

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

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| Name, title and level of final qualification(s) | BA Philosophy (Level 6) |
| Name and title of any exit qualification(s) | Dip HE Philosophy Cert HE Philosophy |
| Is programme offered with a Foundation Year | Yes |
| Awarding Body | University of London |
| Teaching Institution(s) | Birkbeck, University of London |
| Home school/other teaching departments | School of Historical Studies |
| Location of delivery | Central London |
| Language of delivery and assessment | English |
| Mode of study, length of study and normal start month | Full-time (3 years) / Part-time (4 years) / Full-time with FY (4 years) / Part-time with FY (6 years) September |
| Professional, statutory or regulatory body | Not applicable |
| QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England | Philosophy |
| UCAS code | V500; V501 (including with Foundation Yr) |
| Birkbeck Course Code | UUBAPLPH_C (full-time, 3 years) UBAPLPHY_C (part-time, 4 years) UUBFPLPH_C (full-time with FY, 4 years) UBFPLPHY_C (part-time with FY, 6 years) |
| HECoS Code | 100337 |
| Start date of programme | Pre-2007 |
| Date of programme approval | Pre-2007 |
| Date of last programme amendment approval | November 2022 |
| Valid for academic entry year | 2025-26 |
| Date of last revision to document | 07/04/2025 |

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

UCAS tariff: 112 points (48 points for with Foundation Year)

The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a [tariff calculator](#) for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

A-levels: BBC

If you need extra support before starting an undergraduate degree, we offer a BA Philosophy with Foundation Year degree, which provides an extra year of supported study. This is an ideal route if you are returning to study after a gap, or if you have not previously studied this subject, or if you did not achieve the grades you need for a place on this degree.

Once you successfully complete the Foundation Year, you will automatically advance onto the main degree.

We also accept an Access to Higher Education Diploma with a minimum of 15 credits achieved at Merit or Distinction in humanities or social science units.

Holders of Birkbeck's Certificate of Higher Education in Philosophy may be considered for entry into the second year. Each case will be considered on its own merits by the department.

Course aims

- The BA Philosophy programme at Birkbeck provides students an opportunity to study Western philosophy and its history in a uniquely collaborative and supportive programme with some of the country's leading researchers
- The course is suited for students from any background who want to develop their intellectual curiosity, independent thinking and capacity to engage critically with significant ideas
- Students will receive a broad and thorough grounding in central areas of philosophy, while having the chance to study advanced topics with specialists in the areas that they find most interesting

Foundation Year aims:

For the BA Philosophy with Foundation Year programmes, the purpose of the Foundation Year is to prepare students for successful completion of their undergraduate degree. The Foundation Year (one year FT or two years PT) provides students the opportunity to explore their interests and build on their study skills, and on successful completion of the Foundation Year, students may progress onto year one of the Philosophy BA programme. The curriculum for the 'with foundation year' programme after the completion of the foundation year modules is the same as the full-time or part-time BA programme. Students who successfully complete the versions of the degree programme 'with foundation year' are awarded the same final degree title as students on the full-time or part-time degree routes.

Course structure

| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credit | Comp/ Core/ Option | Likely teaching term(s) |
|---|------------------------|--|--------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Full-time – 3 years | | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | | |
| 4 | SSPL233S4 | Morality, Society and Politics | 30 | Comp | T3 |
| 4 | SSPL234S4 | Knowledge and Reality | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 4 | SSPL235S4 | Philosophy as the Art of Living: Ancient & Modern Views | 30 | Comp | T1-2 |
| 4 | SSPL236S4 SSPL239S4 | Either Logic (<i>skills module</i>) or Critical Thinking (<i>skills module</i>) or level 4 option (may be college-wide option) | 30 | Comp/ Option* | T3 T3 T1, 2 or 3 |
| *Note: It is compulsory for students to take either Logic or Critical Thinking at L4/5/6 during the programme, but they may take it later in the programme in place of an option if they prefer to take a level 4 module from elsewhere in the college in year 1. | | | | | |
| Year 2 | | | | | |
| 5 | | Option 1 (see below for indicative options list) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5 | | Option 2 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5 | | Option 3 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5 | | Option 4 (may be college-wide option) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| Year 3 | | | | | |
| 6 | | Option 1 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 2 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 3 (may be a dissertation) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 4 (may be from another programme) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| Part-time – 4 years | | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | | |
| 4 | SSPL233S4 | Morality, Society and Politics | 30 | Comp | T3 |
| 4 | SSPL234S4 | Knowledge and Reality | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 4 | SSPL235S4 | Philosophy as the Art of Living: Ancient & Modern Views | 30 | Comp | T1-2 |
| Year 2 | | | | | |
| 4 | SSPL236S4 SSPL239S4 | Either Logic (<i>skills module</i>) or Critical Thinking (<i>skills module</i>) or Option from another programme | 30 | Comp/ Option* (see note above) | T3 T3 |
| 5 | | Option 1 | | | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5 | | Option 2 (may be college-wide option; can be L4 if Logic/Critical Thinking are taken at L5/6) | | | T1, 2 or 3 |

