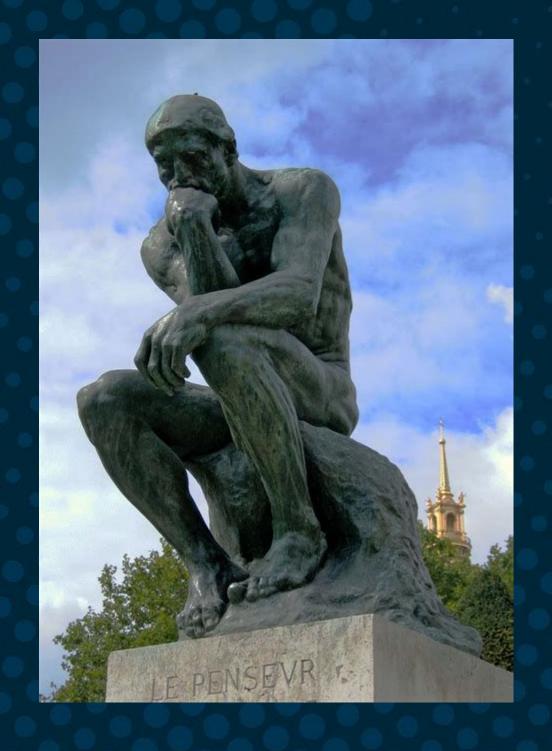
# Thinking About Graduate Studies in Philosophy?

Think Again!

