

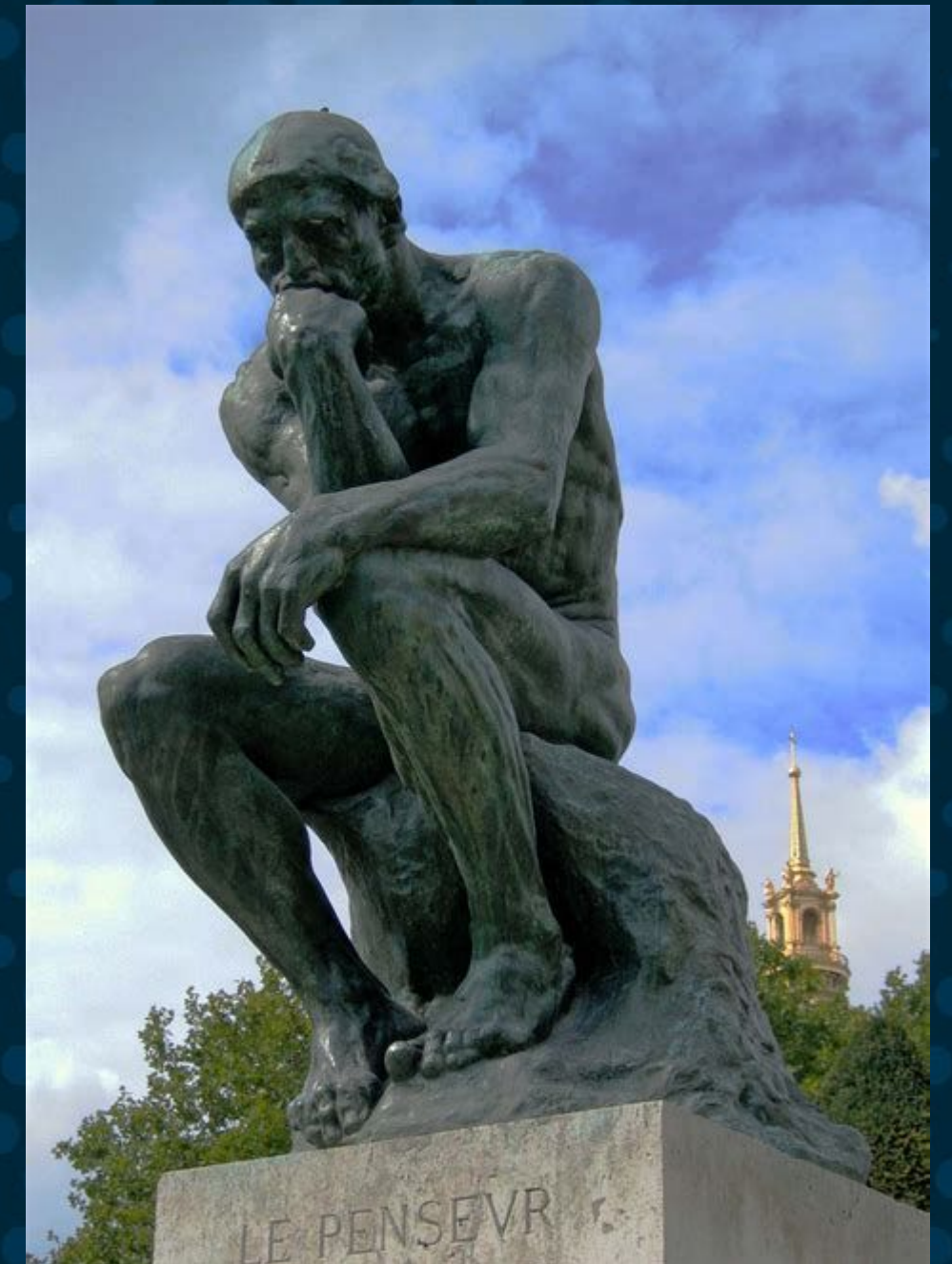
# Thinking About Graduate Studies in Philosophy?

~~Think Again!~~

Advice for USU Philosophy Majors



UtahStateUniversity



October 17, 2024



# Presentation Outline

1. Warning: The Academic Job Market Sucks!
2. Review Grad School Application Components
3. Project the Ideal Application Timeline
4. Identify Factors to Weigh When Choosing Where to Apply
5. Examine What Types of Programs to Consider & How Many
6. Provide Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors
7. Q&A with Recent Grads & Dr. Alex Barrientos, Ph.D. (Utah)



