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The Program in Social, Political, Ethical and Legal Philosophy (SPEL)

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

**Philosophy Department
Binghamton University**

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Welcome to SPEL!

SPEL is a small graduate program and we aim to give each graduate student plenty of individual attention to make your experience here enjoyable, challenging, intellectually exciting and productive. Please feel free to ask the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or any of the SPEL faculty questions at any time, or to offer suggestions for improvement of the program. SPEL recognizes and respects work in both the Anglo-American (analytic) and the Continental (European) traditions, as well as in non-Western traditions, in feminist philosophy and critical race theory, and in other emerging areas of philosophy. As a program that specializes in a cluster of subfields of philosophy (namely social, political, ethical and legal philosophy), SPEL will give you some background in the field of philosophy as a whole, a good deal of knowledge in SPEL areas, and—particularly if you earn a Ph.D.—in-depth training and guidance for original research in your chosen area of specialization. We will also help you gain the skills and experience necessary to become excellent teachers of philosophy, and will help prepare you for other aspects of a career in philosophy and do all that we can to assist you in securing a faculty position when you have completed the program. For those of you earning a terminal masters in SPEL and going on to other careers or other graduate work such as law school, we will tailor your studies towards these ends.

SPEL admits students who have a bachelor's degree (usually but not always with a major in philosophy), students who have an M.A. (usually but not always in philosophy), and, for the five-year combined degree program, students who are still working on their undergraduate degrees in Philosophy or in Philosophy, Politics and Law at Binghamton University. We distinguish between students earning a terminal M.A. (meaning that they will leave SPEL after completing the M.A.)—which includes students in the five-year combined degree program—and students who intend to earn their Ph.D.. We especially welcome applicants from groups that are underrepresented in the field of philosophy, such as women and people of color. Students with a variety of philosophical interests should feel welcome to apply to the SPEL program. Please see the faculty list below for information about their particular interests.

The SPEL faculty, and philosophy department staff

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS):

ROBERT GUAY is Associate Professor of Philosophy. He received his Ph.D. in 2000 from the University of Chicago. He has been at Binghamton University since 2006. His areas of research and teaching include continental philosophy (especially 19th century German), moral and political philosophy, and philosophy of art. His recent publications include “Nietzsche, Contingency, and the Vacuity of Politics”(2009), “Genealogy and Irony”(2011), and “Genealogy as Immanent Critique: Working from the Inside”(2011). He is a recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Faculty:

BAT-AMI BAR ON is Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies, the Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, and Chair of Judaic Studies. She received her Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1981. She has been at Binghamton University since 1991. She is a recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Award for Faculty Excellence in Graduate Mentoring. Her areas of research and teaching include theories of violence (with a focus on terrorism and war), political and social philosophy (with a focus on democracy and global justice), and feminist political, social, and ethical theory. For her publications see: <http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~ami/>.

ERIC DIETRICH is Professor of Philosophy. He received his Ph.D. in 1985 from the University of Arizona. He has been at Binghamton University since 1988. He is a recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. His areas of research and teaching include metaphysics, philosophical logic, epistemology, and the philosophy of mind. His publications include *Sisyphus's Boulder: Consciousness and the Limits of the Knowable* (with Valerie Hardcastle, John Benjamins Press, 2005); "There is no progress in philosophy," *Essays in Philosophy*, 12:2 (2011); and "The Allure of the Serial Killer," in *Serial Killers and Philosophy*, John Wiley. A more complete list of his publications can be found at his website: <http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~dietrich/>.

RANDY FRIEDMAN is Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Judaic Studies. He received his Ph.D. in Contemporary Religious Thought in 2005 from the Department of Religious Studies at Brown University. He has been at Binghamton University since 2005. His areas of research and teaching are philosophy of religion, including Husserlian phenomenology, Modern Jewish Thought, and American Pragmatism. His recent publications include "Traditions of Pragmatism and the Myth of the Emersonian Democrat," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 43, 1 (Winter 2007), "Deweyan Pragmatism," *William James Studies* 1, 1 (August 2006), and "The Challenge of Selective Conscientious Objection in Israel," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Thought* 109 (April 2006). He is currently working on a series of articles that examine Levinas' ethical thought.

CHARLES GOODMAN is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Pell Honors Program (DPHP). He received his Ph.D. in 2002 from the University of Michigan. He has been at Binghamton University since 2003. His areas of research and teaching include Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, analytic metaphysics, and comparative ethics. He has published a book, entitled *Consequences of Compassion: An Interpretation and Defense of Buddhist Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 2009), and several articles about Buddhist philosophy, including "Paternalist Deception in the Lotus Sutra," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* (2008) and "Bhavaviveka's Arguments for Emptiness," *Asian Philosophy* (2008).

CHRISTOPHER KNAPP is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Director of Philosophy, Politics, and Law (PPL). He received his Ph.D. in 2001 from Rutgers University. He has been at Binghamton University since 2001. His areas of research and teaching include metaethics, ethics, environmental ethics, and philosophy of psychology. His recent publications include “Tragedies without Commons” (2011), “Species Inegalitarianism as a Matter of Principle” (2009), and “Equality and Proportionality”(2007). He is a recipient of the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

MAX PENSKY is Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Philosophy Department. He received his Ph.D. in 1989 from Boston College. He has been at Binghamton University since 1990. He is a recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. His areas of research and teaching include social and political philosophy, contemporary continental philosophy, especially critical theory, and the philosophy of law and international relations. Recent publications include *The Ends of Solidarity: Discourse Theory in Ethics and Politics* (2008) and “Amnesty on Trial: Impunity, Accountability, and the Norms of International Law” (2008).

ANTHONY PREUS is Distinguished Teaching Professor of Philosophy and Master of College-in-the-Woods. He received his Ph.D. in 1968 from Johns Hopkins University. He has been at Binghamton University since 1964. His areas of research and teaching include ancient Greek philosophy and medical ethics. He has published books and articles on Aristotle and other topics in ancient philosophy, most recently *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Scarecrow Press).

ANTHONY REEVES is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy. He received his Ph.D. in 2009 from Boston University. His areas of research and teaching include philosophy of law, political philosophy, and normative ethics. He is particularly interested in questions concerning legitimacy, authority, and responsible decision-making in legal and political institutions. His recent publications include “Do Judges Have an Obligation to Enforce the Law?: Moral Responsibility and Adjudication” (2010) and “Judicial Practical Reason: Judges in Morally Imperfect Legal Orders” (2011), both in *Law and Philosophy*.

LISA TESSMAN is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Women’s Studies. Lisa Tessman received her Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1996. She has been at Binghamton University since 1999. Her areas of research and teaching include Ethics, Feminist Philosophy, Critical Race Theory and Social and Political Philosophy. Her books include *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles* (Oxford University Press, 2005); *Feminist Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy: Theorizing the Non-Ideal* (edited, Springer, 2009); and *Jewish Locations: Traversing Racialized Landscapes* (co-edited with Bat-Ami Bar On, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001). Recently published articles and book chapters include “Idealizing Morality,” *Hypatia* 25 (4) (2010); “Against the Whiteness of Ethics: Dilemmatizing as a Critical Approach,” in *The Center Must Not Hold*, ed. George Yancy. Lexington

Books (2010); “Feminist Eudaimonism: Eudaimonism as Non-Ideal Theory,” in *Feminist Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy: Theorizing the Non-Ideal*, ed. Lisa Tessman (2009); and “Expecting Bad Luck,” *Hypatia* 24 (1) (2009). She is currently working on a monograph that focuses on moral failure and the dilemmatic character of moral life.

MELISSA ZINKIN is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS). She received her Ph.D. in 1999 from Northwestern University. She has been at Binghamton University since 1998. She is a recipient of the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. Her areas of research and teaching include Kant, the history of philosophy, aesthetics, and feminist theory. She is the author of articles on Kant, aesthetics, and critical theory, which have appeared in such journals as the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, the *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, and the volume, *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant* (Cambridge, 2006).

Affiliated faculty:

DAVID SLOANE WILSON is SUNY Distinguished Professor, Departments of Biology and Anthropology, and Director of EvoS.

In addition to the SPEL and affiliated faculty, there are other faculty members at Binghamton University who offer graduate courses that may be of interest to SPEL students. Students may consult their individual advisors for recommendations of other Binghamton faculty with whom they may like to study.

Philosophy department staff:

JOY TASSEY is the Administrative Assistant in the Philosophy Department. She came to the Philosophy Department from the School of Education in 2010. She is the only member of the department not in the Five Year Combined Degree Program to have an undergraduate degree from Binghamton University.

DONNA BERG is the Secretary in the Philosophy Department. She was recruited away from the restaurant industry to Binghamton University in 2011.

Getting oriented and choosing an advisor

Orientation takes place the week before classes begin, towards the end of August. The Binghamton University graduate school holds a mandatory orientation for those who will be teaching assistants. SPEL also holds its own mandatory TA orientation, as well as a general orientation, during the same week. At this orientation, new students will meet all of the SPEL faculty, and other SPEL students including students who are more advanced in the program. Also during this week, all incoming SPEL students, as well as any returning students who wish to, will have an individual meeting with the DGS. At this meeting, the DGS will, in consultation with each incoming student, determine who should serve initially as the student’s advisor. Advisors should be chosen based on the

fit between the student's interests and the faculty member's areas of specialization. Any student who enters SPEL with an M.A. should choose as an advisor the faculty member who will serve as dissertation director. Returning SPEL students may also meet with the DGS during the week of orientation, to review their progress in the program and to discuss any concerns. During or just before the first week of classes in the fall, each student should also meet with her/his advisor.

