University of Guelph | Department of Philosophy

**PHIL 6950 MA Seminar** | **PHIL 6960 PhD Seminar**   
**F23**

**Credit value 0.5**

**Instructor**: Please see Web Advisor for instructor information.  
**Email:** Please see Web Advisor for instructor information.  
**Office**: MacKinnon 333    
**Office Hours**: By appointment  
**Location:** Please consult Courselink for the classroom location.  
**Time:** Tuesdays 10 AM to 11:20 AM

# Calendar description

A seminar course in which students work on developing a range of academic skills for doing professional philosophy. This course is pass/fail and is mandatory for all incoming MA students. Please refer to the Philosophy Department website for a comprehensive description of this course.

## Introduction

These two courses are mandatory for all MA and PhD students and are graded Pass/Fail. There are some necessary conditions to pass, listed below, and four main topics will be covered: scholarship & research proposal writing, teaching, academic practice and non-academic careers. On occasion, senior graduate students, former graduates, faculty, and others from outside the Department will attend the seminar and contribute to discussions. Please note that the seminar is not intended as an extra academic course in which you will practice philosophy as such. Rather, it is geared toward the sorts of practical issues and concerns you will encounter as a graduate student and, should you wish to pursue an academic career, a professional in the field.

## Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Submit persuasive grant and fellowship applications (e.g., SSHRC and OGS) and write coherent thesis proposals.
2. Teach effectively by developing the skills needed for running tutorials and classes.
3. Become a more effective researcher by attending the sessions on research strategies and scholarly communication by librarians from the U of G.
4. Investigate non-academic career strategies for those who do not wish to pursue an academic career.

## Course Requirements

[**Please Note**: This course will not be graded on a numerical basis but on a **Pass/Fail** one. Fulfillment of the following conditions is required for a Pass]:

1. **Attendance**: you are required to attend all sessions (please let me know if you must miss a session). (LO 1,2,3,4)
2. **Proposals**: you must either write and submit the relevant funding applications or, for those doing the Coursework MA and who are not planning to apply to a PhD program, your proposal will focus on your MRP. (LO1)
3. **Teaching**: you must attend teaching workshops and webinars as required as well do a mock lecture.  (LO 2)
4. **Academic Practice**: you will need to attend at least 2 talks in the Dept. Speaker Series. (LO 2,3)
5. **Non-academic Careers**: you will need to complete a skills self-evaluation. (LO4)

## Course Topics

These are the four areas on which we will focus in this course:

* Scholarships: skills for successful fellowship applications; CGS and OGS fellowships; public communication of research.
* Teaching: skills for running effective tutorials and classes; fostering inclusive and respectful teaching environments, grading.
* Academic practice: writing thesis proposals; setting up thesis and MRP committees.
* Careers: career strategies; professional career development; academic careers; non-academic careers.

## Course Schedule

### Scholarship applications (and research proposals)

**Week 1 (Sept. 12):** Introduction to the course. I am also going to talk to you about scholarship applications and share with you some examples of successful applications. Please note that time is very tight for PhD students who are required to apply for SHHRC doctoral funding, the deadline for which is September 28.

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| * *Where you fit in the scholarship landscape.*   (Group 1) **You are a Ph.D. student**: you must submit applications for both the SSHRC/CGS-D and the OGS scholarships. (Deadlines Sept. 28 (CGS-D) & Jan. 31 (OGS) respectively.)   (Group 2) **You are a Thesis M.A.** **student**: you must submit applications for the CGS MA (that is SSHRC/CGS for MAs) and for the OGS. If successful, these would be held in the second year of your program. (Deadlines Dec. 1 (SSHRC/CGS) & Jan. 31 (OGS))   (Group 3a and 3b) **You are a MRP (one year M.A.)** and:   [a] You *do plan to apply for entry* into a PhD program that starts in Fall 24: You *could* apply for the SSHRC/CGS doctoral scholarship, though you are unlikely to get this at your stage, but you *really should* apply for the OGS.  (Deadlines Sept. 28 (SSHRC/CGS-D) & Jan. 31 (OGS))   [b] You *do not plan to apply* to a graduate program for Fall 24. In this case, you will not submit any scholarship applications and all of the discussion we have about writing proposals applies to the proposal you need to write for the MRP. |

**For next week**

***Everyone***: Draft out about a 400-word description of the research you plan to do, i.e., your proposal.

Extra for **Group  1**: start the application to SSHRC, through the online portal, if you have not done so already. It’s not a trivial process, so start right away. The good thing about the SSHRC application is that it stores a CV that you can build on for all further applications.