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|---|------------------------|--|----|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Year 3 | | | | | |
| 5 | | Option 1 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5 | | Option 2 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 3 (may be college-wide option) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| Year 4 | | | | | |
| 6 | | Option 1 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 2 (may be a dissertation) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 3 (may be college-wide option) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| Full-time with Foundation Year – 4 years | | | | | |
| Foundation Year (Year 0) | | | | | |
| 3 | CASE002S3 | Fundamentals of Study | 30 | Core | T1 |
| 3 | CASE001S3 | Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge | 30 | Core | T2-3 |
| 3 | SC03015S3 | London: Places, Objects, Ideas | 30 | Core | T1 |
| 3 | SSSS002S3 | Contemporary Global Issues: Approaches in Social Science, History and Philosophy OR Level 4 Language module | 30 | Option | T2-3 |
| Year 1 | | | | | |
| 4 | SSPL233S4 | Morality, Society and Politics | 30 | Comp | T3 |
| 4 | SSPL234S4 | Knowledge and Reality | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 4 | SSPL235S4 | Philosophy as the Art of Living: Ancient & Modern Views | 30 | Comp | T1-2 |
| 4 | SSPL236S4 SSPL239S4 | Either Logic (skills module) or Critical Thinking (skills module) or Option from another programme | 30 | Comp/ Option* (see note above) | T3 T3 |
| Year 2 | | | | | |
| 5 | | Option 1 (see indicative options list below) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5 | | Option 2 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5 | | Option 3 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5 | | Option 4 (may be college-wide option) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| Year 3 | | | | | |
| 6 | | Option 1 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 2 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 3 (may be a dissertation) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 4 ((may be college-wide option) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| Part-time with Foundation Year – 6 years | | | | | |
| Foundation Year 0A | | | | | |
| 3 | CASE002S3 | Fundamentals of Study | 30 | Core | T1 |
| 3 | CASE001S3 | Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge | 30 | Core | T2-3 |

| Foundation Year 0B | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|----|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| 3 | SC03015S3 | London: Places, Objects, Ideas | 30 | Core | T1 |
| 3 | SSSS002S3 | Contemporary Global Issues: Approaches in Social Science, History and Philosophy OR Level 4 language module | 30 | Option | T2-3 |
| Year 1 | | | | | |
| 4 | SSPL233S4 | Morality, Society and Politics | 30 | Comp | T3 |
| 4 | SSPL234S4 | Knowledge and Reality | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 4 | SSPL235S4 | Philosophy as the Art of Living: Ancient and Modern Views | 30 | Comp | T1-2 |
| Year 2 | | | | | |
| 4 | SSPL236S4 SSPL239S4 | Either Logic (skills module) or Critical Thinking (skills module) or Option from another programme | 30 | Comp/ Option* (see note above) | T3 T3 |
| 5 | | Option 1 | | | |
| 5 | | Option 2 (may be college-wide option; can be L4 if Logic/Critical Thinking are taken at L5/6) | | | |
| Year 3 | | | | | |
| 5 | | Option 1 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5 | | Option 2 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 3 (may be college-wide option) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| Year 4 | | | | | |
| 6 | | Option 1 | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 2 (may be a dissertation) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | | Option 3 (may be college-wide option) | 30 | Option | T1, 2 or 3 |
| Indicative list of option modules (likely terms may vary T1, 2 or 3) | | | | | |
| 5/6 | SSPL229S5/ SSPL230S6 | Contemporary Epistemology | 30 | | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL232S5/ SSPL242S6 | Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science | 30 | | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL244S5/ SSPL245S6 | Ethical Traditions | 30 | | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL247S5/ SSPL248S6 | Evolution, Science and Morality | 30 | | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL250S5/ SSPL251S6 | Free Will and Moral Responsibility | 30 | | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL253S5/ SSPL254S6 | Language and Metaphysics | 30 | | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL256S5/ SSPL257S6 | Metaphysical Traditions, Ancient and Modern | 30 | | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL259S5/ SSPL260S6 | Philosophy, Art and Literature | 30 | | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL262S5/ SSPL263S6 | The Ethics of Life and Death: Humans, Animals and the Environment | 30 | | T1, 2 or 3 |