Meet with your advisor regularly—*at least* once a semester. Your advisor will keep your checklist of completed requirements on file and will update this checklist at your meetings; your advisor will also help you plan a course of study and choose your seminars. Terminal M.A. students who are writing an M.A. thesis will work closely with an advisor throughout the thesis work. Those continuing on to earn a Ph.D. will work intensively with an advisor to develop a dissertation plan, carry out the research and prepare for the Ph.D. qualifying exam, and complete the dissertation.

You may change advisors at any time, and do not need to worry about offending your advisor by choosing to work with someone else. Students change advisors for a variety of reasons. For instance, you may begin with one advisor, and then find that your interests have shifted and that you will be better matched with someone else. It is not unusual for a student to work with one advisor through the completion of the M.A. requirements, and then switch to a different advisor who will guide the student towards writing the dissertation and who will serve as dissertation director. If you would like to change advisors, please notify the DGS, and either notify your previous advisor or ask the DGS to do so.

The Five-Year Combined Degree Program

The five-year combined degree program is for Binghamton University undergraduates who are majoring in either Philosophy or Philosophy, Politics and Law (PPL) and who would like to stay one extra year at Binghamton and earn an M.A. in philosophy. Many students in this program plan to continue on to law school or to a Ph.D. program in philosophy at another university. To enter this program, a student must apply during the spring of their junior year or the fall of their senior year. Students who are admitted to the five-year combined degree program spend their senior year completing their B.A. requirements and simultaneously beginning to fulfill the SPEL M.A. requirements. By the end of their senior year, five-year combined degree program students should have taken (and received a grade of B or better in) PHIL 121 (Methods of Reasoning) or 122 (Elementary Logic), PHIL 201 (Plato and Aristotle), and PHIL 202 (Descartes, Hume and Kant) in order to fulfill the proficiency requirements for the M.A.. All students who want to leave open the possibility of applying to a Ph.D. program in Philosophy after completing their M.A. are *strongly* advised to take PHIL 122 rather than PHIL 121 for the logic proficiency, as formal logic is an expected part of a Philosophy M.A. and students will be disadvantaged in applying to Philosophy Ph.D. programs if they have not studied formal logic. However, students who intend to apply to law school after completing their M.A. and are certain that they will not be continuing to a Ph.D. in Philosophy may benefit more from PHIL 121. All five-year combined degree program

students must also take two SPEL seminars (plus the SPEL colloquium) during their senior year. These can be courses that are cross-listed with 400-level undergraduate philosophy courses, and that “double-count” towards the student’s undergraduate major. However, students will be treated in these courses like graduate students rather than undergraduates, and will be required to fulfill the course requirements for graduate students if these differ from the requirements for undergraduates. During their fifth year, students take a full load (three graduate seminars plus the SPEL colloquium per semester) to complete the SPEL M.A. requirements; they are, at that point, no different from any other terminal M.A. students. Students must enroll in the SPEL colloquium for four semesters (unless they do not begin the five-year program until the spring of their senior year, in which case they may have one semester of the colloquium waived). Like all terminal M.A. students, five-year combined degree program students may choose between writing an M.A. thesis (which must be defended by April of their fifth year) and taking the M.A. comprehensive exams (in April of their fifth year). Students who complete the five-year combined degree program and continue to pursue a Ph.D. in philosophy usually continue their studies at another university.

Earning a terminal M.A. degree

Students with a B.A. (usually but not necessarily in philosophy) may apply to the SPEL program to earn a terminal M.A. degree if they do not intend to continue in SPEL to earn a Ph.D.. Binghamton University undergraduates may apply to this track (or to the Five Year Combined Degree Program described above, in which case they must apply by November of their senior year). A terminal M.A. is usually completed in two years. Terminal M.A. students complete all of the requirements for the M.A.; they may choose between writing an M.A. thesis (which must be defended by April of their second year) and taking the M.A. comprehensive exams (by April of their second year). Terminal M.A. students are not eligible for paid teaching assistantships. If a student begins as a terminal M.A. student and then changes her/his mind and wishes to apply for admission to the Ph.D. program, she/he must take the M.A. comprehensive exams. Such a student may apply for funding when applying to the Ph.D. program.

Earning an M.A. and Ph.D. degree in SPEL (the M.A./Ph.D. track)

Students with a B.A. (usually but not necessarily in philosophy) may apply to SPEL with the intention of earning first an M.A. and then a Ph.D. These applicants may be offered teaching assistantships that can be renewed for up to four years; students who are not initially offered funding but who nevertheless begin the program are welcome to apply for funding in subsequent years. Students who wish to continue in the Ph.D. program after finishing the M.A. are required to take the M.A. comprehensive exams. Students’ overall progress and performance in the program is reviewed after the student has taken the M.A. comprehensive exams, and it is at this point that the student will be either formally granted or denied admission to the Ph.D. portion of the program.

Entering SPEL with an M.A. and earning a Ph.D.

Students who have earned an M.A. in philosophy from another institution may apply directly to the SPEL Ph.D. program. These applicants may be offered teaching assistantships that can be renewed for up to three years. Students with a philosophy M.A. who are admitted to SPEL will begin at the same point in the program as students who have just completed the M.A. requirements in SPEL, except that 1) they must enroll in the SPEL colloquium for two years; 2) among the six seminars that they take to fulfill the requirements for the Ph.D., they must take the first-year seminar in Social and Political Philosophy (in the Fall) and the first-year seminar in Ethics (in the Spring); and 3) if they have not concentrated on social, political, ethical or legal philosophy in their M.A. work, they may be required to take the M.A. Comprehensive Exams in Ethics and/or in Social and Political Philosophy. Students who hold an M.A. in Philosophy but are asked to take the M.A. Comprehensive Exams must receive a grade of “high pass” on the exam(s) in order to become ABD in SPEL. They must take the exam(s) by September of their second year (but may take them in their first year if they so choose), and may retake the exam(s) in January if necessary.

Program requirements

The M.A. degree may be earned by completing the following requirements (for which students may request waivers based on their particular circumstances; all such requests will be considered by the SPEL Committee, consisting of all SPEL faculty):

Required course work (any one course may simultaneously fulfill more than one of these requirements):

- A minimum of 32 credits, i.e. eight seminars, with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.3. Seven of these seminars must be SPEL seminars and the remaining one may be a SPEL seminar or may be chosen from other philosophy graduate courses or, in consultation with the student’s adviser, from among graduate courses offered by other departments. All graduate courses taught by SPEL faculty count as SPEL seminars. Before the beginning of each semester, a listing of all courses that count as SPEL seminars will be available. The listing will also specify which SPEL seminars fulfill the distribution requirements listed below. Some seminars may satisfy more than one distribution requirement at the same time; for instance, a particular seminar may fulfill the requirement for a course that draws mainly from the Anglo-American tradition and the requirement for a course in metaphysics, epistemology, etc.
- One first year SPEL seminar in Social and Political Philosophy and one first year SPEL seminar in Ethics, to be taken during the first year of residency (one in the fall, the other in the spring). The specific topics of the seminars vary, though they focus broadly on contemporary social and political philosophy and contemporary ethics; they are taught by different SPEL faculty members each year. These two seminars are taken by all entering SPEL students, including those who enter with an M.A. from another institution.

- At least two SPEL seminars emphasizing the history of philosophy. This is broadly construed, ranging from the ancient world to the 17th, 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, and may be in Western or non-Western philosophy. (Examples: Aristotle's Ethics and Politics; Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*; Evil in the History of Philosophy; History of Buddhist Thought.)
- One SPEL seminar that draws mainly from the Anglo-American tradition (examples: Contemporary Virtue Ethics; Rawls; Metaethics).
- One SPEL seminar that draws mainly from the Continental European tradition (examples: Marx and Arendt; Critical Theory; Contemporary Continental Political Philosophy).
- One SPEL seminar in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of science or philosophy of mind. (Examples: Philosophy of Mind; Buddhist Metaphysics; Feminist Epistemology).
- Four semesters of (one-credit) enrollment in the SPEL colloquium is required for the M.A.. Students in the Five Year Combined Degree Program may have one semester of the colloquium requirement waived. The colloquium is described in a separate section below.

Proficiency requirements:

- Level 1 logic proficiency:
This can be satisfied by any of the following:
 - 1) A grade of at least B in an undergraduate course on formal logic, taken at another institution; students who have earned a grade of at least B in a formal logic course as undergraduates need only show their transcript in order to fulfill this proficiency requirement.
 - 2) A grade of at least B in PHIL 122 (Elementary Logic), or completion of the exam(s) in PHIL 122 with a grade of at least B. SPEL students may informally "sit in" on PHIL 122 (check with the instructor for permission to do this) and take the exam(s) for the course, or may study the course material on their own and take the exam(s).
 - 3) A grade of at least B on the SPEL examination in Basic Formal Logic. This exam covers material from Irving Copi and Carl Cohen, *Introduction to Logic* (13th edition), chapters 8-10, and Kenneth Konyndyk, *Introductory Modal Logic*, chapters 1-2. The SPEL examination in Basic Formal Logic will be administered annually, in April.

Courses in "Critical Reasoning," "Informal Logic," and the like will *not* count as fulfilling this proficiency requirement. The exception to this is for students in the Five Year Combined Degree Program, who are permitted to take PHIL 121 (Methods of Reasoning); however, such students are strongly advised to take PHIL 122 if they intend to apply to Ph.D. programs in Philosophy. For more on this, see the section above on the Five Year Combined Degree Program.

