Handbook
MA, Ethics and Applied Philosophy;
Graduate Certificate in Applied Ethics

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I.   Introduction and General Information

Welcome to the graduate program in philosophy at UNC Charlotte! We offer an MA degree in Ethics and Applied Philosophy and a Certificate in Applied Ethics. For those unfamiliar with our campus, here is a map to help you find your way: https://maps.charlotte.edu. The Philosophy Department is located in the Winningham building, Room 103.

This Handbook is designed to highlight essential information you'll need to succeed in the program. Additional details can be found on our graduate program page, https://philosophy.charlotte.edu/graduate. If you need background information about the program, please visit our "graduate program information" page on that site.

Our program is also governed by the University's rules and requirements, which are available at https://catalog.charlotte.edu/index.php. Please pay particular attention to the following sections: "University Regulations of Student Conduct"; "Financial Information" (which includes information on financial aid, parking, and residency); and "Student Resources and Services" (which includes information about the health center and student activities). If you have any questions, please contact the Graduate Program Director, Dr. Lisa Rasmussen, at lrasmuss@charlotte.edu.

A.   Communication

We communicate primarily via our graduate student philosophy listserv, our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/UNCCPhilosophy), and our homepage (https://philosophy.charlotte.edu/). Please like, follow, and visit us to stay informed. Additionally, we encourage you to engage with faculty and spend time in the department to converse with fellow graduate students.

Graduate student offices are available in the department, allowing you to hold office hours as a TA and use the space for study. You will also have a mailbox in the department's mailroom for paper communication, so please check your box regularly. Access to the department's copy machine for making copies is also available. The departmental administrative assistant will assist you in gaining access.

B.   Involvement

Learning philosophy, and doing philosophy well, requires interaction with others. Therefore, you should plan to participate actively and constructively in your classes. Some faculty may incorporate class participation

into your course grade. Active involvement will enhance your learning experience and benefit your classmates as well.

We strongly encourage you to attend events sponsored by the department and the Center for Professional and Applied Ethics as often as possible. These events offer insight into the diverse ways philosophy is practiced professionally. While we understand that students have other commitments, attending these functions is a valuable part of your education as well as building community. Visit the Center's webpage (https://ethics.charlotte.edu), and email ethicscenter@charlotte.edu to join the event email list and attend some events!

We also have a graduate student philosophy club, the Philosophical Union. This club elects officers each year, organizes social events, and has historically arranged an annual Ethics and Applied Philosophy Graduate Conference in the spring. Having an active graduate student group is essential for eligibility for university funding for conference travel.

C. Self-Direction

A key difference between undergraduate and graduate study is the level of self-direction expected. As a graduate student, you are in charge of your own education. While faculty are experts in their fields, they cannot determine your interests or compel you to learn course material. Think of yourself as the director of your education: read independently, develop your ideas, challenge yourself, and establish one or more areas of specialization. This will enable you to contribute to the education of your fellow students and faculty in your areas of expertise.

This self-direction also affects how you engage in graduate seminars. Completing readings and assignments is essential, but active participation in discussions, and occasionally leading them, is equally important. Simply attending classes without engaging will not lead to success in graduate school.

For additional guidance, read "Welcome to Graduate School" by David Shorter in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, https://www.chronicle.com/article/welcome-to-graduate-school/. It offers valuable recommendations for succeeding in graduate school and can be accessed for free.

II.   Program Requirements

Our program values fundamental knowledge gained through required courses while also offering a wide range of electives to satisfy diverse interests. You are expected to engage actively in both core and elective coursework, participate in departmental events, and pursue independent research. This approach ensures that you are well-prepared and supported throughout your studies.

A. Course Requirements

The MA requires 30 credit hours (10 courses; 3 required and 7 electives):

MA required courses:
>Philosophical Methods (Fall of first semester)
>Ethical Theory (Spring of second semester)
>MA Research Paper Seminar (Fall of third semester)

The electives may include a maximum of two courses from the following categories: courses transferred from another graduate program; courses not cross-listed in Philosophy offered by other departments; and Independent Study courses. Students must request credit for these from the Graduate Program in writing, such as through a brief email explaining the request and its justification.

The Certificate program requires one course (Ethical Theory; usually offered in the Spring); the remaining 4 courses are electives.

B. Grading, Assessment, and Advising

UNC Charlotte graduate grades are assigned as follows:

A	Commendable	IP	In Progress
B	Satisfactory	W	Withdrawal
C	Marginal	P	Pass
U	Unsatisfactory	N	No Credit
I	Incomplete	AU	Audit

Your expectation should be that your coursework consistently earns "A" grades. This is particularly important if you hope to attend a PhD program after finishing the MA. While we understand that various factors can affect performance in individual courses and an occasional "B" is not necessarily alarming, repeated "B" grades indicates that you are not meeting the expected graduate program standards.

Per university policies, receiving a "U" in a course or a third "C" during your graduate studies will result in automatic suspension from the program.