Advice for USU Philosophy Majors





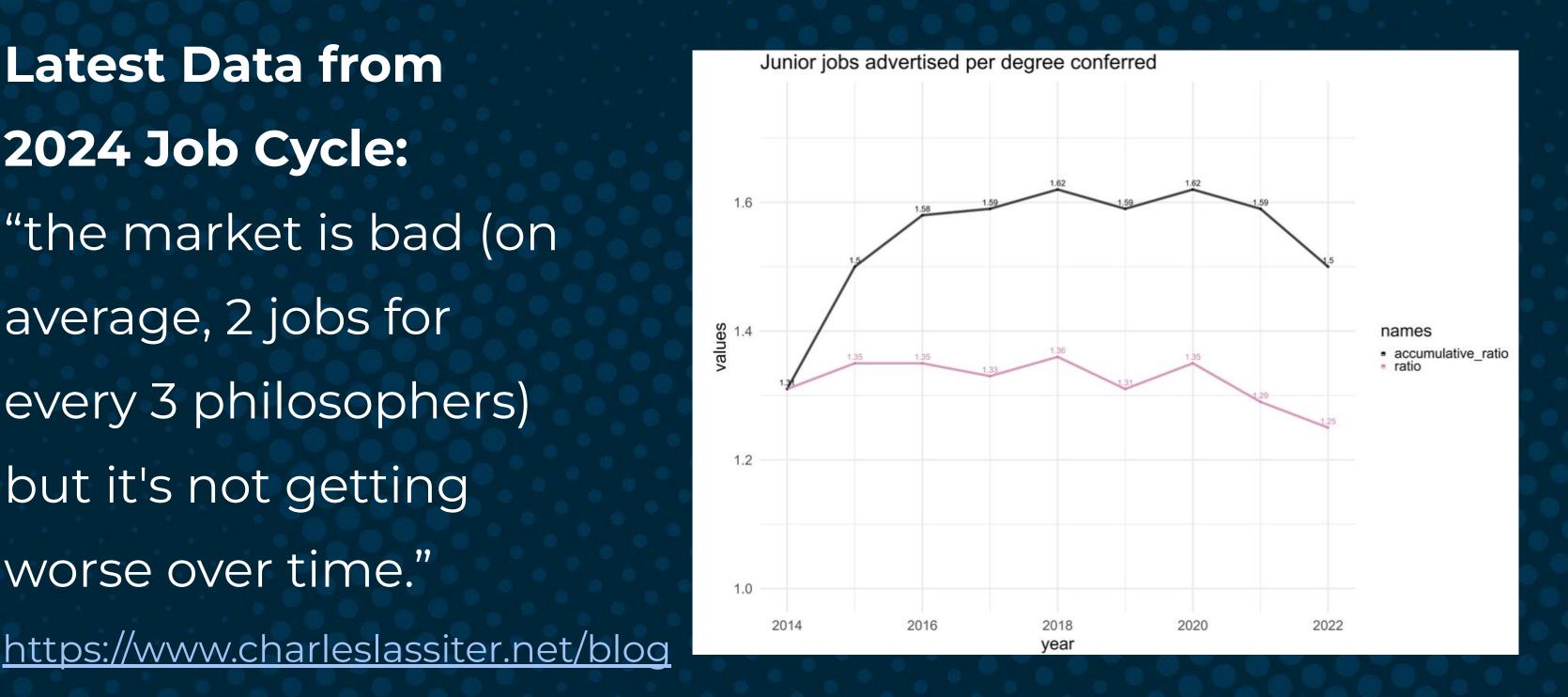
**UtahState**University

#### 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

Sucks!

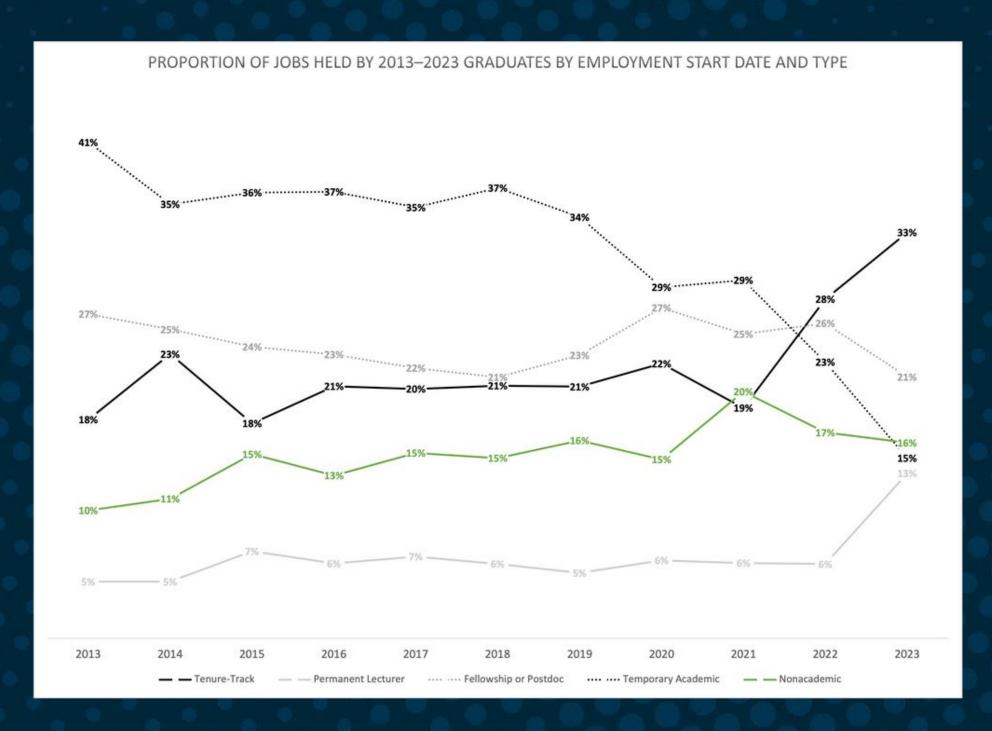
**Latest Data from** 2024 Job Cycle: "the market is bad (on average, 2 jobs for every 3 philosophers) but it's not getting worse over time."