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|---|-------------------------|--|----|------------|
| 5/6 | SSPL265S5/ SSPL266S6 | Themes in Twentieth-Century French and German Philosophy | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL268S5/ SSPL269S6 | Theories of Value: Aesthetics and Ethics | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL271S5/ SSPL272S6 | Topics in Early Modern Philosophy | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL274S5/ SSPL275S6 | Women in Philosophy | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | SSPL277H6 | Special Topics I | 15 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 6 | SSPL279H6 | Special Topics II | 15 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL281S5/ SSPL282S6 | Ancient and Medieval Philosophy | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL283S5/ SSPL284S6 | The Biology of Evil | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL285S5/ SSPL286S6 | Philosophy of Science | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL287S5/ SSPL288S6 | Philosophy, Business and Society | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL037S5/ SSPL038S6 | Political Philosophy | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL289S5/ SSPL290S6 | The Idea of Freedom | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL291S5/ SSPL292S6 | The Philosophy of Nietzsche | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| 5/6 | SSPL293S5/ SSPL294S6 | Foundational Debates in AI | 30 | T1, 2 or 3 |
| Note: terms shown may be subject to change, but all modules including options are taught across 1 term. Timetabling and availability of options varies by year. | | | | |

Core: *Module must be taken and passed by student*

Compulsory: *Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)*

Option: *Student can choose to take this module*

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching are organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists and readings, and information about how and when you will be assessed.

Teaching on this course is a combination of in-person lectures and seminars. Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They include interaction with the lecturer and are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare. In addition to attending lectures and seminars, you will engage in substantial

independent learning during this course, including reading texts in philosophy; answering questions about the texts in preparation for participation in classes; watching/listening to audio-visual resources; completing assessments.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment:

Short writing assignments, essays which will develop in length and expected complexity as you progress through your studies, and short-answer exams completed at home. For some modules you may have sets of problems to solve and other brief assignments.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

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

- Demonstrate a systematic understanding of central areas of philosophy, including historical and contemporary debates
- Display in-depth understanding of specialist principles and concepts deployed by philosophers, and recognise some of their strengths and weaknesses
- Undertake thorough critical analyses of different philosophical arguments and theories, and evaluate the outcomes
- Critically challenge philosophical responses to key arguments, while situating these arguments in relation to different perspectives within and outside philosophy
- Understand and communicate complex ideas and information at an appropriately abstract level, drawing on a range of resources
- Construct cogent arguments from competing perspectives, synthesising information to offer novel considerations for or against philosophical positions
- Demonstrate a capacity for independent thought while effectively communicating, both professionally and interpersonally, across a range of situations
- Take responsibility for your own learning and development using reflection and feedback to analyse your own capabilities, appraise alternatives and implement suggestions

Foundation Year:

By the end of the foundation year, students will be able to:

- Articulate at a foundational level key concepts in some of the disciplines offered by the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy.
- Undertake academic reading, writing, research and assessment skills appropriate to the study of those disciplines
- Understand other key learning skills required for university-level study and know how to access support at Birkbeck to develop these.

Careers and further study

Graduates can pursue career paths in education, research, politics and journalism. Possible professions include:

- Higher education
- Civil service
- Local government officer

- Journalist
- Business and finance
- Social work
- Marketing and advertising

In fact, a philosophy degree from Birkbeck will provide skills that are attractive to employers in wide range of professions, in particular:

- Research skills
- Critical thinking skills
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English
- The ability to evaluate different types of evidence and information
- Presentation skills
- The ability to persuade with cogent arguments

See the [British Philosophical Association Careers and Employability web page](#) for more information.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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