**Warning: The Academic Job Market**  
**Sucks!**

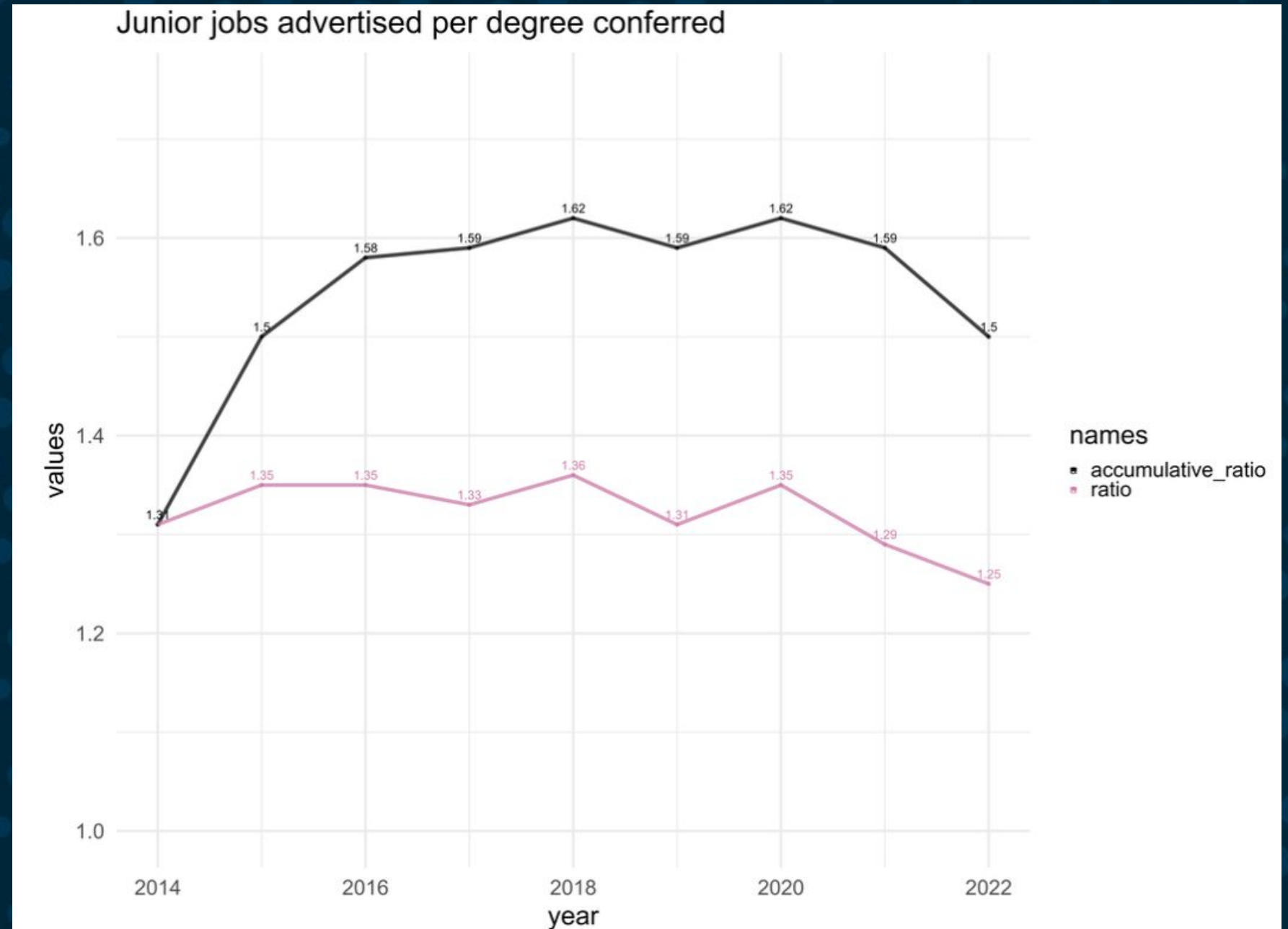


# Warning: The Academic Job Market **Sucks!**

## Latest Data from 2024 Job Cycle:

“the market is bad (on average, 2 jobs for every 3 philosophers) but it's not getting worse over time.”

<https://www.charleslassiter.net/blog>





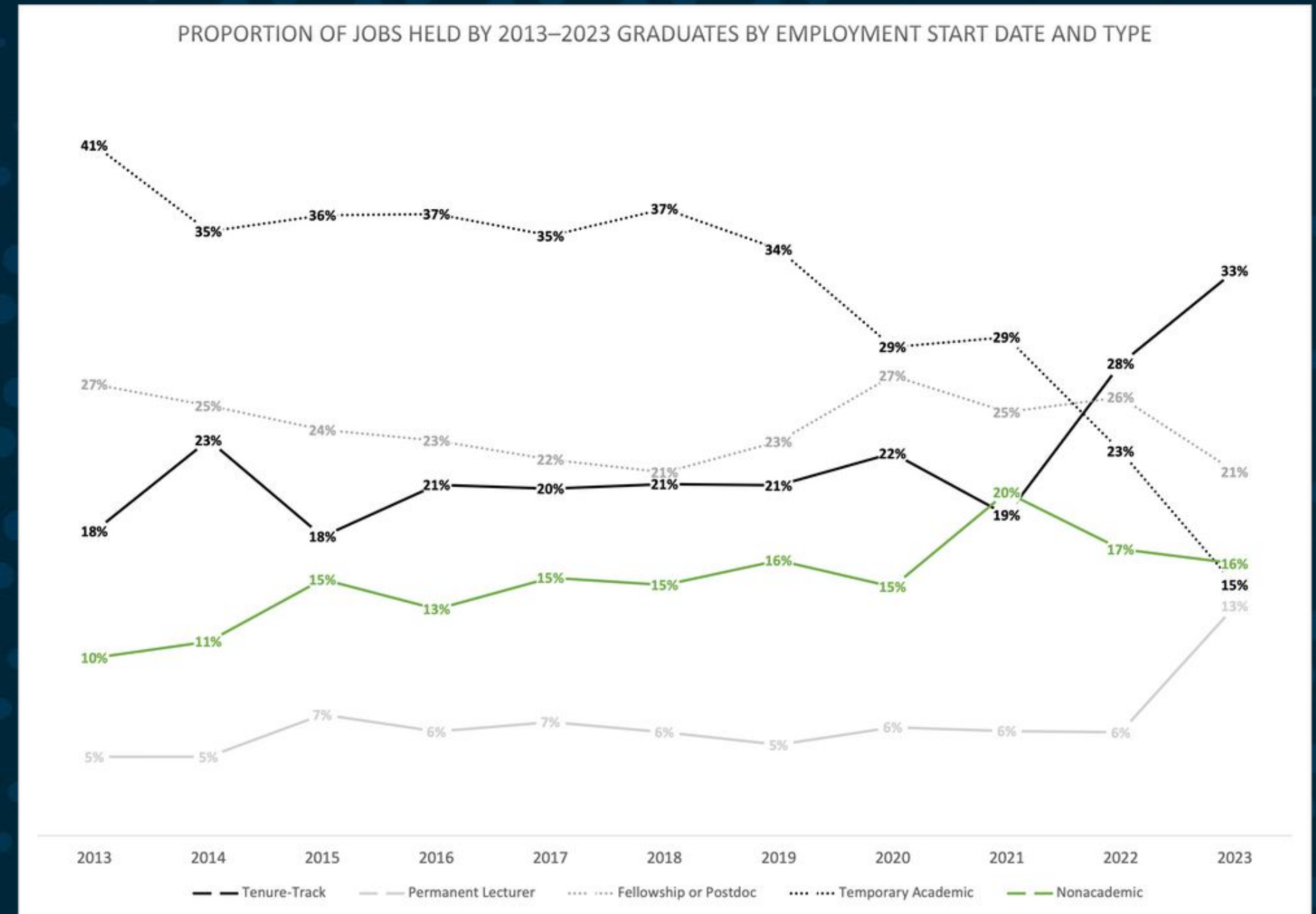
# Warning: The Academic Job Market **Sucks!**

## 2024 Data Collection

### Results: a focus on recent graduates

Between 2013 and 2023, “6,408 graduates earned a PhD in philosophy, 41% of which (2,610) have found permanent academic employment; 33% if we look only at the past 5 years (2019–2023).”