- History of philosophy proficiencies:
A grade of at least B in undergraduate courses in ancient Greek philosophy and modern (i.e. 17th and 18th century) philosophy, or completion of the exam(s) in (undergraduate) Plato and Aristotle (PHIL 201) and Descartes, Hume and Kant (PHIL 202) with grades of at least B. As with the logic requirement, students who earned grades of at least B in these courses as undergraduates need only show their transcripts. Others may “sit in” on PHIL 201 and 202 and take the exams, study the material on their own and take the exams, or take equivalent courses at other institutions. Courses at other institutions must, to satisfy a history of philosophy proficiency, offer a general survey of the major figures of the period. The Director of Graduate Studies will have discretion in determining equivalencies.

Proficiency exams may not be graded by Graduate Instructors of Record; they may only be graded by SPEL faculty members. However, SPEL students may take or sit in on PHIL 122, 201 and 202 when taught by a Graduate Instructor of Record, and have a faculty member grade their exam(s).

Comprehensive Exams or thesis:

- All students earning an M.A. and seeking acceptance into the Ph.D. portion of the program must pass the M.A. Comprehensive Exams, which consist of two written exams, one in Social and Political Philosophy, and the other in Ethics. Reading lists are provided to assist students in preparing for these exams. For students entering in 2011 and later, exams must be taken during the first week of classes in the Fall semester of a student’s second year in the program. Three grades are possible on these exams: high pass, pass, and unsatisfactory. Students must receive a grade of “pass” (or better) in order to earn the M.A., and must receive a grade of “high pass” in order to be considered for acceptance into the Ph.D. portion of the program. Students who do not receive a sufficient grade on either or both of the comprehensive exams may be given the opportunity to retake the exam(s) once, in January of their second year in the program. However, a student who is performing poorly in the program (e.g. receiving low grades or incompletes) and who receives a grade of “unsatisfactory” on a Comprehensive Exam may be denied the opportunity to retake it. The M.A. Comprehensive Exams are described more extensively in a separate section below.
- Students seeking a terminal M.A. may either take the Comprehensive Exams described above, by April of their second year in the program, or may write an M.A. thesis. The thesis must be passed by April of a student’s second year in the program. (For Five-year Combined Degree Program students, “second year in the program” usually means the fifth year at Binghamton University).

Students who complete the M.A. requirements and wish to continue on to earn a Ph.D. must be formally accepted into the Ph.D. program. This decision will depend on the SPEL committee’s assessment of the student’s performance in seminars and on the

comprehensive exams, and on the student having completed all M.A. requirements according to the expected timeline. Students may also be accepted directly into the Ph.D. program if they have earned an appropriate M.A. degree from another institution.

The Ph.D. degree may be earned by completing the following requirements (for which students may request waivers based on their particular circumstances; all such requests will be considered by the SPEL committee):

Required course work:

- Students entering with an M.A. from another institution must take the first year SPEL seminars during the first year in the program and must enroll in the SPEL colloquium every semester for their first two years in the program. Other students continue to enroll in the SPEL colloquium for both semesters of their first year post-M.A. (i.e. their third year in the program).
- Students entering with an M.A. from another institution who have not concentrated on Ethics and/or Social and Political Philosophy in their M.A. work will be required to take one or both of the M.A. Comprehensive Exams. The exam(s) must be taken by September of the student's second year in the program, but may be taken as early as the student's first year. A student who receives a "pass" on the exam(s) may retake the exam(s) once, but must receive a grade of "high pass" on the exam(s) in order to become ABD. A student who receives an "unsatisfactory" on the exam(s) must seek permission from the SPEL Committee to retake the exam(s).
- A minimum of 24 additional course credit hours (six seminars) with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.3, that may, when applicable, be chosen from departments other than the philosophy department in consultation with the student's adviser.

Proficiency requirements:

- Demonstration of proficiency in one language other than English. Students may acquire their language proficiency in any manner, for instance, by "sitting in" on a language class at Binghamton University or at any other institution, by studying on their own, by spending time in a country in which the language is spoken, or by working with the Binghamton University Translation Research and Instruction Program (TRIP) to develop translation skills. It is only necessary to develop the ability to translate a written text in the language; ability in the spoken language is not required. A student whose native language is other than English will not be asked to demonstrate proficiency in their native language. Other students may demonstrate language proficiency in a variety of ways. Students who enter SPEL with an M.A. from a program that has a language requirement need only show evidence of having passed this requirement (however, having passed an undergraduate language requirement is not sufficient). Students may take a proficiency exam administered by TRIP or (depending on the language) by an appropriate faculty member at Binghamton University. The exam requires that

students translate into English a (approximately 700 word) passage from an academic text, with the use of a dictionary. Students may also request other specific ways to demonstrate their proficiency.

- Demonstration of proficiency (as described above) in one more language (other than English);

OR Level 2 logic proficiency. The Level 2 logic proficiency can only be satisfied by coursework at other institutions. The DGS has discretion in determining what coursework counts as satisfying this requirement.

Qualifying Exam and dissertation:

- Acceptance of a dissertation prospectus and satisfactory performance on a Ph.D. Qualifying Examination given by the student's third semester of full time residence in the Ph.D. portion of the program (i.e. the third semester after passing the M.A. requirements). A committee of three faculty members, the majority of whom are members of the Philosophy Department, approve the prospectus and administer the exam which includes both a written and an oral component. The chair of the committee must be a member of the SPEL faculty. Students who have passed the Qualifying Exam and all course and proficiency requirements for the Ph.D. are designated "All But Dissertation" (ABD). The Qualifying Exam is described in more detail in a separate section below.
- Satisfactory completion of a dissertation under the direction of a dissertation committee chosen by the student in consultation with her/his faculty adviser, who must be a member of the SPEL faculty. The committee is composed of at least three faculty members (including the primary adviser, who is the chair of the dissertation committee), the majority of whom must be members of the philosophy department. The dissertation must be approved by the dissertation committee and defended in an oral examination. For the oral examination, the graduate school appoints an outside examiner—usually chosen by the student in consultation with her/his adviser—to serve on the dissertation committee. A student has five years to successfully complete the dissertation after passing the qualifying exam. The dissertation is described in more detail in a separate section below.

Note on requirements: It is possible for SPEL students to write a dissertation on a topic in philosophy that is not in social, political, ethical or legal philosophy. If you intend to work on such a topic, and have the agreement of an advisor, you may substitute an exam on your area of research for one of the SPEL M.A. Comprehensive Exams. You may also substitute one philosophy course for any required course except for the first year SPEL seminars.

The SPEL colloquium

The SPEL colloquium is a speaker series that brings together all SPEL faculty and students in residence and serves to facilitate the exchange and development of ideas and to familiarize students with the norms of presentations in the discipline of philosophy. Colloquium speakers include invited guests from outside of the university, SPEL faculty, and advanced SPEL students who are writing dissertations. SPEL students who are less advanced in the program are asked to serve as commentators, except for terminal M.A. students, who do not serve either as commentators or as presenters.

There are typically three formats of the colloquium. Outside speakers present in a two-hour evening slot, with a graduate student commentator, a response, and time for questions. SPEL faculty presenters distribute their papers in advance; the colloquium meeting time is used for a graduate student comment, a response, and questions. SPEL graduate students and job candidates present at the colloquium meeting time, do not distribute their papers in advance, and do not have commentators.

Students who will earn both the M.A. and the Ph.D. in SPEL must be enrolled in the colloquium every semester for their first three years in the program; students who come with an M.A. in Philosophy and will earn only the Ph.D. in SPEL must be enrolled in the colloquium every semester for their first two years in the program; terminal M.A. students must be enrolled in the colloquium every semester for their two years in the program, except for students in the five-year combined degree program who begin the program in the spring of their senior (undergraduate) year, who may begin enrollment in the colloquium that semester and are enrolled in it for a total of three semesters. All students are expected to continue to attend the colloquium regularly for as long as they are in residence, even after they have stopped enrolling in the colloquium.

Professional development workshops: preparing for a career in Philosophy

On some of the weeks when there is no speaker scheduled for the colloquium, mandatory workshops will be held for SPEL students with the DGS or with other SPEL faculty. These meetings serve to help students gain professional experiences while they are graduate students and to achieve professional goals such as publishing, as well as to prepare students in other ways for the academic job market. The workshops include sessions such as “A Career in Philosophy,” “Preparing Papers for Philosophical Conferences and Publishing,” “Attending Philosophical Conferences” “Teaching, Diversity and Prejudice,” “Tales from the Job Market,” and “Preparing for and Entering the Philosophy Job Market.”

Students who aim to have a career in philosophy need to do more than complete their degree requirements. It is also important to become familiar with the practices and norms of the discipline and to do what is necessary to create a strong set of qualifications before attempting to secure an academic position. Advisors in SPEL will serve as mentors to help students do all of this, and the professional development workshops are also oriented towards preparing students for careers in philosophy. Students are strongly encouraged to identify early on which subfields of philosophy they would like to develop as an area of specialization and as areas of teaching

competency (AOS and AOC), so that they may plan their studies accordingly. Students will be advised about how to get connected in professional networks and how to become familiar with and comfortable within the meetings of philosophical associations. They will also be encouraged to submit papers or proposals for conference presentations and to publish articles in philosophical journals or edited collections.

