

Pedagogical Training Plan - Department of Philosophy

Overview

The Department of Philosophy views the pedagogical training of its students as an integral part of its PhD program. Doctoral students are required to provide instructional assistance to the faculty in undergraduate-level courses and to participate in a number of pedagogical training and mentoring activities, all with the aim of becoming excellent teachers of philosophy. The teaching experience that our students acquire while in our program sets them apart and helps them to succeed in their professional lives post-graduation. To meet with success on the academic job market, philosophy PhDs must compete for positions in diverse institutions of higher education. Many of these positions are teaching intensive, but even faculty positions at research-oriented institutions have a significant teaching component and favor applicants with solid teaching experience and pedagogical training. Above and beyond its role in professional academic life, however, the Department of Philosophy views the teaching of philosophy as standing in a symbiotic relation of mutual support with the activity of philosophizing itself. For this reason, even those doctoral students who decide not to pursue a career in academia will benefit greatly from having acquired the myriad of complex social, communication, and organizational skills that underwrite effective teaching.

Our Pedagogical Training Plan has been designed to ensure that all graduates of our PhD program are able to:

- design and teach introductory courses in philosophy
- design and teach upper-level undergraduate courses in their field of specialization
- create instructive assignments for students and provide helpful and constructive feedback on their work
- effectively facilitate in-class discussion
- deliver effective lectures
- cultivate and maintain an inclusive classroom environment
- describe their own approach to the education of students and provide thoughtful rationales for their pedagogical choices

PTP Requirements

The following table provides a timeline for the completion of the requirements all PhD students must meet in accordance with the Department of Philosophy's Pedagogical Training Plan. In addition, the table includes recommendations and suggestions for pedagogical training events and optional, beneficial teaching opportunities that students are encouraged to take advantage of. *All items not marked as "optional" are required.*

Year	Teaching Experience	Pedagogical Training and Mentoring Activities	Objectives for Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill Development
1	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to acquire basic knowledge of philosophy through departmental coursework
2	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of Philosophy Pedagogy Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to acquire basic knowledge of philosophy through departmental coursework

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Design and College Teaching – CCTL (<i>optional</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire initial practice presenting philosophical material in an instructional capacity and discuss various subject-specific pedagogical issues with faculty members
3	2 Grad Student-TA Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching@Chicago Conference – CCTL¹ • Department of Philosophy TA Training Workshop • Department of Philosophy Classroom Climate Workshop • Observation and feedback from faculty member during TA assignment • Fundamental of Teaching in the Humanities – CCTL (<i>optional</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about available resources to assist with teaching undergraduates at the University of Chicago and reflect on initial experiences in the classroom • Learn from more experienced TAs the strategies and best-practices for generating and maintaining productive discussions and organizing discussion sections • Learn strategies for establishing an inclusive and welcoming classroom climate and for dealing with implicit bias and stereotype threat • Acquire knowledge of general methods for leading effective discussions, assessing student learning, grading practices and norms • Practice teaching and receive constructive feedback on classroom instruction
4	2 Grad Student-TA Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a syllabus for a self-taught course in consultation with the DGS and the student's dissertation committee chair • One guest lecture in a departmental course • Observation and feedback from faculty member during TA assignment • CCT Course Design and College Teaching Seminar (CCTE 50000) or a substitute per DGS if this does not run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to design an inclusive and well-conceived course, based on meaningful learning objectives, informed by active learning methods and assessment practices appropriate to the discipline • Practice teaching and receive constructive feedback on classroom instruction

¹ Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning (<https://teaching.uchicago.edu/>)

5	1 Grad Student-TA Position and 1 Grad Student Lecturer Position (*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One guest lecture in a departmental course • Observation and feedback from faculty member during TA assignment • Observation and feedback from additional faculty member (either the DGS or one of the student's dissertation committee members) • Individual Teaching Consultation – CCTL (<i>optional</i>) • Seminar & Workshop on Teaching Portfolios – CCTL (<i>optional</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice teaching and receive constructive feedback on classroom instruction from both philosophy faculty and specialists in teaching and learning • Design a philosophy course suitable for a mixed undergraduate class • Develop a draft statement of the student's teaching philosophy reflecting their past teaching experiences
6	1 Grad Student-TA Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Philosophy Placement Workshop • Observation and feedback from faculty member during TA assignment • Complete any remaining requirements for College Teaching Certificate² (<i>optional</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a polished teaching dossier (under the guidance of the philosophy department placement director) to be included with applications for academic positions post-graduation • Practice teaching and receive constructive feedback on classroom instruction

(*) – Students will have the option to hold a lectureship to teach one standalone course in either their 5th or 6th year. This course may either consist of a tutorial offered to students enrolled in the intensive track of the undergraduate philosophy major, or it may consist of a section of a departmental course for which that student has already served as a graduate student-TA or for which they have demonstrated all competencies required to provide high-quality instruction. If a student decides not to hold a lectureship, then they will be assigned one additional grad student-TA role. The determination as to whether a student should exercise their option to teach a standalone course and, if so, what course that student should teach will be made by each student in consultation with the DGS and their dissertation committee chair. This determination will be based on three factors: (1) the sample course syllabus submitted to the department during the student's 4th year in the program, (2) faculty observation and feedback on the student's prior guest lectures in departmental courses, and (3) a report from the student's dissertation committee regarding progress towards completing the dissertation.

² A description of the College Teaching Certificate program can be found at <https://teaching.uchicago.edu/courses-certificates/college-teaching-certificate/>.

Additional Notes

- Students who hold certain types of Dissertation Completion Fellowships (DCF) may not engage in any remunerative activity during the period of the fellowship. Students should confirm with the Dean of Students Office whether this pertains to them. All other requirements of the department's Pedagogical Training Plan that do not involve teaching must still be satisfied by students holding a DCF.
- In addition to the department's Pedagogical Training Plan, the department also offers doctoral students the opportunity to participate in an optional Disciplinary Pedagogy Program. To complete this Program, students must fulfill the following components (in addition to the mandatory pedagogical training elements specified above). These additional components can be satisfied at any time:
 - Participation in Course Visitations and Peer Consultation: Students in the Pedagogy Program may team up and discuss practical and pedagogical issues related to their teaching. In a quarter where one of the students is teaching, two others will attend her class or discussion section and provide her with feedback about her teaching through a joint written report and a subsequent face-to-face conversation. The doctoral student coordinator will facilitate the schedule for visits
 - Attendance at Two Presentations by Departmental Alumni: At least one of these discussions will be held each year. Each presenter will make available the syllabus for a course they have recently taught at their home institution and lead a discussion of the course design in the context of the kind of institution where they teach, the level of preparation that their students bring, their pedagogical aims, and so on.
 - Attendance at Two Faculty-Led Discussions on Pedagogical Topics: At least one of these discussions will be held each year. Suitable topics include teaching in specific areas of the discipline (e.g., logic, the history of philosophy, contemporary philosophy); lecturing versus leading discussions; gender and the philosophy classroom; developing writing assignments, and so on. Faculty may provide readings in advance of these meetings.

The Pedagogy Program is run by a student coordinator and the Departmental Administrator, William Weaver, under the supervision of the Director of Graduate Studies.