Extra for **Group 2**: Because you will be submitting an application for a CGS-MA later in the year (Dec. 1), time is not as pressing for you as it is for the PhD students, who must submit their SSHRC applications by the end of September. Still, you will also need to provide a SSHRC online CV. It is prudent for you to begin this right away since it can be time-consuming.

Extra for **Group 3a**: While it’s good to apply for every scholarship for which you are eligible, you should know that it is extremely difficult for Group 3a candidates to win CGS doctoral scholarships. You are competing against students that have completed an MA, and also students in PhD programs, and they usually have more scholarship-relevant experience (conference papers, publications, letters from advisors, grades...). Still, if you are in the 3a category, and wondering if you should apply, contact me right away and I’ll discuss it with you.

**Week 2 (Sept. 19):** During this meeting we will workshop your proposals. Please send them to me prior to our meeting so that I can copy them for distribution to the class.

**Week 3 (Sept. 26):** If you are applying for the CGS-D (Group 1) use the class time to work on the application. It is due in two days! Everyone else: we will meet one on one in my office to talk about your proposals.

### IDP Skills

**Week 4 (Oct. 3): Individual Development Plan skills evaluation**. We will not meet as a group this week. Instead, please take class time to do the IDP self-evaluation, which most students prefer to do on their own. To complete this evaluation, please visit:

<https://graduatestudies.uoguelph.ca/individual-development-plan>

**Week 5 (Oct. 10):** No Class -- Thanksgiving

### Teaching

**Week 6 (Oct. 17):** Teaching Discussion: Professor John Russon will visit the class to talk about pedagogy.

**Week 7** **(Oct. 24):** We will not meet as a group this week. Rather, each of you will use the class time to watch a webinar video on strategies for providing feedback on graded assignments. You will then answer a questionnaire that can be found on Courselink. The video can found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBbu0AJKo54

**Week 8** **(Oct. 31):** Mock-Teaching Session. These sessions will give you a chance to get some peer feedback about your teaching style. (Sounds stressful, but in the past students have really liked it.) Each student in the course will give a 10-minute mini-lecture on a topic that interests them (but *not* on a philosophical topic). There will be peer discussion of your presentation by the group, which I guarantee will be supportive and respectful and useful. The point of this session is threefold: first, to get actual feedback, second, to get you thinking explicitly about teaching, which is a skill you can get better at, and third, to give you an opportunity to talk in front of you peers, which is an important activity for academics. 4 **Phd Students (20 minutes each + 5 minutes of feedback)**

**Week 9 (Nov. 7):** **Mock-Teaching Session (4 MA students – 15 minutes each and 5 minutes of feedback)** Everyone needs a supervisor and a committee. Individual meetings will be scheduled to discuss your committee prospects.

### Academic Practice

**Week 10 (Nov. 14):** Research Strategies Workshop with Librarian Dave Hudson. Please note that this session will not take place in the Philosophy Seminar Room, but in the Library (Lib 384, which is the Florence Partridge Room). It’s on the third floor, next to the Physics Learning Centre, up the triple set of elevators that are next to Starbucks. [Here’s a map](https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/where/floors/floor/3) [Note: you may need to do some homework for this. If so, I’ll send you the info prior to the class.]

**Week 11 (Nov. 21):** Workshop on Scholarly Communication with Librarian Chris Popovich. (Location TBA). [Note: you may need to do some homework for this. If so, I’ll send you the info prior to the class.]

**Week 12 (Nov. 28):** Introduction to Zotero with Librarian Melanie Cassidy. Zotero is a bibliographic tool that assists in the collection, organization and citation of primary and secondary sources. (Location TBA). [Note: you may need to do some homework for this. If so, I’ll send you the info prior to the class. Also: you must download the Zotero software: <https://www.zotero.org/>]

**Week 13 (Dec. 01):** Academic and Non-Academic Careers: This session will involve a visit by Professors Gus Skorburg and Rowan Bell, who comprise the Department’s Placement Committee. Please note that this meeting has been moved from Thursday, November 30 to Friday December 01, same time, same location.

# University Standard Statements

### Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e- mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

### When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact.

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

### Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes [https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg- regchg.shtml](https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-%20regchg.shtml)

## **Copies of Out-Of-Class Assignments**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

### Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer).

Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

More information: [www.uoguelph.ca/sas](http://www.uoguelph.ca/sas)

### Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

### Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

### Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

### Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via Courselink and/or class email.

This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/) and circulated by email.

### Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

### COVID-19 Safety Protocols

For information on current safety protocols, follow these links:

* [https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your- safe-return/](https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-%20safe-return/)
* <https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces>

Please note, that these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health or government directives.