2024 Data Collection Results: a focus on recent graduates

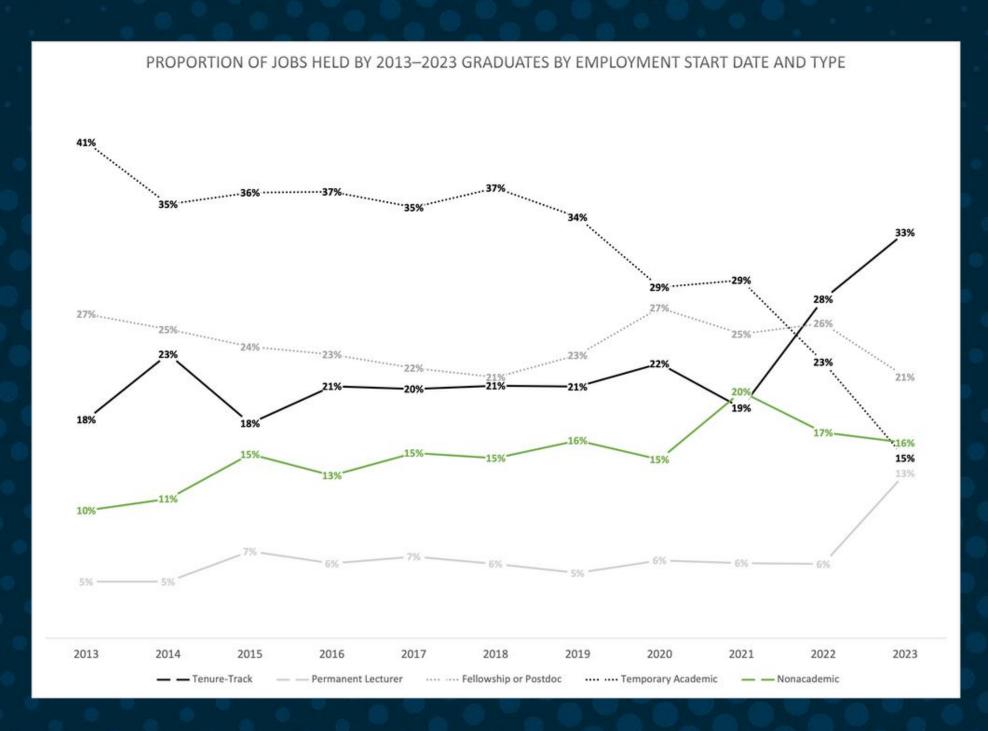
Between 2013 and 2023, "6,408 graduates earned a PhD in philosophy, 41% of which (2,610) have found permanent academic employment; 33% if we look only at the past 5 years (2019–2023)."



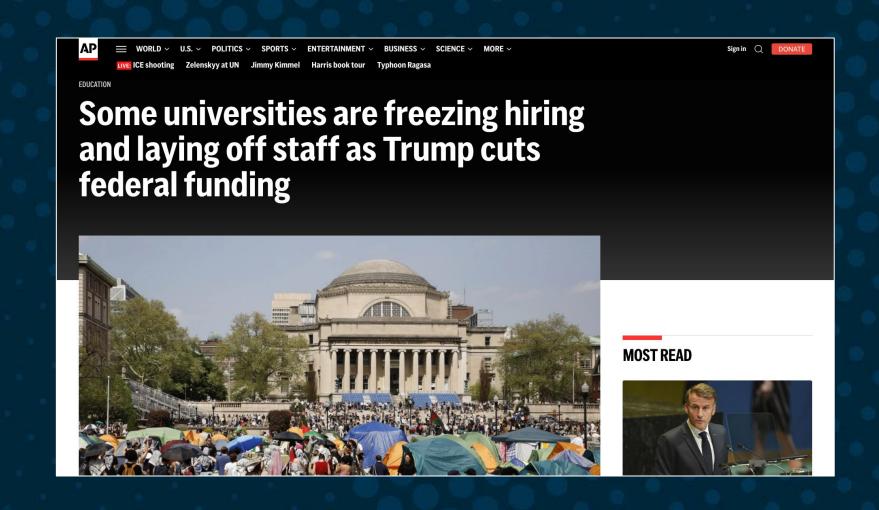
https://apda.ghost.io/2024-data-collection-results-a-focus-on-recent-graduates/