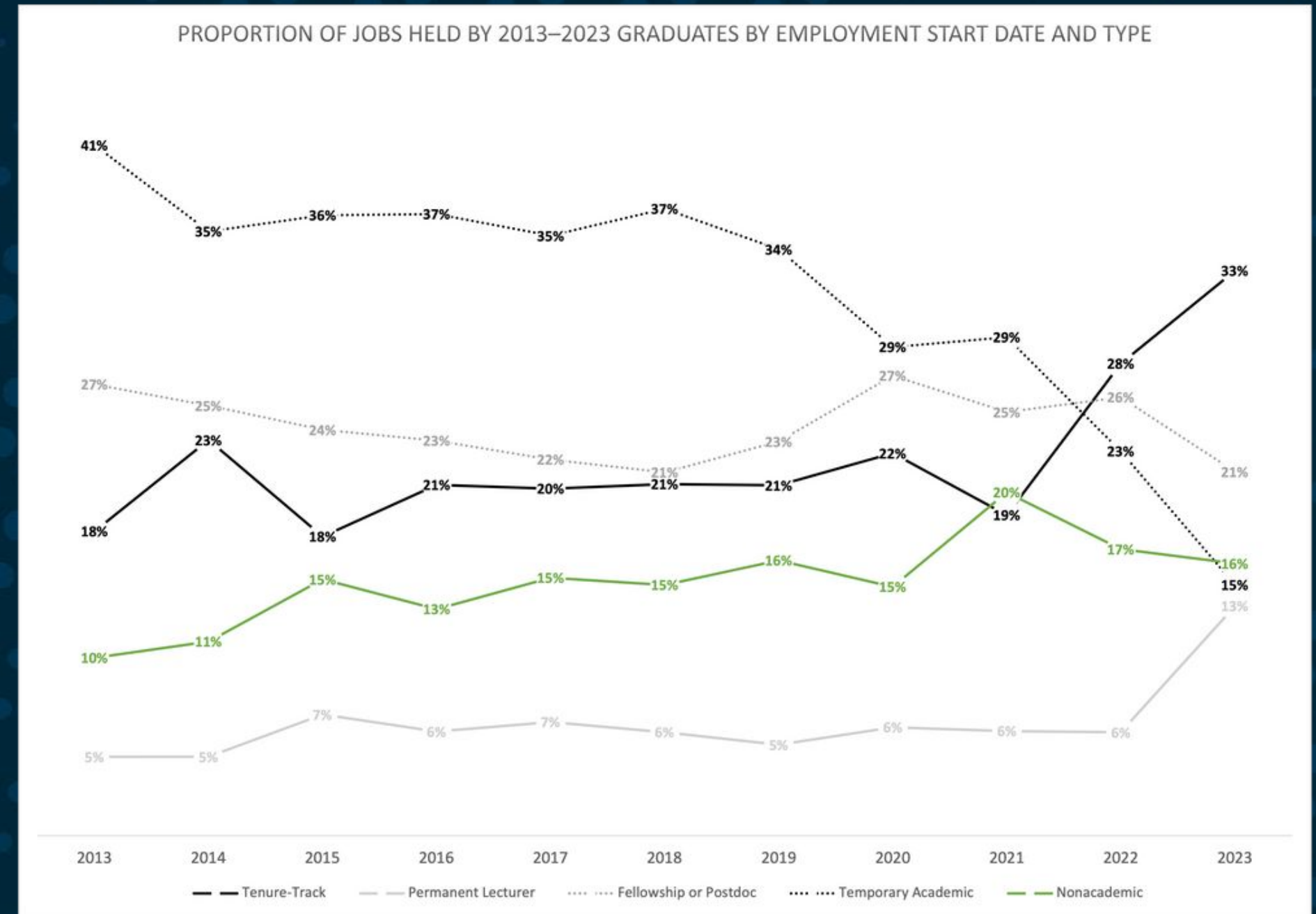
<https://apda.ghost.io/2024-data-collection-results-a-focus-on-recent-graduates/>





# Warning: The Academic Job Market **Sucks!**

**What about the non-academic job market after a philosophy PhD?** "A much smaller proportion [of philosophy Ph.D. grads between 2013-2023], 12%, has had employment outside of academia, with another 10% of unknown status or unemployed." But non-academic employment is closer to 20% post-pandemic.



<https://apda.ghost.io/2024-data-collection-results-a-focus-on-recent-graduates/>



# **Grad School Application Components**



# Grad School Application Components

## 1. Strictly Enforced **Deadlines**

- a. University Graduate Schools typically set deadlines independently of philosophy departments, leaving no room for negotiating late submissions

## 2. **School Application Form(s) + Application Fees \$\$**

## 3. **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** / Academic Resume

- a. look at current grad student examples online; emulate strong examples



# Grad School Application Components

## 4. Statement of Interest

<https://www.usu.edu/career-design-center/students/resources-by-college/grad-school>

### Personal Statement/Letter of Intent

As you write your personal statement or letter of intent, be sure to follow the prompt in the application if there is one. If there is no prompt, think about what to write if a prompt is not provided.

- What are your career goals?
- Why are you interested in this industry?
- Why is this specific program at this specific school the best fit for you?
- What are your best qualifications?
- Tell a story – depending on space and the prompt, try to tell a story or have a common thread through the statement. Consider what influenced your decision to pursue this path or a significant moment/person that influenced your decision.

Some additional tips:

- View this [personal statement example](#).
- Keep the statement to 2 pages or less
- Show a little bit of your personality – this is a personal essay, not a research paper
- Have the [USU Writing Center](#) review your statement

## 5. Writing Sample

a. Not just your best existing class essay; more on this later!



# Grad School Application Components

## 6. **3 Letters of Recommendation**

- a. Cannot be requested or produced last-minute; more on these later too!

## 7. **Graduate Record Exam (GRE)?**

- a. Not required everywhere
- b. Adds another layer of time + expense



## 8. **External Scholarship Applications?**

- a. Often equivalent work to applying to another school
- b. Especially important to consider if applying internationally



# Grad School Application Components

For **some perspective from the admissions committee side of applications:** Dr. Alex Guerrero (Rutgers), “Advice for Applying to PhD Programs in Philosophy”

a. <https://dailynous.com/2021/10/29/advice-for-applying-to-phd-programs-in-philosophy-guest-post/>





# **The Ideal Application Timeline**



# The Ideal Application Timeline



1. Applications typically due early in the new year
  - a. Some exceptions (e.g., applying internationally)
2. Decisions often start to be communicated mid-March
  - a. Applicants may obsess over this news through *GradCafe*:  
<https://forum.thegradcafe.com/forum/40-philosophy/>

THE  
**GRADCAFE**




# The Ideal Application Timeline



3. Decisions across most programs finalized by April 15; waitlisted candidates often notified later

4. **USU's Career Design Center** advises you begin planning applications at least 1 year in advance of applying:

<https://www.usu.edu/career-design-center/files/students/Grad-School-Timeline.pdf>



## Timeline

Start early when applying to graduate school. Deadlines for programs tend to fall between January and March. Applying earlier will increase your chances of being admitted. Many programs have rolling admissions and applications are evaluated as they arrive rather than all at once. Spots can fill up quickly as the final deadline draws near.

