PROGRAM PROFILE
The master’s degree program in philosophy offers students the opportunity to study the historical traditions and contemporary debates in philosophy and the chance to focus on social, political and ethical issues. It is recommended for students who want to further their professional goals or foster their intellectual development. It provides a solid preparation for advanced work in philosophy or other fields such as women and gender studies, cultural studies, or law. The diverse specialties of the faculty and the department’s desire to foster dialogue among different philosophical positions ensure that students will find a welcoming intellectual environment for their interests and ideas.

With its focus on traditional and contemporary philosophy, the master's degree program provides students with a historical and pluralistic approach to philosophical issues and questions. The concentration in professional ethics gives students the opportunity to explore the ethical and philosophical issues that arise in such professional fields of study and work as business, health care, scientific research, biomedical technology and public policy. The concentration in philosophy and cultural theory provides students with a distinctive and important theoretical foundation for doctoral work in cultural studies.

MASTER’S DEGREE
The traditional and contemporary focus of the 30-credit master's degree program is designed for students whose undergraduate background has prepared them for work in philosophy at the graduate level. Students deepen their understanding of the themes and issues that concern philosophers while reading, discussing, and critiquing the major texts of central philosophical figures.

Professional ethics
This concentration attracts students interested in the ethical issues that arise in debates concerning business practices, healthcare, public policy and the environment. Some students are recent undergraduates, others are returning to school after several years’ absence. They are intellectually and individually diverse, and all are highly motivated and intellectually engaged. Their diversity contributes to the pluralism of the program.

Philosophy and cultural studies
This concentration is intended for students who wish to go on to doctoral work in cultural studies or related fields. The concentration draws on philosophy department faculty expertise in cultural studies and on the expertise of related faculty from other programs who teach the courses in the concentration, including faculty from Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Communication, Economics, English, Modern and Classical Languages, Public and International Affairs, Sociology, and Women and Gender Studies.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
The 18-credit graduate certificate in professional ethics emphasizes critical rational thought about ethical matters. It is an excellent complement to other professional degree programs such as law and business, medicine, nursing, health care administration, public administration, and administration of justice. Students may pursue the certificate on its own or concurrently with any other graduate program in the university.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES
Students are encouraged to pursue opportunities beyond the classroom such as study abroad, professional internships, and research work with professors in the department. They also have the opportunity to work with the department when it hosts philosophical conferences, seminars and symposiums.

An accelerated master’s program in philosophy is available to highly qualified undergraduates at George Mason. Students accepted to this program complete some graduate course work as part of their undergraduate degrees. They can earn both a BA and a MA in philosophy by completing 144 credits.
COURSES
The department offers a wide variety of courses to support the master's degree. Some examine the works of major philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Freud. Others treat important topics ranging from the philosophy of law, the philosophy of science, and the mind-body problem, to postmodernist thought and contemporary French feminism. Many other specialized themes in the history of political theory are explored in topics courses under the rubric Movements and Issues in the History of Political Philosophy.

Courses for students in the concentration and certificate in professional ethics include History of Ethical Theory as well as courses focused on biomedical, environmental, and international ethics.

FACULTY
The degree is offered by faculty who have expertise in the continental and analytic traditions, the history of philosophy, social and political theory, feminist theory, philosophy of science, ethics, and applied ethics. They are active in their areas of specializations as authors of important books and articles, as speakers at national and international conferences, and as editors and members of editorial boards of significant journals and anthologies.

HOW TO APPLY
Along with the completed Application for Graduate Admission and application fee, applicants to the master's degree program in philosophy should submit:

- Official transcripts from previous institutions of higher education attended
- Goals statement
- Three letters of recommendation
- Official test scores on the GRE (General Test) (not required, but recommended)
- Resume

See chss.gmu.edu/howtoapply for complete details on the application process.

WHY PHILOSOPHY AT GEORGE MASON?
The master's degree in philosophy offers students a broad but advanced study of philosophy as it is practiced today and prepares students for further study. The philosophy faculty represent a rare combination of Continental and analytic thought, and include specialists in the history of philosophy and professional ethics. Students enjoy the comradery of other students and faculty, and graduates praise the program for its intellectual rigor and interest.

Graduates go on to doctoral programs in philosophy, cultural studies, and liberal studies. Others have taken the degree as a terminal degree and have continued in their existing careers or entered new professions such as teaching.

Named the #1 national university to watch by U.S. News & World Report, George Mason University is an innovative, entrepreneurial institution with global distinction in a range of academic fields. Located in the heart of Northern Virginia’s technology corridor near Washington, D.C., Mason prepares its students to succeed in the work force and meet the needs of the region and the world.

See philosophy.gmu.edu for program requirements and courses.

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