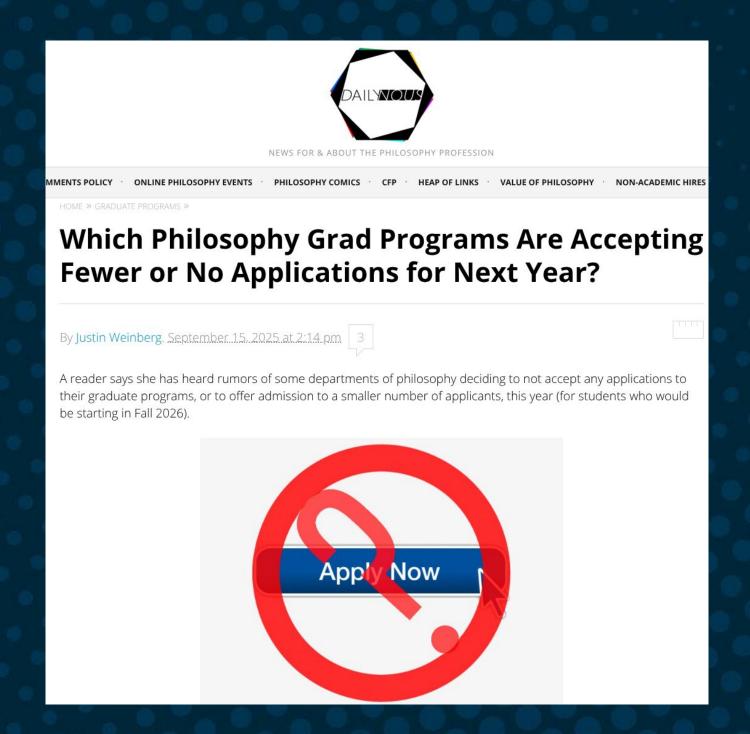


What about the non-academic job market after a philosophy PhD? "A much smaller proportion [of philosophy Ph.D. grads between 2013-2023], 12%, has had employment outside of academia, with another 10% of unknown status or unemployed." But non-academic employment is closer to 20% post-pandemic.



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





https://dailynous.com/2025/09/15/philosophy-grad-programs-are-accepting-fewer-or

-no-applications-for-next-year/

**First Rule of** : Do NOT pursue graduate studies on the **assumption** that it will lead to stable full-time academic employment in philosophy.

(It may, and there are things grad students can do to increase their odds that it does!)

But DO pursue graduate studies if you would judge the time to be well-spent, even best-spent, regardless of where it leads.

- 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

#### 4. Statement of Interest

https://www.usu.edu/career-design-center/students/resourc

es-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. 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 state as what influenced your decision to pursue this path or a significant moment/person that influenced your decis

#### 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 <u>USU Writing Center</u> review your statement

#### 5. Writing Sample

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

#### 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

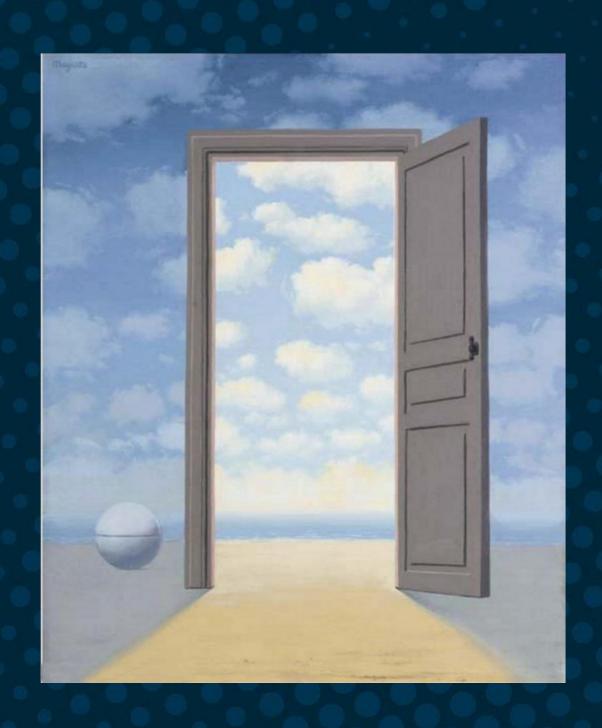


#### 8. External Scholarship Applications?

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

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

a. <a href="https://dailynous.com/2021/10/29/a">https://dailynous.com/2021/10/29/a</a>
<a href="doi:10.29/a">dvice-for-applying-to-phd-progra</a>
<a href="mailto:ms-in-philosophy-guest-post/">ms-in-philosophy-guest-post/</a>