M.A. Comprehensive Exams

The M.A. Comprehensive Exams consist of two written exams, one in Social and Political Philosophy, and the other in Ethics. Each year, a committee of three SPEL faculty members devise and grade the Ethics exam, and a committee of three different SPEL faculty members devise and grade the Social and Political Philosophy exam. Each exam consists of three questions. Students must answer all three questions. Three grades are possible on the exams: 1) high pass: this grade is necessary for admission into the Ph.D. portion of the program, 2) pass: this grade or better is necessary to earn the MA, 3) unsatisfactory. The exams are closed-book exams, that is, students may not consult books, notes, online resources, etc. during the exam. Each of the two exams is three hours long, with one exam given on one day and the other on a different day. If it is possible to schedule the exams on weekdays that will be done, otherwise the weekend will be used. Students are asked to write their exam answers on computers; students may request a loaner computer in advance.

Below is a list of readings that students are expected to have studied before taking the exams. Students may find that some of these readings are assigned in their seminars or in courses in which they work as teaching assistants; however, students should expect to complete much of the reading on their own. Students are strongly encouraged to form study groups for discussion of the readings.

Please note that all readings are pre-20th century. It remains to be seen which 20th and 21st century works will become canonical (or if philosophical canons will cease to form). Students can expect to study a wide range of 20th and 21st century works in SPEL seminars, but these works are not included on the M.A. comprehensive exams.

Reading list for the M.A. exam in ethics:

- Plato, *Republic*
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
- David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751/1772/1777)
- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785)
- John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (1861)
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887)

Reading list for the M.A. exam in social and political philosophy:

- Plato, *Crito*, *Republic* (especially books 1-5, 8, 9)
- Aristotle, *Politics* (especially books 1, 3-6, 7 chapters 1-3)
- St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (1266/8) (questions 90-97 forming the

- “Treatise on Law.”)
- Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1513)
 - Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651) (especially part 1 chapters 10-16, part 2 chapters 17-23, 26-29)
 - John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (1690)
 - Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1762) (especially books 1-2, 3 chapters 1-3, 8-11, 16, book 4 chapters 1-3)
 - Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) (“Introduction and Plan of the Work,” book I chapters 1-4, book IV Introduction, chapters 1-2)
 - *The Constitution of the United States*
 - *The Federalist Papers* (1787/8) (numbers 10, 39, 51, 57, 78)
 - Karl Marx/Frederick Engels, “Estranged Labor” in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, *The German Ideology Part I* (1848), “Wage Labor and Capital” (1849)
 - Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845)
 - John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859) (especially chapters 1-4), *On the Subjection of Women* (1869)

M.A. thesis

The M.A. thesis is an option only for terminal M.A. students (including Five Year Combined Degree Program students). Work for the M.A. thesis should be begun in close consultation with the student’s advisor at the beginning of the student’s final year in the program. Students are advised to decide upon a thesis topic and to begin reading for the thesis during the summer before their final year. It is permissible to use a previously written seminar paper as a starting point for the M.A. thesis. The thesis should demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the relevant literature on the topic of the thesis, and should contribute an original idea to this literature. Usually Fall semester is spent doing reading/research on the thesis topic and drafting the thesis. By the end of Fall semester, each student who is writing a thesis should, in consultation with her/his advisor, form a committee of three members (including the chair of the committee, who is the student’s advisor and who must be a SPEL faculty member), the majority of whom are members of the Philosophy department. The first part of spring semester may be used for rewriting or revising the thesis. The DGS will provide a deadline, usually in March, for all M.A. theses to be circulated to committee members. Committee members may ask for revisions to the thesis before the oral defense. When all committee members agree that the thesis is ready for defense, a one and a half hour oral defense will be scheduled, by the end of April. The thesis must be passed by the committee and submitted in final form to the Graduate School by the deadline set by the Graduate School (deadlines and guidelines are available on the Graduate School website).

Ph.D. qualifying exam and dissertation

Students must begin to develop a dissertation plan and undertake independent pre-dissertation research even before having completed all course requirements. Working closely with her/his primary advisor (who will become the chair of the committee for the qualifying exam and then for the dissertation), the student should write both a dissertation prospectus and a bibliography. The prospectus consists of an overall abstract (usually about two or three pages) of the dissertation, and separate abstracts (also usually about two or three pages each) for each of the planned dissertation chapters. A typical dissertation has about five or six chapters. The bibliography that accompanies the prospectus should contain approximately 40 or 50 works, some of which will be articles or chapters, and others of which will be books. The bibliography should indicate which works are relevant for each of the dissertation chapters. The student is expected to have studied every work listed in the bibliography.

When the student's advisor thinks that the prospectus and bibliography are ready, the student will circulate them to the other two faculty members on the committee. Committee members may simply approve the prospectus and bibliography, or may ask for revisions to the prospectus or changes or additions to the bibliography. After all committee members have approved the prospectus and bibliography, the student may prepare for the qualifying exam.

The qualifying exam has a written and an oral component. Usually, the written exam is taken over a three day period, during which the student writes for four hours per day. The written exam is devised by the committee. Usually committee members write several exam questions for each planned dissertation chapter (sometimes committee members divide up which chapters they will each examine the student on). The student chooses two questions per chapter to respond to. The questions may focus on the abstract of the chapter itself or on any of the works listed in the bibliography that correspond to that chapter.

Example of a qualifying exam, for a planned dissertation of six chapters:

Day 1: Exam on chapters one and two and corresponding works in the bibliography. For chapter one examiner A provides two questions and examiner B provides two questions; the student chooses one question from each examiner to respond to, and writes for one hour on each question. For chapter two examiner B provides two questions and examiner C provides two questions; the student chooses one question from each examiner to respond to, and writes for one hour on each question.

Day 2: Exam on chapters three and four and corresponding works in the bibliography. For chapter three examiner C provides two questions and examiner A provides two questions; the student chooses one question from each examiner to respond to, and writes for one hour on each question. For chapter four examiner A provides two questions and examiner B provides two questions; the student chooses one question from each examiner to respond to, and writes for one hour on each question.

Day 3: Exam on chapters five and six and corresponding works in the bibliography. For chapter five examiner B provides two questions and examiner C provides two questions; the student chooses one question from each examiner to respond to, and writes for one hour on each question. For chapter six examiner C provides two

questions and examiner A provides two questions; the student chooses one question from each examiner to respond to, and writes for one hour on each question.

After the committee has read and evaluated the written exam, a two hour oral exam will be held. Generally, the student will be asked to describe what she/he has learned during the written exam; sometimes it becomes evident to a student during a written exam that revisions must be made on the dissertation plan, and the student may describe what revisions she/he anticipates. Then the committee members may ask the student questions about any portion of the written exam or about works listed in the bibliography.

The aim of the qualifying exam is to provide a format for the student to do intensive work on beginning the dissertation and to bring out problems that may be encountered in the dissertation topic. Students may find that the written material that they produce during the exam forms the beginnings of chapter drafts.

The precise format of the qualifying exam is flexible, and may be modified by the student and committee when appropriate. The above description is intended as a guideline.

Following the qualifying exam, the student begins writing the dissertation. Usually, the committee that gave the qualifying exam becomes the student's dissertation committee (and the chair of that committee becomes the dissertation director). For the oral defense of the dissertation, the student must also have an outside member on the committee. For full guidelines and deadlines on preparing a dissertation, see the Graduate School website.

Timeline for completing SPEL degree requirements

Unfunded students, including all terminal M.A. students, are permitted to be part-time and do not have a mandatory timeline as long as they continue to demonstrate progress towards their degree and requirements are completed within the time limits set by the Graduate School: students earning an M.A. must complete all degree requirements within five years of matriculating; students earning a Ph.D. must be advanced to candidacy (i.e. become ABD) within five years of being awarded the M.A. if they earn both the M.A. and the Ph.D. in SPEL or within five years of matriculating if they came to SPEL with an M.A. in Philosophy; furthermore, all students earning the Ph.D. must complete all degree requirements within five years of being advanced to candidacy.

Funded students are required to complete requirements according to the following timelines:

Funded students entering with a B.A.:

1st year:

Fall semester: 3 courses + colloquium (13 credits).

Spring semester: 3 courses + colloquium (13 credits).

2nd year:

Fall semester: 2 courses + colloquium (9 credits).

Fall semester should also be spent studying for M.A. Comprehensive Exams.

Take M.A. Comprehensive Exams in September

It is strongly recommended that all M.A. level proficiencies be complete by the end of Fall semester.

Spring semester: 2 courses + colloquium (9 credits).

Retake M.A. Comprehensive Exam(s) if necessary.

All students must have completed all requirements for the M.A. by the end of spring semester.

Pre-dissertation research may also be begun during spring semester.

It is strongly recommended, but not required, that one of the two language proficiencies for the Ph.D. be completed by the end of spring semester.

3rd year:

Fall semester: 2 courses + colloquium (9 credits); pre-dissertation research (not for credit).

Spring semester: 2 courses + colloquium (9 credits); pre-dissertation research (not for credit).

Ph.D. coursework must be complete by the end of spring semester.

Ph.D. level proficiencies (languages) must be complete by the end of spring semester.

4th year:

Fall semester: Register for pre-dissertation research (9 credits).

Complete the prospectus by early in fall semester, and take the qualifying exam by the end of fall semester.

All students must be ABD by the end of fall semester.

Spring semester: Register for doctoral dissertation (1 credit).

Funded students entering with an MA:

1st year:

Fall semester: 3 courses + colloquium (13 credits).

Spring semester: 3 courses + colloquium (13 credits).

