the degree will be conferred. In depositing the thesis, the following regulations apply:

i) *Submission of Thesis*: When the thesis is in its final form after the oral

examination, the graduate program will submit, in unbound form, *four copies* of the thesis, to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The thesis must be free from typographical and other errors: all copies must be identical in content, each containing all illustrations, charts, maps, figures, tables and appendices as approved by the Examining Committee. Each copy of the thesis must contain a copy of the Certificate of Approval signed by each member of the Examining Committee. The thesis must be accompanied by the candidate's Graduate Record Form and a copy of the National Library of Canada (NLC) Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Theses.

ii) *Submission and Binding*: The University Library will arrange for the submission of the thesis to the Theses Canada Program and for the binding of the thesis. A *fee is levied* at registration to cover the cost of the submission to the Theses Canada Program and binding. The Library can arrange binding of additional copies of a thesis at the candidate's expense.

iii) *Disposition of Copies*: After binding, the copies will be dispersed as follows:

- a) Original Copy: will be catalogued and placed in the University Library for consultation;
- b) Copy 2: will be bound and returned to the graduate program for its files;
- c) Copy 3: will be bound and returned to the candidate; and
- d) Copy 4: will be forwarded to ProQuest/UMI to be reproduced on microfiche and digitized in PDF format on behalf of the Theses Canada Program.

iv) *Circulation and Copying*: In normal circumstances, as a condition of engaging in graduate study in the University, the author of a thesis grants certain licenses and waivers in respect of the circulation and copying of the thesis;

- a) to the University Library - permitting the consultation of the thesis as part of the library collection and the making of single copies for another library or similar institution or for an individual for private study and research;
- b) to the Theses Canada Program - permitting the reproduction, loan and distribution and sale of the thesis. To this end, National Library of Canada (NLC) Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Theses must be completed and submitted with the thesis. Theses are reproduced on microfiche and digitized in PDF format by ProQuest/UMI on behalf of Theses Canada. An ISBN is assigned to each thesis using the NLC's prefix. Two copies of the theses on microfiche are sent to the NLC and one copy to the submitting university. Under certain circumstances, (e.g., to protect confidential commercial information, patentable material, pending application, or where immediate commercial publication is anticipated), the Dean of Graduate Studies may delay the circulation and copying of a thesis for a period of up to twelve months from the date of successful defense.

v) *Copyright*: In order to claim copyright, the author of the thesis must ensure that all copies of the thesis bear the International Copyright Notice at the bottom of the thesis title page. The Notice consists of three elements printed on one line:

- a) the letter "C" enclosed in a circle, thus ©;
- b) the name of the copyright owner, the author; and c) the year of completion.

Thus in accord with the above, the submitted Thesis must be accompanied by a "Thesis Approval Form" (obtained from the Administrative Assistant) and signed by the thesis supervisor and each member of the Supervisory Committee. Please see the Graduate Studies web page for further details regarding the submission documents.

6. EXTENSION OF TIMES TO COMPLETION

This policy applies to both Major Research Papers and Theses. The Philosophy graduate program is designed as a three-term (12 months) degree. Students can continue to work beyond the three terms without seeking an extension from the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This decision is made by the MA Philosophy Program Committee as to whether or not to allow the continued course enrollments and supervision for another term or two of a student who is not yet finished. However this is subject to the University's regulations for time to completion (see above section 2).

In exceptional circumstances, an extension of time permitting further registration may be granted. The Faculty of Graduate Studies must receive extension requests, detailing the exceptional circumstances, within the first month of the term in which the completion date expires, only then can they be considered for approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies. An extension will only be considered for approval after completing the following procedure:

- 1) The student (i) fills in a [Request for Extension of Degree Time Limits Form](#), and submits it to his/her supervisor (or the Graduate Program Director if s/he does not have a supervisor) at least one month prior to the expiry of the degree time limit, outlining (ii) the reason(s) for the delay in completing the degree requirements; (iii) the current status of his/her program; (iv) what remains to be completed; and (v) how much additional time s/he requires to complete the program.

The extension depends on individual circumstances and is typically limited to one additional term. The student will outline planned progress giving specific dates of expected completion, and ensure his/her availability to work full time throughout the requested extension period.

- 2) The supervisor (or Graduate Program Director) will complete the designated section of the above-mentioned form, specifying (i) the present state of the student's work and what remains to be done; (ii) the amount of additional time required for the student to complete; (iii) what extra monitoring of progress will be implemented; and (iv) whether approval of the student's request is recommended, and if yes, for how many terms, but if not, why not.