## 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*: <a href="https://forum.thegradcafe.com/forum/40-philosophy/">https://forum.thegradcafe.com/forum/40-philosophy/</a>



### The Ideal Application Timeline



- 3. Decisions across most programs finalized by April 15; candidates already waitlisted may be notified later
- 4. USU's Career Design Center advises you begin planning applications at least 1 year in advance of applying:

  <a href="https://www.usu.edu/career-design-ce">https://www.usu.edu/career-design-ce</a>
  <a href="https://www.usu.edu/career-design-ce">nter/files/students/Grad-School-Timeli</a>

ne.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/htm/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

#### Augu

- 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 transcript
- 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
- 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.
- 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 FASFA online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships

#### April

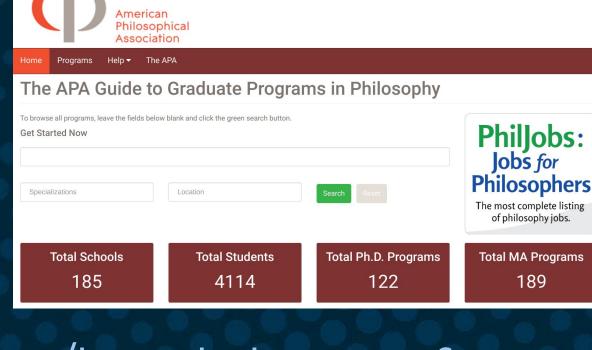
- Celebrate vour acceptances.
- Appeal the aid package (or apply for alternative loans) if the amount the school offers you doesn't meet your financial needs.
- Report your success to your career coach.

Career Coaches' Favorite Sites: gradschools.com graduate-schools.petersons.com



## APP. Meally, you want:

- a. Several faculty working on things you want to study = potential dissertation supervisors / committee members
- b. Current students working on topics you find interesting
- c. Search by specialty / sub-discipline: <a href="https://gradguide.apaonline.org/">https://gradguide.apaonline.org/</a> or



Register Contact Us Login

https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/breakdown-of-programs-by-specialties/

## APP Ming Package evaluated against local Cost of Living

- a. Second Rule of .: Unless you're already financially set, don't go into debt for graduate school in philosophy
- b. Tuition remission is pretty standard; if a program cannot offer this, that may be a **red flag!** (minimal student fees are no cause for alarm)

## APPMing 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 students
  - 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

## 4.Pacement Record of (Especially Recent) Graduates:

a. Academic Philosophy & Data Analysis (APDA) Project <a href="https://www.philosophydata.org/">https://www.philosophydata.org/</a> | APDA Dashboard



## ARPAtational Ranking of Department:

a. Philosophical Gourmet Report (PGR): <a href="https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/overall-rankings/">https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/overall-rankings/</a>



b. A User's Guide To Philosophy Without Rankings: <a href="https://philosophyrankings.com/">https://philosophyrankings.com/</a>