Ph.D. coursework must be complete by the end of spring semester.

It is strongly recommended, but not required, that students who must take the MA comprehensive exam(s) do so by January of their first year.

It is strongly recommended, but not required, that one of the two language proficiencies be completed by the end of spring semester.

2nd year:

Fall semester: Register for pre-dissertation research + colloquium (9 credits).

Students who must take the MA comprehensive exam(s) and have not already done so must take them in September, and retake in January if necessary.

Spring semester: Register for pre-dissertation research + colloquium (9 credits). Ph.D. level proficiencies (languages) must be complete by the end of spring semester.

Complete the prospectus by early in spring semester, and take the qualifying exam by the end of spring semester.

All students should be ABD before the beginning of fall semester of their 3rd year.

Notes on the timelines:

- Funded students' tuition scholarships cover a limited number of credits; if students register for additional credits, they must pay for these credits themselves. Tuition scholarships will pay for: 13 credits for each semester of the 1st year; 9 credits for each semester of the 2nd year; 9 credits for each semester of the 3rd year; 9 credits for fall semester of the 4th year, and 1 credit for spring semester of the 4th year. Students are required to register for at least 9 credits until they are ABD. Thus, if students do not become ABD according to the expected timeline, they will have to pay for all but one credit for continuing enrollment (exceptions may be made for Clark Fellows, who have additional years of funding).
- Students who wish to enroll in a 1 credit course such as a TRIP course may substitute this for the colloquium, with the understanding that they are still required to participate in the colloquium.
- All domestic (U.S. citizen or permanent resident) students are required to become NY residents before the beginning of their second year; tuition scholarships will not cover non-resident tuition for domestic students beyond their first year. Tuition scholarships *will* cover non-resident tuition for international students.
- The application deadline for the Dissertation Assistantship is in February of a student's 4th year for students entering with a BA (even though the prospectus would have been completed the previous semester) and in May of a student's 2nd year for students entering with an MA; the timing of this deadline is intended to give students who entered with an MA a fair chance to compete for the DA.

Planning your course of study, and a sample plan

In order to complete all degree requirements according to the expected timeline, students need to plan their coursework, proficiencies, exams and other work carefully. In planning their studies, students should keep in mind the AOS and AOC that they intend to develop. Frequent discussions between a student and her/his advisor are very helpful in this regard. Below is a sample plan, just to give some idea of how one student might go through the program. Obviously, each individual student's course of study will be different.

Sample plan for a funded M.A./Ph.D. student aiming to specialize in ethics, and develop teaching competencies in medical ethics and in contemporary Anglo-American social and political philosophy.

Enters having completed undergraduate courses in ancient Greek and modern history of philosophy with grades of at least B, but with a grade of less than a B in undergraduate formal logic.

Year 1:

Fall: Colloquium

First-year SPEL seminar (in Anglo-American social and political philosophy); *fulfills requirement for a SPEL seminar that draws mainly from the Anglo-American tradition, and fulfills requirement for a first-year SPEL seminar in social and political philosophy.*

SPEL seminar: Public/private in the history of philosophy; *fulfills one of the requirements for a SPEL seminar that emphasizes the history of philosophy.*

SPEL seminar: Normative ethics.

Teaching Assistant for PHIL 146, Law and Justice.

Spring: Colloquium

First-year SPEL seminar (in 20th century ethics); *fulfills requirement for a first-year SPEL seminar in ethics.*

SPEL seminar: Nietzsche; *fulfills requirement for a SPEL seminar that draws mainly from the continental European tradition.*

SPEL seminar: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*; *fulfills one of the requirements for a SPEL seminar that emphasizes the history of philosophy.*

Teaching Assistant for PHIL 149, Environmental Ethics

Summer:

Study for M.A. comprehensive exams.

Revise a seminar paper to submit for a conference presentation.

Year 2:

Fall: Take M.A. comprehensive exams.

Colloquium (serve as commentator for the first time)

SPEL seminar: Advanced topics in medical ethics

SPEL seminar: Buddhist metaphysics; *fulfills requirement for a SPEL seminar in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of science or philosophy of mind.*

Teaching Assistant for PHIL 148, Medical Ethics

Sit in on PHIL 122 (elementary logic) and take exam.

Spring: Colloquium

SPEL seminar: Ethics of cost-benefit analysis

Graduate course cross-listed with Philosophy: Radical politics

Teaching Assistant for PHIL 345, Philosophy of Law

Brush up on French (studied as an undergraduate) and take language proficiency exam in French.

M.A. requirements completed

Summer:

Instructor of record for summer session course, PHIL 146, Law and Justice.
Revise a seminar paper to submit for a conference presentation.

Year 3:

Fall: Colloquium

SPEL seminar: Virtue ethics
SPEL seminar: Feminist political theory
Teaching Assistant for PHIL 122, Elementary Logic
Sit in on German class.
Pre-dissertation research.

Winter break: Revise a paper that was presented at a conference and submit it for publication.

Spring: Colloquium (serve as commentator for the second time)

SPEL seminar: Rawls
SPEL seminar: Global politics
Teaching Assistant for PHIL 101, Introduction to Philosophy
Sit in on German class and take language proficiency exam in German.
Pre-dissertation research (begin writing prospectus).

Summer:

Complete a draft of the prospectus and bibliography.
Take a vacation (?)

Year 4:

Fall: Attend (but do not register for) Colloquium

Register for Pre-dissertation research:
Revise, polish, and turn in prospectus and bibliography
Prepare for and take the qualifying exam.
Teaching Assistant for PHIL 101, Introduction to Philosophy

Ph.D. requirements: "all but dissertation" (ABD) completed

Spring: Attend (but do not register for) Colloquium

Submit prospectus in February to be considered for Dissertation Assistantship
(awarded one semester DA for fifth year)
Register for Doctoral Dissertation (write chapter 1)
Instructor of record for PHIL 140, Topics in Ethics

Summer:

Write chapter 2 of dissertation, and revise it into a stand-alone article, then submit it for publication.

Year 5:

Fall: Attend (but do not register for) Colloquium
 Register for Doctoral dissertation (write chapters 3-4)
 Receive DA

Spring: Attend (but do not register for) Colloquium (serve as presenter)
 Register for Doctoral dissertation
 Revise another chapter of the dissertation into a stand-alone article, then submit it for publication.
 Write chapter 5
 Teach adjunct course in the Binghamton University philosophy department or at a community college.

Summer:

Revise chapters 1-5
 Instructor of record for summer session course, PHIL 101

Year 6:

Fall: Register for Doctoral dissertation
 Write chapter 6 of the dissertation
 Teach adjunct course in the Binghamton University philosophy department or at a community college
 Apply for visiting positions (i.e. one-year jobs) in philosophy

Spring: Register for Doctoral dissertation
 Write an introduction, revise entire dissertation, and submit it to dissertation committee
 Dissertation defense
 Ph.D. awarded.

Summer:

Teach adjunct course at community college

Year 7: Apply for tenure-track jobs in philosophy
 Hold one-year position as Visiting Assistant Professor at a college or university

Year 8: Begin tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Incomplete grades

Incomplete grades should be assigned only in special circumstances, such as a serious illness at the end of a semester. All incompletes must be completed in time for the instructor to submit a grade within six months of the last day of classes. After six months, a grade of "I" (incomplete) will become a grade of "W" (withdrawn) and cannot be changed. Funded students who receive an incomplete for a Spring semester course must

have a grade submitted to replace the incomplete by August 1st in order to retain their funding for the following fall.

Satisfactory progress towards the degree

Every February, the SPEL committee evaluates the progress that each SPEL student is making towards her/his degree. All students will receive a written evaluation. Students who are not making satisfactory progress will receive a warning from the DGS identifying a date by which specific improvements must be made. A student who fails to make the improvements may be dismissed from the Graduate School by the dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the DGS. Students who are receiving funding will not have their funding renewed for the following year if they are not making satisfactory progress towards the degree. Furthermore, students who are working for the department as teaching assistants will have their performance as teaching assistants evaluated. Those who have not performed their duties as teaching assistants in a satisfactory manner may not have their funding renewed for the following year.

Whether or not a student is making satisfactory progress is determined by a number of factors, including satisfactory completion of all degree requirements according to the expected timeline, grade point average, and participation in SPEL activities. Students who enter the program without an MA in Philosophy must be formally admitted to the Ph.D. portion of the program; this decision is based on satisfactory completion of all M.A. degree requirements (including receiving a grade of “high pass” on the M.A. comprehensive exams) according to the expected timeline, and grade point average. Expectations for satisfactory progress and the consequences for not meeting these expectations are outlined below.

Requirements for Satisfactory Progress for Ph.D. track students entering the program without an M.A. in Philosophy:

At the progress review during February of a student’s first year, if a student’s GPA is:

3.3 or below, the student’s funding will end at the completion of his or her first year, and the student will receive a warning that if his or her GPA does not improve to above a 3.3 at the completion of the spring semester, he or she may be dismissed from the Graduate School by the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the DGS. If the student’s GPA does improve to above a 3.3 at the completion of the spring semester, the GPA must improve further, to a 3.7, by the progress review of the second year, or else he or she will be at risk of not being permitted to continue past the M.A.;

below 3.7 but above 3.3, the student will receive a warning that if his or her GPA does not improve to a 3.7 by the progress review of the second year, then his or her funding will end at the completion of his or her second year, and he or she will be at risk of not being permitted to continue past the M.A..