Almost every graduate school applicant will receive at least one rejection. While disappointing, it's not quite the final act. Contact the program advisor and politely express your regret at not being admitted. Ask them if they can point out where your application was weak or give you some suggestions on how you might strengthen your candidacy in the future. This will help if you choose to re-apply the following year.

Below is a sample schedule for a student hoping to enter graduate school in the fall. *Be sure to modify this schedule to fit the specific school's deadlines.*

**Fall Semester-May:** (more than one year before graduate school begins)

- ☐ Research potential schools.
- ☐ Speak to professionals in the field who know about different programs.
- ☐ Consider the cost of attending different schools.
- ☐ Consider relocation and/or effects of school on my family and relationships.
- ☐ Take practice tests for MCAT, LSAT, GRE, GMAT, MAT, etc. Study guides are available for check-out at Career Services.

**June:**

- ☐ Register for the test at Career Services in our testing area at (435) 797-1004 or online. Registration links can be found at: [www.usu.edu/career/html/testing](http://www.usu.edu/career/html/testing)

**July:**

- ☐ Request information from schools that interest you.
- ☐ Meet with several of your professors who can recommend good programs and help you make some connections.
- ☐ Take required entrance exams

**August:**

- ☐ Re-take required entrance exams if needed. This leaves you time to send the scores to the programs you are applying to.
- ☐ Begin writing your personal statement/letter of intent.

**September:**

- ☐ Finalize your list of prospective schools.
- ☐ Pick a professor or two from each school you are considering whose research interests mirror your own and familiarize yourself with their work if applicable.
- ☐ Contact your recommenders and ask if they will write letters of recommendation for you. Keep developing your personal statement.

**October:**

- ☐ Request official transcripts.
- ☐ Send your recommender supplemental materials (i.e., resume, personal statement, etc.) that they can use as a reference. Make contact with students and professors at your prospective schools.
- ☐ Arrange a campus visit, if possible, or follow-up to increase your chances of receiving an invitation for a visit from those programs that invite candidates.
- ☐ Talk to current students in the programs and meet with key professors
- ☐ Explore living areas around the campus.

**November:**

- ☐ Have someone in the field, a professor or advisor, and your Career Services Career Coach review and edit your personal statement. Leave time for rewriting and editing.
- ☐ Start your FAFSA form online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships.

**December:**

- ☐ Complete and submit all applications, keeping a copy of every section for your records.
- ☐ Verify that your recommendations have been sent.

**January:**

- ☐ Focus on financial aid—Finish your FAFSA online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships.

**April:**

- ☐ Celebrate your acceptances.
- ☐ Appeal the aid package (or apply for alternative loans) if the amount the school offers you doesn't meet your financial needs.
- ☐ Report your success to your career coach.

**Career Coaches' Favorite Sites:**  
[gradschools.com](http://gradschools.com)  
[graduate-schools.petersons.com](http://graduate-schools.petersons.com)

3



# **Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to Apply**



# Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to Apply

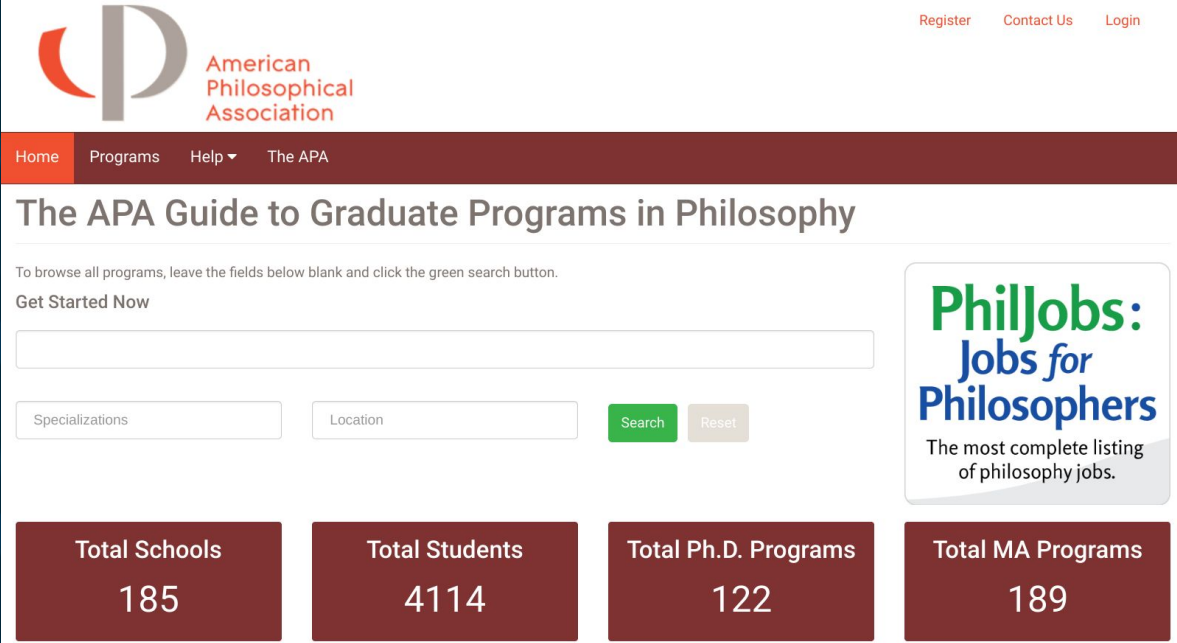
1. Fit: Ideally, you want:

a. Several faculty working on things you want to study = several candidate dissertation supervisors / committee members

b. More advanced students working on topics you find interesting, etc.

c. Search by specialty / sub-discipline:

<https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/breakdown-of-programs-by-specialties/> or <https://gradguide.apaonline.org/>



The screenshot shows the American Philosophical Association (APA) website. The header includes the APA logo and navigation links: Home, Programs, Help, and The APA. The main content area is titled 'The APA Guide to Graduate Programs in Philosophy' and includes a search bar with a green 'Search' button and a 'Reset' button. Below the search bar, there are four statistics displayed in red boxes: Total Schools (185), Total Students (4114), Total Ph.D. Programs (122), and Total MA Programs (189). A sidebar on the right features a 'PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers' advertisement, stating it is 'The most complete listing of philosophy jobs.'