A.P. Amity to your support system



#### 6. Climate for grad students

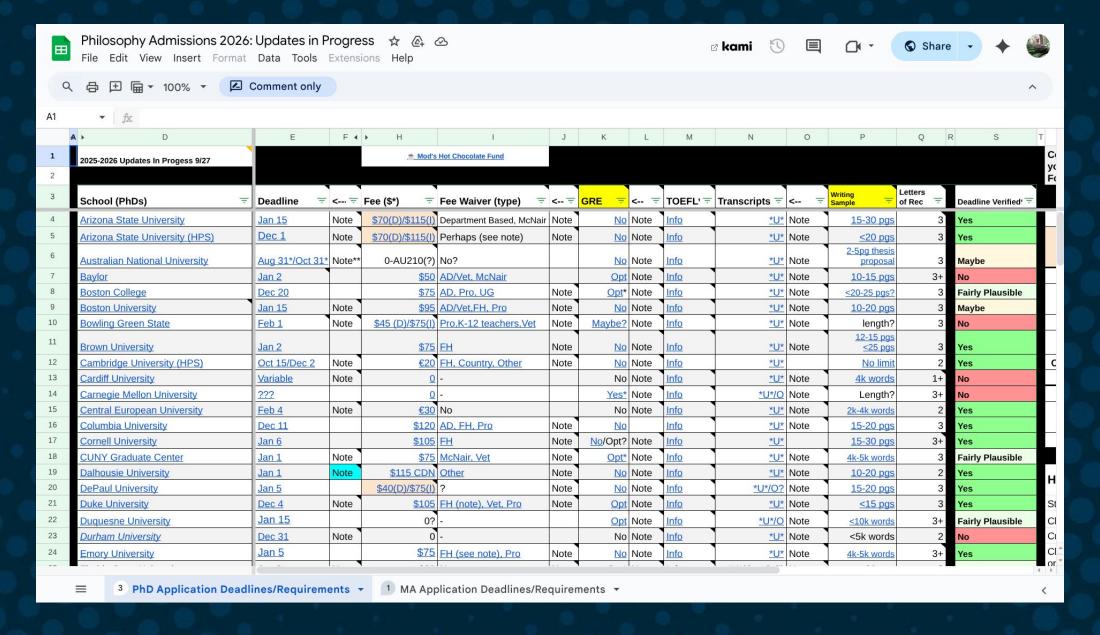
- a. Do current grad students seem happy in the program?
- b. <a href="https://dailynous.com/2024/10/08/grad-program-data-clima">https://dailynous.com/2024/10/08/grad-program-data-clima</a> te-mental-health-employment-demographics/

A.B. Bedial Circumstances: e.g., reduced international

competition The WHITE HOUSE PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP **▼ PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS** RESTRICTION ON ENTRY OF CERTAIN NONIMMIGRANT WORKERS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA A PROCLAMATION The H-1B nonimmigrant visa program was created to bring temporary workers into the United States to perform additive, high-skilled functions, but it has been deliberately exploited to

Appled about Keeping Track? Make a spreadsheet, like the

Philosophy Admissions 2026: Updates in Progress sheet!



### 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. <a href="https://fundedphilma.weebly.com/">https://fundedphilma.weebly.com/</a>

# FUNDED MA PROGRAMS IN PHILOSOPHY (US)

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

#### 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, <a href="https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/m-a-programs-in-philosophy">https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/m-a-programs-in-philosophy</a>

#### Types of Grad Programs: How Many?

- 3. Depending on how much (1) and \$ you can devote to applications, consider applying to a range:
  - a. Dream School(s)
  - b. Realistic Options

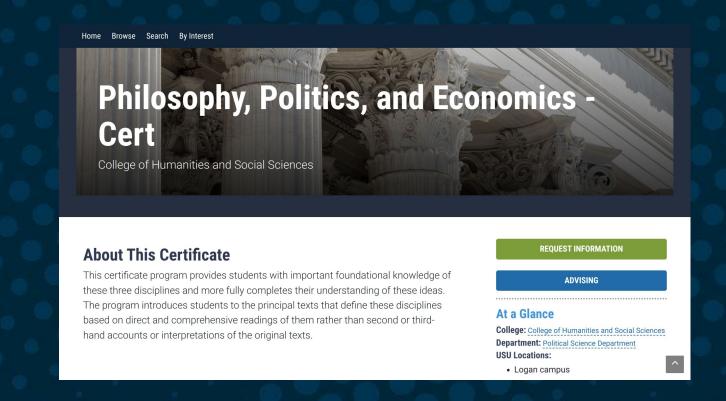


- c. "Safety" School(s) you would still happily attend if accepted
  - i. Not wanting to be shut out, some people apply to places they really don't want to go, leading to torturous deliberations; avoid this if possible

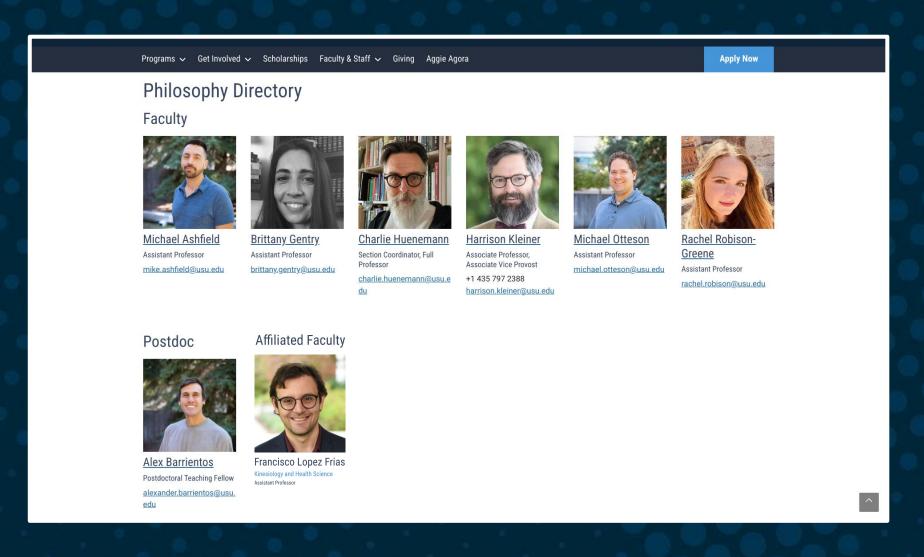
1. Consider Registering Philosophy Officially as your First Major (email brendan.lee@usu.edu), and consider a certificate OR second major for enrichment and adaptability



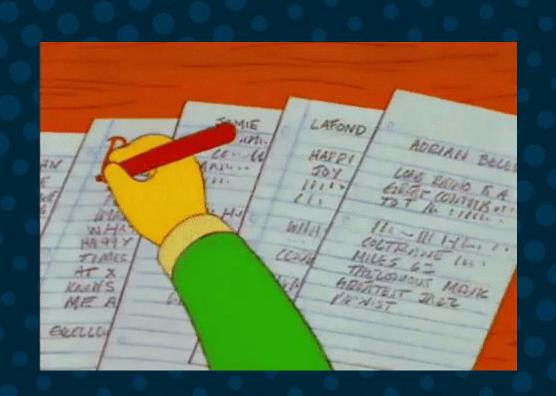




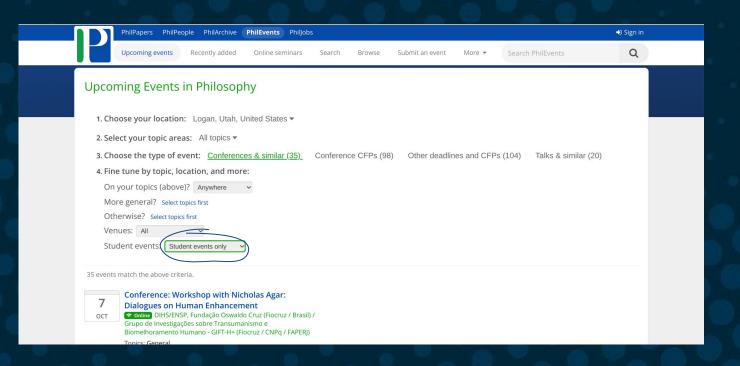
- 2. **Take classes with a wide range of faculty members**, so that you get to know several well enough to ask them to write you a letter or recommendation.
  - a. Ideally, you want to request letters no later than early Fall of Senior Year (or the year you're applying)



3. **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.