Graduate Student Progress Letters:
At the end of each semester, the department's graduate faculty members will meet to discuss the progress of each student. A few weeks after the semester ends, you will receive a letter summarizing the faculty's collective assessment of your work thus far. This letter is informal and does not become part of your official record. Its purpose is to provide you with candid feedback on your strengths and areas needing improvement. This feedback aims to help you develop your skills and abilities, guide faculty in supporting your future progress, and inform you where to focus your efforts in the program.

TA Evaluations:
Teaching Assistants will also be evaluated by the students of the course in which they serve as TA. Please see Appendix 1 for the evaluation rubric.

Advising:
The Graduate Program Director serves as your primary advisor and can assist you with the program, curriculum, paperwork, and other related matters. However, you should also feel free to seek help or advice from any other faculty members.

If you plan to pursue a PhD program, it is crucial to seek guidance on how to best position yourself for the application process. Building relationships with one or two faculty members whose work aligns with your interests will be beneficial. These faculty members can provide specific guidance and be well-positioned to write strong letters of recommendation when the time comes.

III.   Student Resources

A.   Funding

Stipends:

We are pleased to be able to offer many students the opportunity to become teaching assistants. Those chosen for this role will receive a stipend along with full coverage of their tuition costs. The stipend is a fixed amount per semester, disbursed bimonthly by the university, and requires approximately 20 hours of work per week.

According to university policy, in order to be eligible to receive and retain graduate assistant (GA) funding, students must:

a) be enrolled in at least nine credit hours (three courses) for the semester in which they receive funding (with the exception of the final semester before graduation);
b) complete INS paperwork required for employment on campus;
c) have a 3.0 GPA or better in any completed graduate coursework;
d) participate in any required orientation program; and
e) have completed their previous semester's assigned work satisfactorily, according to the supervising faculty member and/or the Graduate Program Director.

Additional Scholarships:
The Graduate School keeps an updated list of financial opportunities at:
https://graduateschool.charlotte.edu/funding/funding-graduate-education.

Graduate Student Travel Support:
We want to help as much as we can with supporting graduate student travel to present work at conferences or, in rare cases, other forms of travel that contribute directly to a student's area of research. Listed below ((A) through (C)) are the sources of travel support available to graduate students in our department; they should be utilized *in the order in which they appear*.

Please note that the University requires that travelers complete a Travel Authorization Form at least two weeks prior to travel (this should be turned in to the Philosophy Administrative Assistant along with any supporting documents). After you return, you will need to fill out, within 30 days, a Travel Reimbursement Form with actual expenses and supporting documents for everything except "per diem" meal costs. Please see https://legal.charlotte.edu/policies/up-602.7 for complete details regarding the University's travel policies.

In many cases, the Department or Center (whichever is providing funds) may be able to purchase tickets or hotel stays with a purchase card ("P-card") so that you will not have to pay up front and await reimbursement. Please see the Center or Department Administrative Assistant for further information, or for help if you have questions

1. Graduate and Professional Student Government https://gpsg.charlotte.edu/funding/travel-funding. This organization has some funds available to help graduate students attend conferences. There are restrictions, such as applying within a certain application window and receiving approval for your travel. There is also an annual maximum and it is first-come, first-served. For more details, see their website and plan ahead of time so that your application has time to be reviewed. (Also, more funding is made available to students who are part of a chartered grad student organization, so this is a reason to make sure our own organization is active.)

2. Center for Professional and Applied Ethics. The Center has agreed to commit up to $500 annually per student to support graduate student travel to ethics-related conferences.

3. Department of Philosophy. The Department works with a very modest travel fund that supports our faculty. When it has funds available, the department will consider supporting graduate student travel costs up to $100 for expenses beyond what is covered by the previous two sources. Here, too, you should plan ahead of time, because the travel fund is exhausted before the end of the fiscal year (June 30).

B.   Graduate Student resources

There is a wide variety of resources available via the UNC Charlotte Graduate School. Information on things like housing, financial aid, etc. can be found at https://graduateschool.charlotte.edu/current-students/current-student-resources. We also have a Center for Graduate Life and Living, where you can find professional workshops and social events for graduate students. Please see https://gradlife.charlotte.edu/ for further information.

You can receive a limited amount of free individual counseling and unlimited group 9 counseling at the counseling center (https://caps.charlotte.edu/). The student health center is also available for students; see https://studenthealth.charlotte.edu/frequently-asked-questions for frequently asked questions about the Health Center and eligibility issues. (Students may purchase health insurance if they are not already covered.) Information on other options such as student housing are available here: https://housing.charlotte.edu/housing-options/communities.

C. Forms

You will need a variety of forms while in our program. Most forms can be found here: https://graduateschool.charlotte.edu/current-students/forms.
Important forms includes transfer credit, appeal of suspension, application for candidacy for a degree, and application for graduation.

IV. Policies and Procedures

A. Graduation

The university requires you to file for graduation surprisingly early in the semester in which you plan to graduate; it's often the fourth week of classes. The Graduate Program Director will usually send out reminders, but the best way to make sure you don't miss this deadline is to plan ahead.