Category	Count
Total Schools	185
Total Students	4114
Total Ph.D. Programs	122
Total MA Programs	189



# Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to

## **Apply** 2. Funding Package evaluated against local Cost of Living

- a. Unless you're independently wealthy, don't go into debt for graduate school in philosophy
- b. Tuition remission is standard; if a program cannot offer this, that's a **red flag!** (minimal student fees are no cause for alarm)





# Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to

## **Apply** 2. Funding Package evaluated against local Cost of Living

- c. Additional funding to cover living expenses is also standard
  - i. **Fellowships:** usually require no labor from grad student
  - ii. **Graduate/Teaching Assistantships:** compensation for grading/teaching
  - iii. **External Scholarships:** usually require no labor
- d. Some funding is only partial, so research carefully and compare the cost of living there to that of Logan



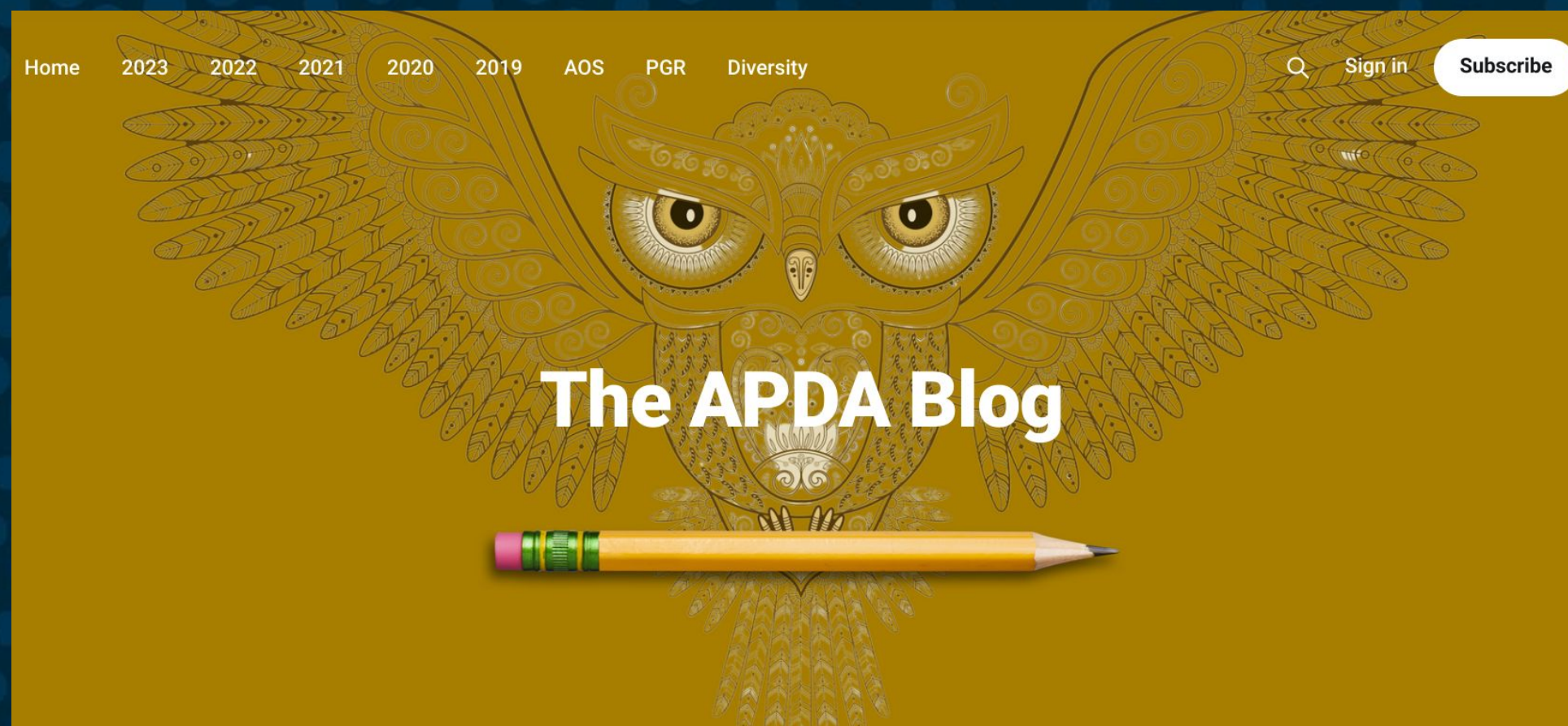
# Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to

## Apply

### 3. Placement Record of (Especially Recent) Graduates:

a. Academic Philosophy & Data Analysis (APDA) Project

<https://www.philosophydata.org/> | [APDA Dashboard](#)





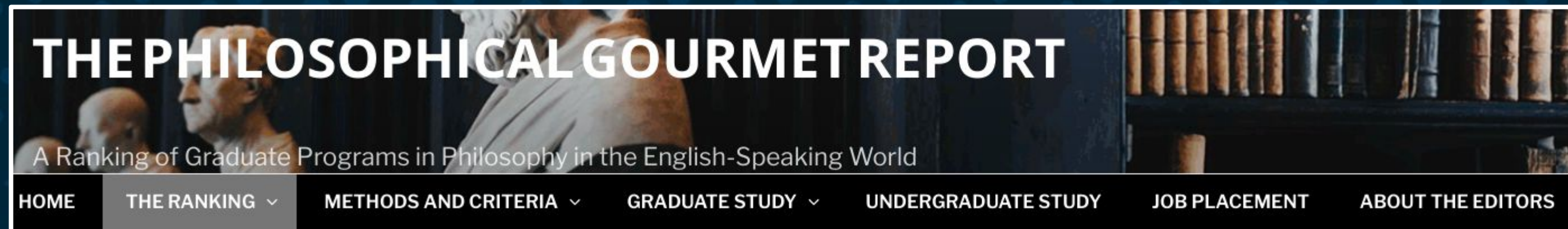
# Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to

## Apply

### 4. Reputational Ranking of Department:

a. Philosophical Gourmet Report (PGR):

<https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/overall-rankings/>



b. QS World Rankings:

<https://www.topuniversities.com/university-subject-rankings/philosophy>



# Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to

**Apply**

## 5. Proximity to your support system



## 6. Climate for grad students

- a. Do current grad students seem happy in the program?
- b. <https://dailynous.com/2024/10/08/grad-program-data-climate-mental-health-employment-demographics/>



