

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	BA Politics Philosophy and History (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE, Cert HE
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences (home); 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) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	Not applicable
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	Politics and International Relations, Philosophy, History
UCAS code	LV25
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBAPOPH_C (full-time, 3 years) UBAPOPHI_C (part-time, 4 years)
HECoS Code	100491 – Politics 100337 – Philosophy 100302 – History
Start date of programme	Autumn 1988
Date of programme approval	Summer 1988
Date of last programme amendment approval	June 2025
Valid for academic entry year	2025-26
Programme Director	TBC
Date of last revision to document	17/06/2025

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualification as we base decision 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: the UCAS tariff is set at 112 points.

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. Students who fail to achieve this level may still be considered for entry if they demonstrate the required level of intellectual commitment and potential.

Course aims

The BA Politics, Philosophy & History (PPH) brings together three subjects in a unique combination. The programme is interdisciplinary, drawing on three of Birkbeck's Departments, and is unified by three core modules taught by members of all three contributing Departments and taken by all students. These core modules bring the three disciplines together and focus on problems they share in common.

The main aims are:

1. to enable mature students in full-time employment to undertake undergraduate study in Politics, Philosophy and History, in fulfilment of the mission of the College;
2. to enable students to develop and deepen their understanding of the conceptual and theoretical bases of the three disciplines, their methods of inquiry, and their domains of knowledge, with particular emphasis on using the methods of philosophical inquiry as tools for examining the other two disciplines;
3. to offer students the opportunity to develop and deepen their skills of critical evaluation and analysis; and
4. to enable students to develop and extend their key skills as a foundation for personal development, employment, or further academic study.

Course structure

Description

The programme consists of 360 credits. Students take 30 credits in compulsory modules from each of the subject areas at level 4 plus an option. At level 5 one compulsory module of 30 credits taught by Politics, with the remaining credits taken from options. Students will be expected to choose at least one option from both Philosophy and History at Level 5. At level 6 students will either undertake a dissertation plus 3 options, or choose to take 4 options. Options are usually to be taken equally from the three disciplines, i.e., 30 credits each in Politics, History and Philosophy respectively, with a final 30 credits free to be taken from any of the departments

Option modules

The discipline-specific modules from the three subject areas offer both a wide range of choice and the possibility of concentrating on one of the three subjects. Politics, Philosophy and History are disciplines which share broadly similar teaching styles and expectations, enabling students to move between subjects. A list of indicative options is included below. At level 5 students will be expected to take at least 30 credits in History and 30 credits in Philosophy in addition to the compulsory 30 credit Politics module Governing by Numbers. At level 6 students

will be expected to take at least 30 credits in modules from each of Politics, Philosophy and History. Students who opt to undertake a dissertation in Politics (30 credits) will be required to also take Doing Political and Social Research (SSPO220S6) (30 credits) .

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Status	Likely teaching term
Full-time – 3 years					
Year 1					
4	HICL200S4	Approaching the Past	30	Compulsory	1-3
4	SSPL235S4	Knowledge and Reality	30	Compulsory	1
4	FFPO956S4	Comparative Government	30	Compulsory	2
4		Option	30	Option	3
Year 2					
5	SSPO151S5	Governing by Numbers	30	Compulsory	1-3
5		Option	30	Option	1
5		Option	30	Option	2
5		Option	30	Option	3
Year 3					
6	POSO024S6	Either Dissertation* Or Option	30	Option	1-3
6		Option	30	Option	1
6		Option	30	Option	2
6		Option	30	Option	3
Part-time – 4 years					
Year 1					
4	HICL200S4	Approaching the Past	30	Compulsory	1-3
4	SSPL235S4	Knowledge and Reality	30	Compulsory	1
4	FFPO956S4	Comparative Government	30	Compulsory	2
Year 2					
5	SSPO151S5	Governing by Numbers	30	Compulsory	1-3
4		Option (Level 4)	30	Option	1, 2, or 3
5		Option (Level 5)	30	Option	1, 2, or 3
Year 3					
5		Option (Level 5)	30	Option	1, 2, or 3
5		Option (Level 5)	30	Option	1, 2, or 3
6		Option (Level 6)	30	Option	1, 2, or 3
Year 4					
6	POSO024S6	Either Dissertation* Or Option	30	Option	1-3
6		Option	30	Option	1, 2 or 3
6		Option	30	Option	1, 2 or 3
Indicative List of L4 Options					
4	SSP011854	Introduction to Global Politics	30	Option	3
4	SSHC411S4	The Modern World	30	Option	3
4	SSPL236S4	Logic	30	Option	3