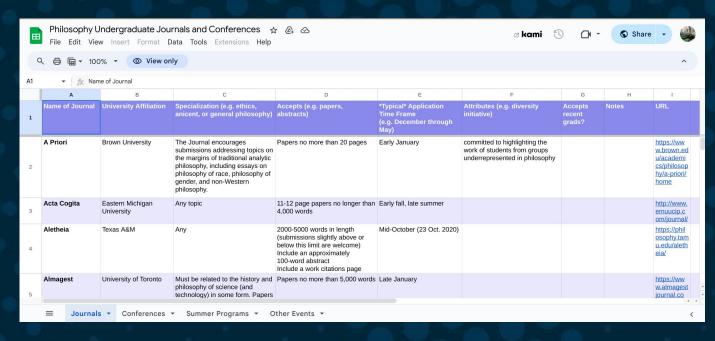


- 4. If possible, submit your work to student conferences or
  - journals:
  - a. Philevents.org can filter for "student events only"



b. Check the <u>Undergraduate</u>

Philosophy Journal Database



- 5. Your **Writing Sample** almost certainly cannot be your best existing philosophy essay written for a class
  - a. Approach a professor early
     (e.g., Fall of Junior Year) about
     doing an URCO or PHIL 4910 *Directed Reading* (e.g., Spring of Junior Year)
     to polish a potential writing sample
  - b. General Advice For GoodPhilosophical Writing:

CFP: Mastering the Writing Sample: A Workshop for Grad School Applicants

Submission deadline: August 31, 2025
Conference date(s):

Reminders

Add to Outlook

#### Go to the conference's page

October 12, 2025

#### Conference Venue:

Graduate Philosophical Association, University of Oklahoma Norman, United States

#### Details

The Graduate Philosophical Association (GPA) of the University of Oklahoma (OU) invites folks intending to apply to graduate programs in Philosophy to send in putative writing samples for our annual Writing Sample Workshop. People whose papers are accepted have the opportunity to present their papers and will receive constructive feedback from OU graduate students. Participants will also have the opportunity to attend MEW (MidWest Epistemology Workshop - 10/10-11). We invite papers on any topic (Max 6000 words, including footnotes). Please also include a short statement of intent. Preference will be given to folks applying to the University of Oklahoma's graduate program. Some funding may be available to defray travel expenses.

Add to Google CalendarEmail: the day before | the same day

#### Custom tags

#Writing Workshop, #Undergrad Workshop, #Wri Application

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

- 6. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute for prospective grad students:
  - a. The Hamilton College Summer Program in Philosophy



- 6. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute for prospective grad students:
  - b. The Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy



### Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

- 6. 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:

    <a href="https://www.apaonline.org/page/diversityinstitutes">https://www.apaonline.org/page/diversityinstitutes</a>



### Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

- 7. 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 or <a href="intelligence">intelligence</a> 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

- 7. 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 <a href="https://dailynous.com/?s=non-academic">https://dailynous.com/?s=non-academic</a>

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

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

### Presentation Recap

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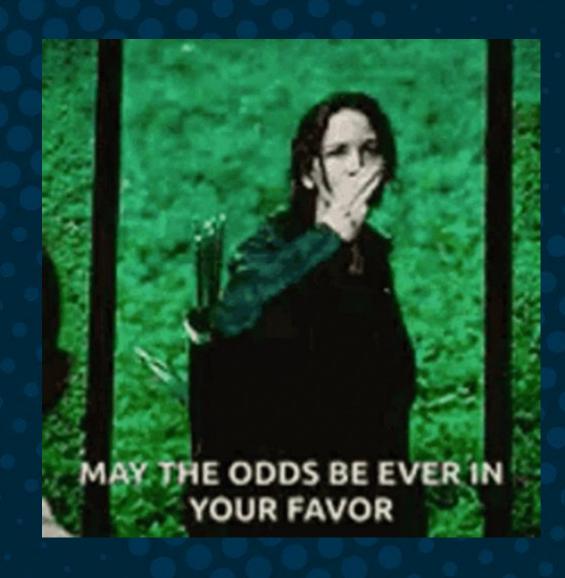






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# Thank You

8

Good Luck!



**UtahState**University