B. Incomplete, Withdrawals, and Leaves of Absence

The program is governed by the University's policy on withdrawal from courses and "Incomplete" grades (which you can find here https://provost.charlotte.edu/policies-procedures/academic-policies-and-procedures/grading-graduate/). We are also governed by the University's policy on Leaves of Absence. You can find that here: https://provost.charlotte.edu/policies-procedures/academic-policies-and-procedures/continuous-registration-and-leave-absence/. Please contact the Graduate Program Director if you have further questions.

C. Conduct

1. Academic Integrity

The program adheres to the code of conduct established by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and the Graduate School with respect to academic integrity, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, complicity in academic dishonesty, etc. See full academic integrity policy here: https://legal.charlotte.edu/policies/up-407.

2. Professional Conduct

While neither the University nor the Department has a code of professional conduct, we urge you to be thoughtful about how you conduct yourself. We strongly support academic freedom, so this is not a caution

to guard what you say. Rather, we have in mind things such as how you treat your fellow graduate students or the undergraduate students for whom you are serving as a TA. For example, while you are a TA, do not discuss your students' work or behavior on social media. They have just as much need for a supportive learning environment as you do. Certain discussions of student work may also constitute a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to which you are held as a TA. See here for the full policy: https://legal.charlotte.edu/policies/up-402, and here for a Powerpoint presentation on FERPA by the University's Senior Counsel: https://teaching.charlotte.edu/.

Another resource for professional development is the Center for Graduate Life and Living (https://gradlife.charlotte.edu/). They regularly offer opportunities for professional development, for example workshops on CV preparation.

D.   Suspension/Termination/Course Expiration & Time Limits

1.   Suspension and Termination

According to University Policy, any student who receives an Unsatisfactory ('U') grade or a third 'C' is automatically suspended from the program. The program may also recommend suspension or termination of a student who is not making adequate progress.

Such decisions may be appealed; the appeal process can be found here: https://graduateschool.charlotte.edu/current-students/suspension-and-termination-appeals. Note that suspension also means that you are not eligible for tuition or stipend support from the university; see section III.A.1 above for eligibility information

2.   Course Expiration and Time Limits

Regardless of academic progress, courses for master's students begin to expire after 6 years. Students have the option of revalidating those that are less than 8 years old. To revalidate a course, the student, along with the program coordinator and the course instructor, prepare a revalidation plan that must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate School. This plan often involves taking a special examination designed by the faculty of the graduate program. Once the plan has been completed, the program coordinator must notify the Graduate School in writing. The Revalidation Form is available on the Graduate School website at https://graduateschool.charlotte.edu/current-students/forms. Students may not revalidate courses with a grade of 'C' or lower, courses that are internships or other forms of practice, or courses taken at other institutions. Additionally, no more than 25% of the courses on a student's program of study may be revalidated and for master's students no course older than eight years may be revalidated.

E.   University Policies & Ombuds

We hope you will not need these, but in case you ever do, the full catalog of university policies (e.g., harassment; student grievance) can be found here: https://legal.charlotte.edu/policies.

Should you ever have concerns with processes or climate within the department, please know that the Chair and Graduate Program Director want to know about them and will work with you to address them. Should you wish to speak with someone outside the department on such matters, the Graduate School has a Graduate Student Ombuds. Further information on the Ombuds can be found here: https://gradlife.charlotte.edu/.

F. Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Our aim is to allow all students who want a chance to serve as a TA to do so. Therefore, each semester we evaluate students eligible to TA and try to make assignments equitably and with an eye to fit between the student's research interest and the course material. The Graduate Program Director, in consultation with the Chair and the instructor of the course in question, will make TA assignments.

TAs must satisfy training requirements before serving as a TA the first time. Please see https://teaching.charlotte.edu/node/9959/ for more information.

V. Appendix: Teaching Assistant Evaluation

TA Name: _____ Course: _____   Date: _____

Please rate 1 to 5 the following questions, with 5 being the highest. If the item does not apply to the TA, answer N/A.

<u>Preparation</u>

The TA follows the syllabus provided for the course.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA is prepared for class.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA enforces the grading policies described in the syllabus.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA uses the grading rubrics provided for the course.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA enforces the attendance policies described in the syllabus.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA is available to the students on a regular, scheduled, and announced basis.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A

<u>Teaching</u>

The TA presents information in a clear and easy-to-understand manner.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA is able to explain and reframe information when students do not understand.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA uses meaningful activities or in-class exercises when teaching.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA offers ample opportunities for meaningful discussion in the class.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA offers opportunities for the students to engage in critical thinking in the class.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA guides class discussions in ways that are helpful to the students.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A

<u>Classroom management</u>

The TA is sensitive when handling difficult classroom behavior.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA has appropriate control over the class and maintains boundaries when interacting with students.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA respects differences of opinion.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA is able to engage different perspectives	1 2 3 4 5 N/A

<u>Overall</u>

In general, the TA takes their responsibilities seriously.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The TA is effective as a teacher and is able to promote learning.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Comments or areas for improvement: