

What is Applied Ethics, and how does it differ from a straight Philosophy degree?

Applied Ethics is a Master's degree that grew out of the interests among Philosophy faculty, but it also encompasses aspects of other disciplines. It is designed for students who wish to pursue advanced academic and practical work on the ethical dimensions of society, as part of becoming an educated, engaged citizen.

What are your particular strengths at OSU?

OSU's faculty members have a wide range of interests, and they are particularly committed to issues dealing with social justice, environment, public health and medicine, and science.

You should look at the online faculty profiles to judge whether there might be a fit between your interests and those of our faculty. Also, feel free to get into contact with faculty members about your interests and plans.

Do I need to have a research topic already planned out before I apply?

No. You should have a sense of what you might like to pursue, but also be flexible because your interests will likely evolve after you start the program.

How important is it to identify faculty with similar interests to mine?

Although you don't need to come to our program too focused, you should investigate faculty members, look at their publications, and imagine yourself working with one or two particular people on your final research project. This is not set in stone and it can change, but identifying potential mentors is an important part of your application.

What faculty members are most involved in the program?

All Philosophy faculty members teach and mentor students in the Applied Ethics program. You will find that the courses designed specifically for the program (see below) are taught primarily by faculty with a specialization in Ethics. However, any faculty can mentor you and advise your MA or MS thesis or non-thesis final research project.

What graduate courses are available?

You will mostly be taking 500-level PHL courses. PHL 525 (Philosophical Methods), PHL 541 (Classic Moral Theories) and PHL 542 (Contemporary Moral Theories) are all required. Additional requirements include a practicum, thesis work, and a minor (at least 15 credits). Your remaining classes will be filled out by courses of your choice, most of which will be “slash” courses. These are 400/500 courses in which there are a small numbers of graduate students, but most of those enrolled are junior and senior undergraduates.

How large is the Applied Ethics MA program?

There are typically about eight graduate students in the Applied Ethics program, and we expect the numbers to range between 5-15 at any given time.

Do I need to take the GRE?

This is not required. You may wish to provide your GRE scores (if you have them) as another indicator of your academic potential. However, the absence of GRE scores does not count against your application.

What kind of writing sample is acceptable?

Applicants should submit a 7-10 page essay on any topic, arguing in support of a thesis. The essay should include reference to source material appropriate to the topic. The Applied Ethics admissions committee uses this sample to evaluate persuasive writing skills, analytic abilities, and research abilities. We do not use this sample to evaluate the applicant’s background in philosophy, generally, or even ethics, in particular.

Who should write my letters of recommendation?

Your letters should be written by people who have been in a position to evaluate your ability to think, write, and contribute productively to an academic setting. For most people, this means you should ask your undergraduate professors to write letters for you.

What is the acceptance rate?

The Applied Ethics program does not have an established acceptance rate. We look primarily for highly capable students who fit with the goals of our program and our faculty’s interests.

APPLIED ETHICS, FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Will OSU offer me financial support?

We do offer a limited amount of financial support, typically involving work as a graduate teaching assistant or graduate research assistant.

Do I have to apply separately for funding?

No.

Should I get in touch with individual faculty members prior to making my application?

This is not required, but it is a wonderful way for us to get to know you, and to talk about the possible fit with our program.

What is the best way to get in touch?

Email.

If I want to talk about application mechanics and don't want to bother faculty with my questions, is there someone I can email or call?

Yes. Contact Professor Allen Thompson, Director of the Applied Ethics program. His email address is allen.thompson@oregonstate.edu.