3) The Graduate Program Director will review the request for extension, make a recommendation whether to approve the request, and submit the case to the Faculty of Graduate Studies; the Dean of Graduate Studies will decide whether to approve the request for extension.

4) The Faculty of Graduate Studies will inform the student of the Dean's decision.

5) Upon notification of approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies, students will pay the re-registration fee to maintain active student status.

If by the end of the extension period the student still cannot complete the MA Program's exit requirements, s/he will be either withdrawn from the program or not allowed to register in further courses.

6.1. Reinstatement of Students who Voluntarily Withdrew or were Required to Withdraw

A. Students who were previously accepted to, and registered in, a graduate program at Brock University, but voluntarily withdrew or were required to withdraw, may apply for reinstatement to their graduate program by completing the Request for Reinstatement Form. The graduate program and the Faculty of Graduate Studies will consider the request for reinstatement and determine if the student is eligible for reinstatement and outline the degree requirements that must be met following reinstatement.

B. No graduate courses ten or more years old may count toward degree requirements. Graduate programs will determine if courses taken within the ten-year period are eligible to count toward degree requirements.

C. Graduate programs and/or the Faculty of Graduate Studies are under no obligation to re-instate students who voluntarily withdrew or were required to withdraw.

Appendix I. STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT FORM

The Faculty of Graduate Studies recommends that all graduate programs collect student progress reports. These reports assist the Philosophy MA Program in keeping track of student progress. Students must: complete this form three times per year; have their supervisor sign the form once they have completed sections 1-5; return the completed form to the Graduate Program Director.

Portion Completed By Student

Student Name: _____

Mid-December - Mid-April - Mid-August (please circle) Year: 20_____

1. General Information

a. Year of fall entry into the program: _____

b. Full-time

Part-time

c. Major Research Paper / Thesis / Not Yet Determined (please circle)

d. Expected program completion date: _____

2. Courses Taken

Course #	Name	Term	Grade (indicate if incomplete)

3. Major Research Paper/Thesis

a. Supervisor Name: _____

b. Supervisory Committee Member Names:

c. Working Title:

d. Describe progress on major research paper/thesis by indicating actual or projected dates for various components:

Component	Date
Supervisor Selected	
Supervisory Committee Established	
Proposal Approved	
First Draft of MRP/Thesis Completed	
Final MRP/Thesis Submitted	

4. Related Activities: Scholarly and/or Community

While we only assess academic progress, we are interested in learning about any related activities you may be involved in and therefore encourage you to share this information if you wish. Activities could include (but are not limited to) publications, attendance at HRI sponsored or co-sponsored colloquia, other events at Brock University, awards and/or scholarships (applied for and/or received), conference presentations/attendance, teaching assistantships and/or research assistantships, and any other activities advocacy/activist/service activities) since your last Progress Report:

5. Other Relevant Information (e. g. future goals for education and/or career)

Portion to be completed by Supervisor and Supervisory Committee Members

I have discussed the contents of this progress report and articulated any concerns to the Student.

Supervisor's Signature and Date_____

I have reviewed this progress report and communicated any concerns to the student. Supervisory Committee Member Signatures and Dates

When the Supervisor, Supervisory Committee Members and Student have reviewed and signed this progress report, the Supervisor and student should retain a copy and one copy should be forwarded to the Graduate Program Director who will forward the copy on to the MA Program Committee.

Appendix II. THESIS PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM

Thesis Proposal Approval Form MA in Philosophy

In accordance with the MA Philosophy Program Handbook (4.2.a), a thesis proposal must be approved by the end of the first term (D2) of coursework (December). The thesis proposal must include:

- a. rationale for the proposed research;
- b. initial research questions and/or hypothesis;
- c. a preliminary review of related research;
- d. a description of the research methodology;
- e. a bibliography of research consulted to this point;
- f. a time line indicating steps toward completion of the project.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Thesis Proposal Title: _____

The following points have been communicated to the student for the development of the thesis:

(Comments to student continued...)

Supervisor (please print)

Signature

Second Reader (please print)

Signature

Third Reader (please print)

Signature

Student (please print)

Signature

Graduate Program Director

Signature Date

A copy of the approved thesis proposal must be submitted to the GPD with the Thesis Proposal Approval Form.