# **Types of Grad Programs & How Many**



# Types of Grad Programs

1. Funded Doctoral Programs (PhD or DPhil)
2. Funded Terminal Master's Programs (MA or MPhil) likely to improve your prospects of acceptance into a Doctorate

a. <https://fundedphilma.weebly.com/>

**FUNDED MA PROGRAMS IN  
PHILOSOPHY (US)**

b. <https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/m-a-programs-in-philosophy/>



# Types of Grad Programs: The Master's

## M.A. PROGRAMS IN PHILOSOPHY

Who should consider an M.A. program in philosophy? Three categories of students who ultimately want to get a Ph.D. and pursue an academic career might benefit from such programs: (i) students whose undergraduate major was not philosophy; (ii) students who majored in philosophy at universities with philosophy departments outside the mainstream of the profession; and (iii) students who majored in philosophy, have a solid grounding in the various areas of philosophy, but who studied philosophy at smaller colleges and universities, or at institutions with weak academic reputations (students should consult their departments to find out whether graduates of their schools have been able to gain admittance to Ph.D. programs of their choice). Students in each category may be both qualified for and able to get into the Ph.D. programs of their choice; but students who fit into one of these categories may be more likely to have trouble getting into Ph.D. programs and may be good candidates to benefit from M.A. programs.

A good M.A. program will provide many benefits: it will allow a student to get a basic grounding in philosophy or expand the breadth of her existing knowledge, develop increased familiarity with current debates in philosophy, prepare and polish written work in philosophy that will be useful in the applications process for Ph.D. programs and get to know some established philosophers who can then provide meaningful letters of recommendation for Ph.D. programs.

—Brian Leiter, <https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/m-a-programs-in-philosophy>



# Types of Grad Programs: How Many?

**3.** Depending on how much \$ you can devote to applications, **consider applying to a range of programs:**

a. **Dream School(s)**

b. **Realistic Options**

c. **“Safety” School(s)** you would still happily attend if accepted

i. Not wanting to be shut out, some people apply to places they really don't want to go, leading to torturous deliberations; avoid this if possible





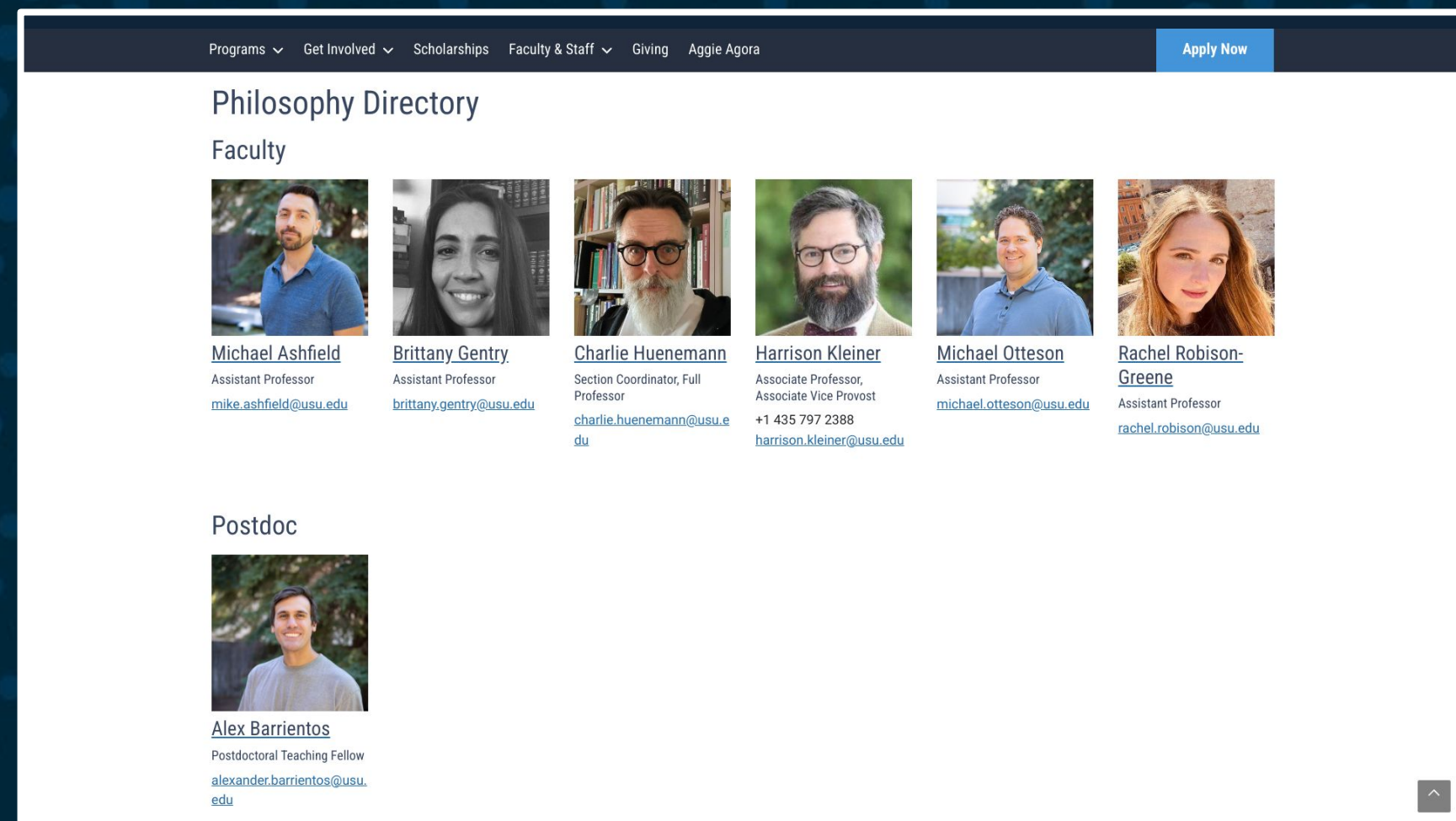
# **Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors**










# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

1. **Take classes with a wide range of faculty members**, so that you get to know several well enough to ask them to write you a letter or recommendation.

a. Ideally, you want to request letters no later than early Fall of Senior Year (or the year you're applying)