At the progress review during February of a student’s second year, if a student’s GPA is:

below 3.7, or if there is any *W* on the transcript, the student's funding will end at the completion of his or her second year. In addition, the SPEL Committee will determine whether the student is permitted to continue past the M.A.

Any student who has not received a grade of "high pass" on each of the M.A. Comprehensive Exams will not typically be allowed to continue past the M.A.

At the progress review during February of a student's third year, if a student's GPA is:

below 3.7, or if there is any *W* on the transcript, the student's funding will end at the completion of his or her third year and he or she may be dismissed from the Graduate School by the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the DGS.

At the progress review during February of a student's fourth year:

If a student has not completed all doctoral degree requirements but for the dissertation (ABD), the SPEL Committee will determine whether the DGS will recommend that the student be dismissed from the Graduate School by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Requirements for Satisfactory Progress for students entering the program with an M.A. in Philosophy:

At the progress review during February of a student's first year, if a student's GPA is:

3.5 or below, the student's funding will end at the completion of his or her first year and he or she may be dismissed from the Graduate School by the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the DGS.

below 3.7 but above 3.5, the SPEL Committee will determine whether the student's funding will end at the completion of his or her first year.

At the progress review during February of a student's second year:

If any of these conditions obtain, the SPEL Committee will determine whether the DGS will recommend that the student be dismissed from the Graduate School by the Dean of the Graduate School: if a student was required to take the M.A. Comprehensive Exam(s) and has not received a grade of "high pass" on the exam(s); or has not completed all coursework required for the Ph.D.; or has not made satisfactory progress on the dissertation prospectus and/or on completing the Ph.D. proficiency requirements.

Requirements for Satisfactory Progress for terminal M.A. students not in the Five Year Combined Degree Program:

Students must receive a GPA of at least 3.0 in their first semester. Students with a GPA of 3.0 or less after their first semester may be dismissed from the Graduate School by the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the DGS. Students with a GPA between 3.0 and 3.3 will receive a warning that, unless they make significant improvement in their work, they may be recommended for severance from the Graduate School. All terminal M.A. students will be re-evaluated at the end of their first year; students who are at risk of not meeting the minimum requirements for the degree may be recommended for severance from the Graduate School. Students with a GPA of less than 3.05 at the end of the first year, or less than 3.3 at the end of their third semester, will be recommended for severance from the Graduate School.

Requirements for satisfactory progress for students in the Five Year Combined Degree Program:

Students will be evaluated before they formally enter SPEL, i.e., typically at the end of one's senior year as an undergraduate. Students with a GPA of less than 3.15 in their initial graduate coursework will not be recommended for matriculation into the Graduate School. Students with a GPA of less than 3.15 at the end of their first full semester as a graduate student may be recommended for severance from the Graduate School. The SPEL Committee reserves the right to deviate from these policies in cases that it deems contain exceptional extenuating circumstances.

Graduate certificates available at the University

While completing a degree in SPEL, students have the opportunity to simultaneously earn a graduate certificate in a variety of areas. Several SPEL faculty members are involved in graduate certificate programs and can advise about them. For more information on all of the graduate certificates that are available, see <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/cs/graduatecertificates.asp>, or for the certificate programs listed below, ask the SPEL faculty member indicated:

Graduate certificate in Asian and Asian American Studies: Charles Goodman
 Graduate certificate in Evolutionary Studies: Eric Dietrich, Christopher Knapp
 Graduate certificate in Feminist Studies: Bat-Ami Bar On, Lisa Tessman
 Graduate certificate in German Studies Certificate: Robert Guay, Max Pensky, Melissa Zinkin

Funding your graduate studies

Students may be admitted to SPEL with or without funding. Students in the five-year combined degree program and other terminal M.A. students cannot be considered for funding. Students entering with a B.A. and intending to earn an M.A. and a Ph.D. in SPEL may be offered a teaching assistantship that is renewable for up to four years of funding, and students entering with an M.A. and intending to earn a Ph.D. in SPEL may be offered a teaching assistantship that is renewable for up to two years of funding.

Teaching assistantships are offered for one year at a time and are renewed conditional upon the student's satisfactory progress towards the degree and satisfactory performance as a teaching assistant. A teaching assistantship comes with a tuition scholarship, a stipend, and health care benefits. Students who are not initially offered funding but who begin the program may apply for funding in subsequent years, but they will be competing for the available teaching assistantships with new applicants to SPEL.

Students who are in their fourth year (or second year if they entered with an M.A.) and who will be ABD by the end of fall semester (or by a designated date in the spring semester if they entered with an M.A.) may apply for a Dissertation Assistantship (DA); to apply the student must submit a dissertation prospectus with bibliography, and a letter of recommendation from her/his advisor. Applications are due in early February. The philosophy department expects to have one DA available each year. There will be a merit-based competition amongst all qualified SPEL students for this fellowship. In some cases, one DA may be split between two students, and each student will receive the DA for one semester. The DA carries the same stipend, tuition scholarship, and benefits as a teaching assistantship, but the recipient does not have any teaching duties; this frees the DA recipient to focus fully on writing the dissertation. Students who are working on dissertations but who are not a DA recipient are often offered work in the department as adjunct instructors.

Other opportunities for funding exist. Students who have already earned their M.A. (in SPEL or elsewhere) and who have already served as a teaching assistant (or taught elsewhere) may apply to teach their own courses during summer sessions or winter session. Students who do not have teaching assistantships may want to volunteer to serve as a teaching assistant (without pay) both in order to gain teaching experience and in order to become qualified to teach their own courses.

Applicants to the SPEL program who meet particular "diversity criteria" are encouraged to apply for a Clifford D. Clark Graduate Fellowship for Diversity. "Clark Fellows" are awarded (conditional upon satisfactory progress towards the degree) funding for two years to earn a terminal M.A., for five years to earn an M.A. and a Ph.D., and for four years to earn a Ph.D. if entering with an M.A.. The fellowship includes a tuition scholarship, a stipend that is higher than other teaching assistantship stipends in the department, health care benefits, and other miscellaneous benefits. Clark Fellows assist in or teach one course per year. For more information, see <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/cs/clark.asp>.

Some students find adjunct work at other colleges or universities while they are still working on their degree—most often when they are writing dissertations. While adjunct teaching either at Binghamton or elsewhere may be financially necessary, becoming absorbed in teaching sometimes sidetracks students from finishing their degrees, and students should be careful in this regard.

For information on loans, work-study, and other ways to fund your graduate studies, see: <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/cs/financialinfo.asp>.

Working as a teaching assistant and as an instructor of record

SPEL students who receive a teaching assistantship will be assigned to assist in an undergraduate class taught by a member of the philosophy department faculty. Usually, the teaching assistant attends the lectures that are delivered by the faculty member, and leads (and grades all work for) two discussion sections. However, specific duties vary and may include more grading, particularly if extra discussion sections are led by undergraduate teaching assistants (who are not permitted to do grading) or if there is a lecture course with no discussion sections. For the first two years of working as a teaching assistant, the student will rotate through a variety of undergraduate courses, usually including: PHIL 146 (Law and Justice), PHIL 149 (Environmental Ethics), PHIL 148 (Medical Ethics), PHIL 147 (Ethics, Markets and Law), or PHIL 345 (Philosophy of Law). After this (or a similar) rotation, students will be asked by the chair of the philosophy department to express their preferences about which courses they would like to assist in. Possible courses may include: PHIL 101 (Introduction to Philosophy), PHIL 105 (Introduction to Asian Philosophy), PHIL 107 (Introduction to Existentialism and Phenomenology), PHIL 122 (Elementary Logic), PHIL 201 (Plato and Aristotle), and PHIL 202 (Descartes, Hume and Kant). In their final year of receiving a teaching assistantship, students are given the opportunity to be the instructor of record for one course (i.e., to teach their own class rather than assist). Most 100-level and many 200-level courses may be taught by graduate instructors of record. All assignments to courses are made by the chair of the philosophy department in consultation with the DGS. Any student who is unhappy with a teaching assignment or who has a special request should discuss the matter with the chair of the philosophy department and/or with the DGS.

Graduate teaching assistants are evaluated every semester. Teaching evaluations of graduate assistants will be distributed in discussion sections and sent to the faculty member teaching the course, who will then write a formal evaluation of the graduate teaching assistant. This evaluation is read by the DGS and the chair of the philosophy department, and is kept in the graduate student's file. Instructors of record are also required to distribute teaching evaluations in their class; they are encouraged but not required (unless there is a problem, such as complaints from students) to have a SPEL faculty member (often their advisor) visit their class and write a letter of evaluation.

Adjusting to teaching and learning how to balance the demands of teaching and the demands of being a student can be difficult. Graduate teaching assistants who feel that they are being overloaded with teaching and grading duties should discuss their concerns with the faculty member for whom they are assisting. Usually, as one becomes more experienced with teaching, one is better able to limit the amount of time that it takes to prepare for class and accomplish grading, without sacrificing the quality of one's teaching.