Indicative List of L5 Options					
5	SSPO270S5	International Relations and Foreign Policy	30	Option	1
5	POSO003S5	Contemporary British Politics	30	Option	2
5	POSO029S5	Introduction to International Political Economy	30	Option	2
5	SSPO272S5	Digital Politics	30	Option	2
5	SSHC569S5	The Cold War: A Global History	30	Option	2
5	SSHC509S5	Italy and the World: Conflict and the Incomplete Nation, 1815-present	30	Option	2
5/6	SSPL281S5/ SSPL281S56	Ancient and Medieval Philosophy	30	Option	2
Indicative List of L6 Options					
6	POSO004S6	War and Modern Society	30	Option	2
6	SSPO220S6	Doing Political and Social Research	30	Option	1
6	SSPO122S6	Parliamentary Studies	30	Option	2
6	POSO013S6	Social and Political Theory	30	Option	2
6	POSO036S6	Politics and the Middle East	30	Option	3
6	SSHC408D6	Writing the Past: History Dissertation	60	Option	1, 2, 3
6	SSHC393S6	The Colonial Gaze: Western Perceptions of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, 1600-1960	30	Option	2

Additional Philosophy options available at level 5 and 6 (Terms may vary)

Foundational Debates in Artificial Intelligence.

Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science.

Philosophy of Science:

The Philosophy of Nietzsche.

Themes in Twentieth Century French and German Philosophy.

Topics in Early Modern Philosophy.

Women in Philosophy

The Ethics of Life and Death, Animals and the Environment.

The Ethics of Technology and Artificial Intelligence.

Theory of Value: Aesthetics and Ethics

*Note: The dissertation is optional. When taken, it is always taken in a student's final year and students who take a dissertation in politics are required to also take **Doing Political and Social Research (SSPO220S6) (30 credits)** as one of their level 6 options.

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 lectures (pre-recorded) 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 are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

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 essays, which will develop in length and expected complexity as you progress. Some modules may have short writing assignments, short-answer exams (completed at home) or sets of problems to solve. Written feedback on essays is provided within four weeks of submission, and students have the opportunity to clarify any feedback by contacting their lecturers and seminar leader.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, students should be able to

1. Demonstrate an ability to apply critically the main theories, models and concepts used in the three disciplines to the analysis of issues arising within and across those disciplines.
2. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
 - a) the social, political, cultural and intellectual changes that gave rise to the modern system of states;
 - b) the origins of modern conceptions of the human and of social science, and of the distinctive approaches of the disciplines of Politics, Philosophy and History to the logic of social explanation, problems of meaning, and issues of historiography and historical interpretation.
3. Demonstrate an expanded and deepened their knowledge of each of the three disciplines via the completion of at least two full course units in each discipline.
4. Successfully complete an independent research project, where the dissertation option has been chosen as the final course unit.
5. Extended and developed their analytical, evaluative and critical capacities.
6. Developed transferable skills, including the ability to take responsibility for their own learning, learning how to learn, making oral and written presentations, planning and producing written assignments, working independently, and, where they have so chosen, using information technology.

Careers and further study

You will find PPH graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- research positions in universities and other public and private research bodies;

- jobs in central and local government, trades unions, political parties, NGOs and international organisations;
- journalism;
- political/civic activism; and
- teaching in secondary education.

Birkbeck's PPH graduates will finish with a set of valuable attributes, such as:

- The ability to work as part of a team
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English
- Research skills
- Skills in evaluating and assessing types of information
- The ability to present yourself and an argument

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](#).

Copyright, Birkbeck, University of London 2023 ©