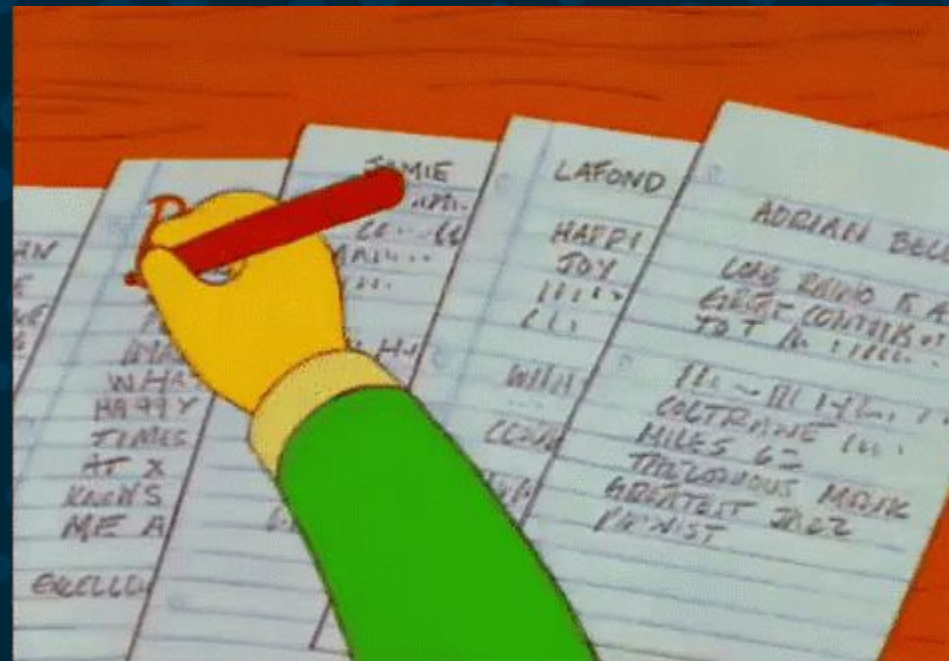
The screenshot shows the USU Philosophy Directory website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Programs, Get Involved, Scholarships, Faculty & Staff, Giving, Aggie Agora, and an Apply Now button. Below the navigation bar is the title "Philosophy Directory" and a sub-header "Faculty". There are six faculty members listed in a row, each with a portrait photo, name, title, and email address. Below the faculty list is a sub-header "Postdoc" and one postdoc member listed with a portrait photo, name, title, and email address.

Philosophy Directory					
Faculty					
					
<b>Michael Ashfield</b> Assistant Professor <a href="mailto:mike.ashfield@usu.edu">mike.ashfield@usu.edu</a>	<b>Brittany Gentry</b> Assistant Professor <a href="mailto:brittany.gentry@usu.edu">brittany.gentry@usu.edu</a>	<b>Charlie Huenemann</b> Section Coordinator, Full Professor <a href="mailto:charlie.huenemann@usu.edu">charlie.huenemann@usu.edu</a>	<b>Harrison Kleiner</b> Associate Professor, Associate Vice Provost +1 435 797 2388 <a href="mailto:harrison.kleiner@usu.edu">harrison.kleiner@usu.edu</a>	<b>Michael Otteson</b> Assistant Professor <a href="mailto:michael.otteson@usu.edu">michael.otteson@usu.edu</a>	<b>Rachel Robison-Greene</b> Assistant Professor <a href="mailto:rachel.robison@usu.edu">rachel.robison@usu.edu</a>
Postdoc					
					
<b>Alex Barrientos</b> Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow <a href="mailto:alexander.barrientos@usu.edu">alexander.barrientos@usu.edu</a>					



# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

2. **Apply to be a UTF** to get some experience with what being a TA might be like. It also might give you a sense of whether teaching/grading work is something you actually like doing.

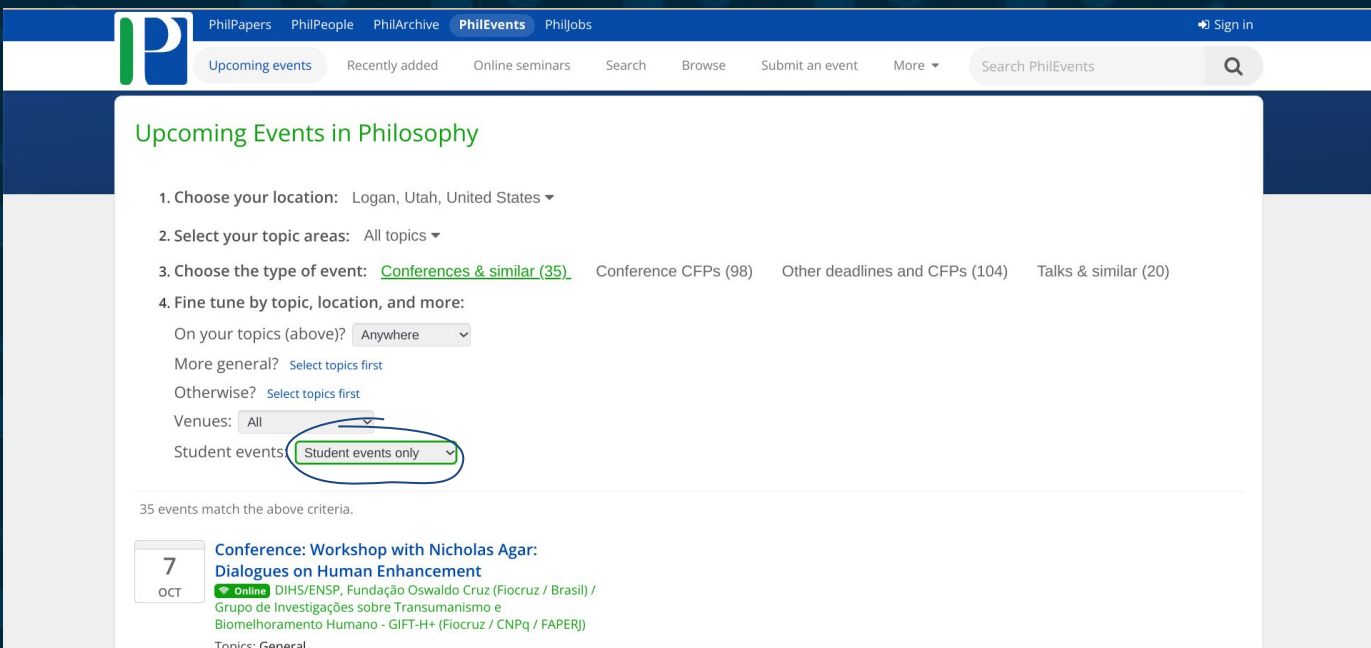




# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

3. If possible, **send your work off** to undergraduate conferences and/or journals:

a. Philevents.org can filter for “student events only”