Expectations regarding graduate student responsibilities as teaching assistants or graduate instructors of record are as follows:

1. Your obligations for the semester begin during the first week of classes and end only after grades are submitted.
2. Your time commitment during the semester is about 20 hours a week. (The 20 hours include class attendance, office hours, preparation, meeting with students, correcting and evaluating students' work, and all the meetings that are required by the course.)
3. You are bound by a code of professional ethics to discharge all your responsibilities appropriately.
4. If you are a graduate teaching assistant, then you should
 - a. Be prepared for and attend all lectures and all section meetings of the course you are assisting. If an emergency or a professional conflict arises, you must communicate with the course's instructor of record and work out a solution for your absence.
 - b. Attend all meetings asked for by the instructor of record for the course that you are assisting.
 - c. Hold office hours (2 hours a week) during all the weeks that the course you are assisting meets, and make arrangements for students to see you by appointment. (But you do not need to be available to students on demand, to give them your private phone number, and the like).
 - d. Teach to the syllabus of the course. If you are interested in some variation (e.g. introducing a different reading), you need to have a clear understanding with the instructor of record for the course.
 - e. Complete all corrections and evaluations of student work on time.
 - f. Use a teaching evaluation instrument and file copies of your teaching evaluations with the Philosophy Department. The teaching evaluation can be supplied by the instructor of record or if not, by the Philosophy Department.
 - g. If difficulties with students arise in your course – disciplinary problems, plagiarism – speak with the instructor of record for the course that you are assisting.
 - h. If difficulties arise between you and the instructor of record for the course that you are assisting, speak with the DGS and/or the chair of the Philosophy Department.
 - i. If you teach an ABC section, contact and stay in touch with the college's Master.
5. If you are a graduate instructor of record, then you should
 - a. Be prepared for and attend all the class meetings of your course. If an emergency or a professional conflict arises, notify your class of changes and arrange to reschedule the meeting you will be missing. If the emergency is long term, discuss the situation with the DGS and the Philosophy Department chair. Notify the Philosophy Department office if you will be missing any classes.

- b. Hold office hours (2 hours a week) during all the weeks that the course you are teaching meets, and make arrangements for students to see you by appointment. (But you do not need to be available to students on demand, to give them your private phone number, and the like).
- c. Teach to the syllabus of the course. A copy of the syllabus is due in the Philosophy Department's office no later than the end of the first day of classes. If you revise the syllabus, a copy of the revision should be filed with the department. All syllabi need to be detailed enough and describe the course, list all assigned readings and all course requirements, and provide a schedule. (A syllabus is a legal document.)
- d. Complete all corrections and evaluations of student work in a timely fashion.
- e. Use a teaching evaluation instrument and file copies of your teaching evaluations with the Philosophy Department at the end of the semester. The teaching evaluation can just be a standardized one (University or Department of Philosophy) or supplemented with an evaluation you devise.
- f. If difficulties with students arise in your course – disciplinary problems, plagiarism – speak first with your teaching mentor or advisor, and/or with the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Philosophy. For procedural questions consult the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Philosophy.
- g. If you teach an ABC section, please contact and stay in touch with the college's Master.

Offices and library carrels

Students who are working as teaching assistants will be assigned an office, usually shared with other teaching assistants, in the Library Tower. Please cooperate with your office-mates about sharing the space; it is best if teaching assistants sharing an office hold their office hours at different times.

Students who do not have teaching assistantships (and therefore do not have offices) may request a library carrel in order to have a private study space on campus. For carrels, see: <http://library.lib.binghamton.edu/webdocs/circ.html#grad>.

International students

SPEL welcomes international students. Applications from international students are assessed exactly the same way as those from U.S. citizens, except that TOEFL scores are requested from students for whom English is not a native language. International students are eligible for teaching assistantships and for the dissertation assistantship (but not for Clark Fellowships).

International students who wish to improve their ability in spoken or written English may enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Both intermediate and advanced classes are offered as well as a course called "Oral Communication in College Teaching" which is tailored to international graduate teaching assistants. While graduate students do not receive credit for ESL classes, they do receive hours that count for maintaining full

time status. For the student's first year enrolled at Binghamton University (but not for subsequent years), the cost of the classes is covered by the tuition scholarships that come with teaching assistantships. See: <http://iss.binghamton.edu/admission/esl.html>.

Information about visas, employment, immigration regulations, and so on is available at the Office of International Student and Scholar Services. Visit their office in Room G-1 (ground floor) of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center in Hinman College or go to: <http://iss.binghamton.edu>. There are also several different graduate student organizations for international students. Information on these can be found at: <http://iss.binghamton.edu/admission/virhostnew.htm>.

Non-matriculated students

Students who have not applied or been accepted to SPEL may, if they have completed an undergraduate degree, take graduate courses in SPEL. However, individual faculty members may insist on the student having completed certain prerequisites before taking a particular seminar, and some seminars are restricted; for instance, the First Year Seminar is only for students who have been admitted to SPEL.

Some students who are interested in SPEL but who want more background in philosophy to strengthen their application, or who want to test out what SPEL is like before committing to the program, take SPEL seminars before applying to SPEL. If later admitted to SPEL, students may apply up to 12 credits (3 SPEL seminars) towards their degree in SPEL.

More information on registering as a non-matriculated graduate student can be found at: <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/ps/nondegree.asp>.

The SPEL committee

The SPEL committee consists of all SPEL faculty members. Policy decisions, curricular decisions, admissions and funding decisions, and so on are made by this committee. This committee also evaluates current SPEL students. SPEL meetings are scheduled as needed, usually from 11:45-1:00 on Tuesdays or Thursdays, on weeks that there is no Philosophy Department meeting and no colloquium or workshop meeting. SPEL students are welcome to attend SPEL meetings, except that meetings or portions of meetings will be closed to students when individual prospective or current SPEL students are discussed. The SPEL committee welcomes suggestions from any SPEL student at any time.

Graduate student organizations and student representation in SPEL

There is a general Binghamton University Graduate Student Organization (GSO) that SPEL students may wish to be involved in. Information can be found at: <http://www.gso-binghamton.org>. In addition, SPEL students may become involved in the SPEL-GSO, which is recognized as a suborganization of the Binghamton University GSO. The SPEL-GSO is responsible for setting its own meeting times and for organizing itself and

determining its own structure and activities, and deciding how SPEL-GSO funds are to be spent.

The SPEL faculty appreciates having two representatives of the SPEL-GSO serve on the SPEL committee as non-voting members and attend SPEL meetings regularly (except for those meetings that must be closed to students).

Resolving disputes

Disputes between undergraduate students and graduate teaching assistants or instructors of record, between two graduate students, or between a graduate student and a faculty member can usually be resolved informally. Whenever possible, the parties involved should speak with each other first in order to attempt to resolve the conflict. Students who are supervised by a particular faculty member may speak to the faculty member for help in resolving a conflict that arises between (undergraduate or graduate) students. If the conflict cannot be resolved at this level, SPEL students are encouraged to speak with the DGS or with the chair of the philosophy department about conflicts with each other or with faculty members. In some cases, an ad hoc committee will be formed within the philosophy department to hear grievances. The University Ombudsman (see: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/ombudsman/>) provides advice and services in mediation and other forms of conflict resolution and may be helpful, including in the case of serious offences such as sexual harassment. A dispute that cannot be resolved at the department level or with the help of the University Ombudsman may be brought to the grievance committee of the graduate council.

The Graduate School

SPEL is governed by all policies of The Graduate School at Binghamton University. Please visit their website at <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/>, as they provide lots of important and helpful information for graduate students. In particular, be sure to familiarize yourself with the graduate school manual, found at: <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/fs/handbook.asp?lv=1&dt=fs>.

APPENDIX I: Checklist of Degree Requirements

Checklist of Requirements for M.A.

Name: _____ **Entered program in (semester/year):** _____
Advisor: _____

- Eight seminars, seven of which must be SPEL seminars and one of which may be chosen from other Philosophy graduate courses or in consultation with the student's adviser from among courses offered by other departments, with a cumulative grade point average of at least a 3.3.

	Course name	Course number	Professor	Semester/year	Final grade
1)					
2)					
3)					
4)					
5)					
6)					
7)					
8)					

- One first year SPEL seminar in Social and Political Philosophy and one in Ethics, both to be taken during the first year of residency.

Course name: _____

Course name: _____

- Two SPEL seminars emphasizing the history of philosophy.

Course name: _____

Course name: _____

- One SPEL seminar that draws mainly from the Anglo-American tradition.

Course name: _____

- One SPEL seminar that draws mainly from the Continental European tradition.

Course name: _____

- One SPEL seminar in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of science or philosophy of mind.

Course name: _____

- Enrollment in the SPEL colloquium for four semesters (one semester may be waived for students in the Five Year Combined Degree Program).

Checklist of Requirements for Ph.D.

Name: **Entered program in (semester/year):**

Advisor:

Check one:

- Completion of the M.A. requirements in the SPEL Philosophy program.
- Or** completion of an equivalent M.A. at another institution.
 - One first year SPEL seminar in Social and Political Philosophy and one in Ethics, both to be taken during the first year in the program. (*Required only of Ph.D. students without an M.A. from SPEL*).

Course name:

Course name:

- A grade of “high pass” on comprehensive exams in Ethics and/or in Social and Political Philosophy (*Required only of Ph.D. students without an M.A. from SPEL, and who were told in their admissions letters that the comprehensive exam[s] would be required.*)
- Enrollment in the SPEL colloquium for four semesters if entering the program with an M.A. from another institution, and for two semesters (in addition to the four semesters already completed for the M.A.) for students who earned their M.A. in SPEL.
- Six seminars that may, when applicable, be chosen from departments other than the Philosophy Department in consultation with the student's adviser.

	Course name	Course number	Professor	Semester/year	Final grade
1)					
2)					
3)					
4)					
5)					
6)					

Proficiency requirements:

- Demonstration of proficiency in one language other than English.
Language:

Check one:

- Demonstration of proficiency in one more language (other than English).
Language:
- Or** level 2 logic proficiency (see separate sheet for criteria).

