

Penn State Mont Alto Offers New Degree for Focused Students

Pool Table from page 1

Prof. James Hamilton

For several decades there has been a little known degree offered at Penn State called the Bachelor of Philosophy Degree. It has been attempted by few and completed by even fewer. I have been asked to shed some light on this degree program so, here goes.

First, let me tell you what the program is not. It is not a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy. Like a Doctor of Philosophy Degree, it is a degree in a specific area of study rather than a degree that studies primarily philosophy. The name comes from the notion that, like a PhD, the student designs the degree to fit his or her particular and unique interests. The subsequent studies are in depth. It is not a degree for students who do not know what they want to do and are looking for a way to find some sort of focus. It is not a degree for students who just want to sample a little from here and a little from there in a superficial and unconnected way with the hope that they can accumulate enough credits to qualify for a diploma some day. It is not for students who could get the degree they want somewhere at Penn State but are location-bound (cannot or will not move) and simply want to stay at their present location. It is most definitely not a degree for students who are academically weak and think that if they could just take only the kinds of courses they like, they would get better grades.

In contrast to the above, the Bachelor of Philosophy Degree has some specific requirements and intents. It is a degree for students who very much know what they want to study and have found that there is no degree currently at Penn State

that will enable them to do so. It is a degree that requires students to be self-motivated, highly organized, and academically sound. And it is a degree that enables students to choose from among the wide variety of Penn State programs for the purpose of focusing on a particular subject in a deeply meaningful (philosophical) rather than superficial way.

The process by which one enters into the Bachelor of Philosophy degree program is a fairly complex one. Because the student is creating her or his program from scratch, much thought must go into its construction. Since, to my knowledge, this is the first time the degree will be offered at a campus other than University Park, the exact order of events is still to be determined. However, the process would go something like this. Students who have an interest in a particular area of study should first determine that Penn State does not already offer a degree program that suits their needs. If there is no appropriate program, they should then seek out a faculty member to be a preceptor (advisor) for their intended program or, if they are unsure of who might be appropriate, they should go to Dr. Francis Achampong (the Director of Academic Affairs) for help in selecting a preceptor. The students, along with their preceptors, should then put together the degree program in as much detail as they can, including all of the courses, faculty, and timetables involved. It should be noted that all general education requirements must be met, though there is, perhaps a bit more flexibility than normal. At this point each student, the preceptor, and Dr. Achampong

would get together to assemble a Bachelor of Philosophy Degree Committee from among the population of faculty designated as B-Phil faculty. The committee would generally consist of 3-5 faculty, though the exact number is not specified. Each student would then present his or her program to the committee for approval in much the same way that a masters or doctoral student presents a research design. The following section is verbatim from the B-Phil web page.

Requirements for Admission

1. An entry interview with the candidate, the preceptor, and the members of the Bachelor of Philosophy Degree Committee is required prior to admission to the program. This preliminary interview provides an opportunity for the candidate to discuss and justify the intended use of the Bachelor of Philosophy degree program, and the unique circumstances that surround the applicant.
2. Second-, third-, and fourth-semester students may apply; those selected will begin their programs the following semester. Exceptions may be approved by the committee.
3. Evidence of successful completion of course work requiring independent research is required. In addition, the committee will consider the applicant's cumulative grade-point average as an index of academic performance and responsibility. Applicants must possess the capability of performing at a 3.0 minimum level.
4. Approval of the student's program by the committee is required.

Requirements for Graduation

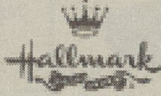
1. Satisfactory completion of General Education.
2. Satisfactory completion of a program approved by the committee: (a) a minimum of 120 credits to include at least 18 credits at the 400 or 500 level; (b) certification by the faculty preceptor; (c) and approval of a thesis, or thesis equivalent, by the faculty preceptor.
3. Approval by the committee for graduation.

I am aware of students who have done studies in linguistics, environmental ethics, and textile manufacturing (specifically weaving technologies) in the past. This is a rigorous degree and not for the faint of heart. That said it may be just the thing if you are a motivated student with a strong idea of what you would like to study but cannot find in the current Penn State system.

would offer an alternative and "discourage drinking, especially at the gates."

Krueger says that housing and food gives money to the Residence Hall Council so they can plan activities for students. Krueger questions whether or not a third pool table on campus is necessary and if it would even be used. She says, "We want to build community... but would rather see that room used as a study space."

Current Student Government Association Vice President Nolan Fontaine is lobbying for a pool table on behalf of the student body. He says, "The Senate for '04-'05 school year tried to no avail ... to get a Game/Community Room last year in the Penn Gate Complex. Since the Penn Gates have a handicap suite and not as much community sociability as Mont Alto Hall, we thought it would be advantageous for them to have the extra space. This could build Mont Alto's recruitment and retention numbers for the next year and as of now, Senate '05-'06 is making the Penn Gate Pool Room one of its goals to accomplish for the year."



Dru's Books 'N Things

Candles	Open 7 days a week	Greeting Cards
Gifts	Mon-Fri 9-9	Magazines
Ty, Inc.	Sat 9-8 Sun 9-5	Books
Boyd's Bears	(717) 762-9707	Maps

Wayne Heights Mall in Waynesboro (by Martin's)
Show your college I.D. and receive
an additional 10% discount

Excludes non-taxed items, sale goods, and Hallmark Keepsake ornaments. May not be combined with other offers.