PhD in Applied Philosophy

The PhD Applied Philosophy is a new program at the University of Waterloo that brings together abstract theorizing and practical problems.

THE PROGRAM
Applied philosophy involves engaging with and reflecting on real, practical situations and problems. It requires bidirectional thinking: reflecting fruitfully both on how existing philosophical ideas and theories help us understand and solve practical problems, and also on how the details of actual cases lead us to reexamine and reformulate existing theories.

The PhD in Applied Philosophy requires the completion of course work, a prospectus and a dissertation project. Students complete an Applied Research Placement at a host organization (e.g., non-profit, hospital, business, government agency).

KEY FEATURES
- Coursework focused on engagement with practical problems
- Flexible assignments to learn various communication styles
- The Applied Research Placement, an eight-month activity combining scholarly work with a host organization
- Dissertation projects with non-traditional components, such as policy recommendations or articles for the popular press
- Training appropriate for academic and non-academic careers

FUNDING
All PhD students in the Department of Philosophy receive a standard annual funding package, which will continue during the placement. The department also has special funds available for extra expenses that may be incurred during the placement.

MITACS
The Department of Philosophy has formed a relationship with MITACS, a national non-profit research and training organization that facilitates graduate student internships. Students accepted for MITACS placements will receive special funding jointly through MITACS and their host organizations.

ADMISSIONS
Applications are due by February 1 for the 2017-18 school year. Admissions requirements are similar to those for traditional philosophy PhD programs, though we are open to candidates with a broader range of academic backgrounds.

In a recent internship at Philip Beesley Architects, Teresa Branch-Smith examined philosophical constructions of life and living as they apply to a cutting-edge technique called ‘near-living’ architecture. “Being in these spaces and working on these problems with the intention of communicating your experience is something you cannot read in a book. Having this experience will make me a more competitive candidate on the job market.”

uwaterloo.ca/philosophy
PILOT PROJECT
The Department of Philosophy is currently conducting a pilot project, in which three students will do Applied Research Placements. Their projects include:

» An investigation of how people with cognitive disabilities can contribute to decision-making about their care
» An evaluation of how non-profits working with vulnerable populations measure their own effectiveness
» A study of organizational ethics, focused on working relationships in large healthcare institutions

FACULTY RESEARCH
Our faculty engage in research on a wide range of applied and interdisciplinary topics, including:

» Ethics, Justice and Social Policy: distribution of global health resources, ethical issues in scientific and medical research, the ethics of sport, sexual objectification, just war theory, autonomy and disability.
» Science and Society: science policy, public understanding of science and technology, values in science, feminist philosophy of science, and the social structure of scientific communities.
» Interdisciplinary: research intersections with neuroscience, psychology, computer science, physics, biology, sociology, environmental science, linguistics, international studies, and classics.