

Philosophy 4+1 Master's Degree

The Vanderbilt Philosophy Department offers to qualified Vanderbilt undergraduates the opportunity to earn a Master's degree (MA) in Philosophy with just one year of study beyond the four years of undergraduate work.

The 4+1 Master's Program is designed to provide students with broad training in philosophy at the graduate level. The central objective is to help students develop competencies in (i) the central figures and texts in the history of philosophy; (ii) the main fields and debates in contemporary philosophy; and (iii) the fundamental research, writing, and argumentative skills employed in philosophy. Competence developed in these areas can serve as an academic basis for further work in philosophy, political science, economics, law, business, and medicine.

Work towards the 4+1 MA must begin in the student's senior year of undergraduate study. Applicants are expected to be on track for completing the Philosophy undergraduate major by the close of the senior undergraduate year; however, applications from students completing minors in Philosophy (and majors in other disciplines) will also be considered. A cumulative GPA of at least 3.3 is required for admission to the Program. Applicants need not submit GRE scores.

Application deadline for the Program is January 15th the junior year. Application must be made directly to the Program's Faculty Coordinator. An application consists of the following:

1. A statement of purpose of no more than 800 words describing the applicant's philosophical interests and reason for pursuing a 4+1 MA in Philosophy.
2. Two confidential evaluation letters written by Vanderbilt Philosophy faculty.
3. An academic transcript.

Admissions decisions will be made by January 30th. Those admitted into the 4+1 MA Program will meet individually with the Faculty Coordinator by February 15th following acceptance into the Program to devise a plan for completing the 4+1 MA.

The 4+1 MA requires 30 hours of graduate-level coursework in Philosophy, taught by regular (tenured or tenure-track) Philosophy faculty. No undergraduate courses and no courses outside of the Philosophy department count towards the MA. Normally, no more than 6 hours may be taken as PHIL 8050 (Independent Readings); an additional 3 hours of PHIL 8050 may be taken with permission from the Program Coordinator. Students in the Program are encouraged to take at least 3 graduate hours in Philosophy in the fall of their senior year, and 6 graduate hours in Philosophy in the spring of their senior year. In consultation with the Faculty Coordinator and a regular Philosophy faculty member, students may take a summer Independent Readings course in the summer in between their senior year and their "plus one" year. In the "plus one" year, students will take at least 9 hours of Philosophy graduate credits in each semester, as required to reach the total 30 credits required by the close of the "plus one" academic year. In order to retain good standing in the Program, students must earn a grade of at least B+ in each of their graduate courses and must stay on track for completing the MA by the close of the "plus one" academic year. Students who do not retain good standing will be removed from the Program.