Qualifying exam and dissertation:

- Acceptance of a dissertation prospectus and satisfactory performance on a Ph.D. qualifying examination.

Date passed:

- Satisfactory completion and defense of a dissertation.

Dissertation director:

Committee members:

Outside examiner:

Defense date:

ADVISOR SIGNATURE (when checklist is complete) _____ Date _____

APPENDIX II: Writing the Prospectus

The prospectus consists of an overall abstract (usually about two or three pages) of the dissertation, and separate abstracts (usually about two or three pages each) for each of the planned dissertation chapters. A typical dissertation has about five or six chapters. The bibliography that accompanies the prospectus should contain approximately 40 or 50 works The bibliography should indicate which works are relevant for each of the dissertation chapters. The student is expected to have studied every work listed in the bibliography.

– from the SPEL Handbook

The most important thing to remember about the prospectus is that consists of a series of abstracts. In these abstracts, you have slightly more latitude to specify the details of your claims than you would in a typical conference abstract, but not much. As with all abstracts the goal is to convey both concisely and accurately one's thesis or main claims, the support (whether evidence or argument) for one's thesis or main claims, and the contrary positions that one will take into consideration. There is little room for anything that is neither a main claim nor an argument that supports or refutes a main claim. It must be immediately clear what your main point is. (There may also be some small number of equally important main points.) If you are unsure what your main point is, then try writing a 50 or 100 word abstract. If you can't or if it doesn't make any sense, then you don't have a dissertation topic.

With anything you write that is not your main point, it should be clear how that relates to your main point. You should not have substantive discussions or extensive use of quotations. You should not frequently refer backwards and forwards in your prospectus; you should structure it in a way that your argumentative aims are clear from the outset and your exposition follows a logical progression. The positions that you are arguing against should be presented with as much care as your own. Please note that according to the Handbook guidelines, a typical prospectus would be about 15 pages long.

The most basic criterion for assessing a dissertation is whether it makes an original contribution to scholarship. This can mean many things, but it always requires acknowledgement and understanding of existing scholarship. What is new can be: a problem, a solution, an argument for an old position, an objection to a new position, an interpretive frame, an analysis, an explanation of something previously unexplained, an observation of something previously unnoticed, or many other things. But one always defines one's original contribution in relationship to existing scholarship. One of the virtues of Lovitts and Wert's Developing Quality Dissertations in the Humanities lies in its discussion of this point.

So one traditional way of organizing a dissertation is: summary and analysis of existing literature, criticism of existing positions, arguments for a favored position, further implications of adopting the favored position. One need not, of course, adopt this form. Another popular format is to break up one's topic into a number of sub-topics that can be treated separately. Another popular format is to identify a problem, argue that existing positions need to but fail to solve it, and then offer a solution. But however one organizes one's dissertation, the same responsibility, that of explaining existing scholarship and how one may go beyond it, obtains.

The first draft of your prospectus will usually serve as the occasion for constructive criticism, and since your prospectus will presumably organize your subsequent work, it is important that you have a good prospectus. Your advisor will probably offer you criticism that is directed toward the definition of your project, so that you may write a successful dissertation. Accordingly you may be asked to clarify your thesis, to consider a wider range of viewpoints, to narrow the focus of your dissertation, to develop your arguments, to make your claims more modest, to make your claims less modest, to clarify how elements are related to one another, to divide your discussion into a series of independent points, and so on.

Although the Handbook refers to it as accompanying the prospectus, the bibliography is really an integral part of the prospectus. It shows how you are situating your discussion and what claims and arguments you will be responsible for. As the Handbook indicates, you are expected to have studied each listed work. The practical import of this is that your Qualifying Exam committee may and will ask you about the works listed, whether or not you mention them in your prospectus.

Before the Qualifying Exam, your committee will also likely ask you about inclusions and omissions in your bibliography. As you may already understand, this is because it is important to settle what audience you are addressing yourself to and which arguments and objections you are taking responsibility for. You must be both comprehensive and exclusive in constructing your bibliography. You need to cover the full range of existing discussion of the problem, idea, argument, or issue that you are addressing. At the same time, you need to define a collection of books and articles that may or may not address each other *as* an existing discussion, and doing so will take some selectivity.

The Handbook suggests that a list of 40 to 50 works is appropriate for a bibliography. If this seems much too small to you, then your dissertation topic is probably too broad or amorphous. If this seems much too long to you, then you either haven't done enough research or your dissertation topic is too narrow or weird.

One common question is how one should indicate, as the Handbook instructs, which works are relevant for which dissertation chapters. There are a variety of acceptable ways of doing this, and it doesn't much matter which one you choose.

It is very difficult to construct an excellent prospectus, but if you do, the rest is mostly just typing.

APPENDIX III: DECLARATION OF COMMITTEE FORM

Instructions: please fill out and submit this form to the Graduate Director no later than the beginning of your fourth year (or equivalent) in SPEL, and again whenever there is a change in your committee membership or whenever there is a significant change in the topic of your dissertation.

TITLE OF DISSERTATION:

name

signature

COMMITTEE:

CHAIR:

COMMITTEE:

COMMITTEE:

(optional)

COMMITTEE:

BRIEF SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION:

SIGNATURE AND DATE:

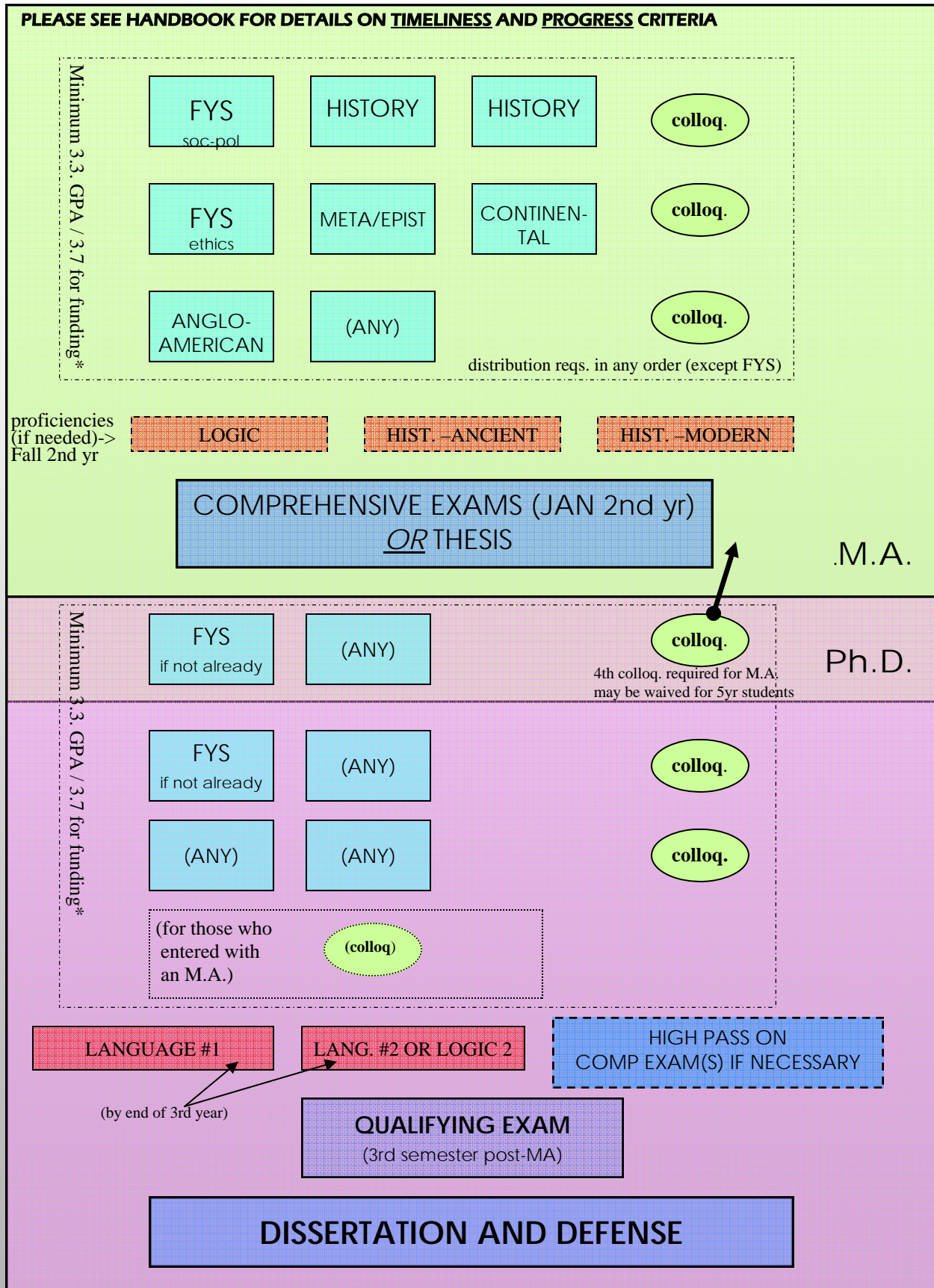
APPENDIX IV: INDEPENDENT STUDY FORM

Instructions: please fill this out at the beginning of the semester in which you are doing an independent study.

PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING TO EARN THE INDEPENDENT STUDY CREDITS – PLANNED COURSE OF STUDY, MEETINGS, WRITING, ETC.

SIGNATURE AND DATE:

SPEL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (UNOFFICIAL)



* please see "SPEL Requirements for Satisfactory Progress Towards the Degree" for additional information