b. Check the Undergraduate Philosophy Journal Database

A screenshot of a spreadsheet titled "Philosophy Undergraduate Journals and Conferences". It contains a table with columns: Name of Journal, University Affiliation, Specialization (e.g. ethics, analytic, or general philosophy), Accepts (e.g. papers, abstracts), \*Typical\* Application Time Frame (e.g. December through May), Attributes (e.g. diversity initiative), Accepts recent grads?, Notes, and URL. The table lists five journals: A Priori, Acta Cogita, Aletheia, and Almagest. The fifth row is partially visible.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Name of Journal	University Affiliation	Specialization (e.g. ethics, analytic, or general philosophy)	Accepts (e.g. papers, abstracts)	*Typical* Application Time Frame (e.g. December through May)	Attributes (e.g. diversity initiative)	Accepts recent grads?	Notes	URL
2	A Priori	Brown University	The Journal encourages submissions addressing topics on the margins of traditional analytic philosophy, including essays on philosophy of race, philosophy of gender, and non-Western philosophy.	Papers no more than 20 pages	Early January	committed to highlighting the work of students from groups underrepresented in philosophy			<a href="https://www.brown.edu/academics/philosophy/a-priori/home">https://www.brown.edu/academics/philosophy/a-priori/home</a>
3	Acta Cogita	Eastern Michigan University	Any topic	11-12 page papers no longer than 4,000 words	Early fall, late summer				<a href="http://www.emu.edu/acta-cogita/journal/">http://www.emu.edu/acta-cogita/journal/</a>
4	Aletheia	Texas A&M	Any	2000-5000 words in length (submissions slightly above or below this limit are welcome) Include an approximately 100-word abstract Include a work citations page	Mid-October (23 Oct. 2020)				<a href="https://philosophy.tam.u.edu/aletheia/">https://philosophy.tam.u.edu/aletheia/</a>
5	Almagest	University of Toronto	Must be related to the history and philosophy of science (and technology) in some form. Papers	Papers no more than 5,000 words	Late January				<a href="https://www.almagestjournal.ca">https://www.almagestjournal.ca</a>



# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

4. Your **Writing Sample** almost certainly cannot be your best existing philosophy essay written for a class

a. General Advice For Good Philosophical Writing:

<https://dailynous.com/2024/01/23/write-philosophy-paper-online-guides/>

b. Approach a professor early (e.g., Fall of Junior Year) about doing a PHIL 4910 *Directed Reading* (e.g., Spring of Junior Year) to polish a potential writing sample

## *Guidelines for Students on Writing Philosophy Papers*

- "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper" by Jim Pryor
- "Writing a Good Philosophy Paper" by Justin Weinberg
- "Writing a Philosophy Paper" by Peter Horban
- "Tips on Writing Philosophy Papers" by William Blattner
- "How to Write (not Terrible) Philosophy Papers" by Manuel Vargas
- ~~"Philosophy Paper Writing Guidelines" by Tim O'Keefe and Anne Farrell~~
- "A Guide to Writing" by Michael Huemer
- "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper" by Stephen Yablo
- "7 Steps to a Better Philosophy Paper" by Bryan W. Roberts
- "Some Writing Tips for Philosophy" by Brian Earp
- "How to Write a Crap Philosophy Essay" by James Lenman
- "A Sample Philosophy Paper" by Angela Mendelovici
- "Writing Philosophy Essays" by Michael Tooley
- "Writing Your Philosophy Paper: Common Problems to Avoid" by Elijah Millgram
- "A Guide to Philosophical Writing" by Elijah Chudnoff
- "The Pink Guide to Philosophy" by Helena de Bres



# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

5. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute for prospective grad students:

a. [The Hamilton College Summer Program in Philosophy](#)





# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

5. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute for prospective grad students:

b. The Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy





# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

5. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute for prospective grad students:

c. The many Undergraduate Diversity Institutes in Philosophy, including the **Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institutes (PIKSI)** and several more detailed here:

<https://www.apaonline.org/page/diversityinstitutes>





# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

6. It's wise to **go in with a non-academic back-up plan** tailored to *your* interests, skills, connections, etc.
  - a. Consider developing in-demand skills along the way that will help almost anywhere you end up (e.g., data analysis)
  - b. Consider concurrent programs with other disciplines or professions (e.g., J.D./Ph.D. programs)
  - c. There have probably never been more supports in place for helping doctoral students succeed outside academia



# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

6. It's wise to **go in with a non-academic back-up plan** tailored to *your* interests, skills, connections, *etc.*

c. ...helping doctoral students succeed outside academia

*E.g.,* **The American Philosophical Association's Committee for Non-Academic Careers:**

PhDs in philosophy who work outside of academia are holding office hours for philosophers considering careers outside of academia

<https://dailynous.com/?s=non-academic>

<https://dailynous.com/2024/08/23/philosophers-in-industry-office-hours/>

Name	Subject areas	Link to office hours
<a href="#">Nathan Bice</a>	Tech/Data Science jobs, Resume building, Marketing yourself, Industry vs Academia cultural differences	<a href="#">LINK</a>
<a href="#">Aaron Kagan</a>	Tech Jobs, User Research, Human Factors, Design jobs	<a href="#">LINK</a>
<a href="#">Johann Klaassen</a>	Finance, Financial services, Investment and any related fields	<a href="#">LINK</a>
<a href="#">Daniel Immerman</a>	Tech jobs, in particular conversational AI.	<a href="#">LINK</a>
William Smith	Medicine, Healthcare, Health Policy, Bioethics	<a href="#">LINK</a>



# Presentation Recap

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# Recent USU Philosophy Alum

**Abigail Fritz**

Ph.D. Student, Classics

University of Pittsburgh

M.A., Ancient Languages  
and Cultures, USU

B.A., Philosophy, USU

[abigail.fritz@pitt.edu](mailto:abigail.fritz@pitt.edu)





# Recent USU Philosophy Alum

**Maggie Mattinson**

Ph.D. Student, Philosophy

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B.A., Philosophy, USU

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# Recent USU Philosophy Alum

**Miranda Judson**

Ph.D. Student, Philosophy

Arizona State University

B.A. Philosophy, USU

[majudson@asu.edu](mailto:majudson@asu.edu)





# Recent USU Philosophy Alum

**Jack Leonard**

Ph.D. Student, Philosophy

Kansas University

B.A. Philosophy, USU

[jack.leonard@ku.edu](mailto:jack.leonard@ku.edu)





# Recent USU Philosophy Acquisition

**Dr. Alex Barrientos**

Ph.D., Philosophy

University of Utah

Postdoctoral Teaching

Fellow, Philosophy, USU

[alexander.barrientos@usu.edu](mailto:alexander.barrientos@usu.edu)







**Thank You  
&  
Good Luck!**



**UtahStateUniversity**