

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	PG Diploma Philosophy (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Certificate in Philosophy
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 (1 year) Part-time (2 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	Not applicable
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TPDPLPHY_C
HECoS Code	100337
Start date of programme	Autumn 2016
Date of programme approval	Spring 2016
Date of last programme amendment approval	November 2022
Valid for academic entry year	2025-26
Date of last revision to document	31/10/2022

Admissions requirements

At least a second-class honours degree (2:2), or equivalent, not necessarily in philosophy.

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.

On your application form, please list all your relevant qualifications and experience, including those you expect to achieve.

Course aims

- The PG Diploma Philosophy programme at Birkbeck offers students postgraduate teaching in central aspects of Western philosophy and its history in a uniquely collaborative and supportive programme with some of the country's leading researchers.
- The course has two routes. The non-conversion route is suited for students who have a first degree in philosophy and wish to progress to more advanced levels of study, while the conversion route is for those without undergraduate training in philosophy 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. Students without a first degree in philosophy will take a special route through the course.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
CONVERSION PROGRAMME (for students without a first degree in Philosophy)					
Full-time – 1 year					
7	SSPL074S7	Introduction to Philosophy	30	Comp	T1
7		Option 1 (may be L6 Logic)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 2	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 3	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Part-time – 2 years					
7	SSPL074S7	Introduction to Philosophy	30	Comp	T1
7	Year 1	Option 1 (may be L6 Logic)	30	Option	T2 or 3
7	Year 1/2	Option 2	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	Year 2	Option 3	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
NON-CONVERSION PROGRAMME (for students with a first degree in Philosophy)					
Full-time – 1 year					
7		Option 1 (may be L6 Logic)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 2	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 3	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 4	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Part-time – 2 years					
7	Year 1	Option 1 (may be L6 Logic)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	Year 1	Option 2	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	Year 1/2	Option 3	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	Year 2	Option 4	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3

Indicative list of option modules			
L7	SSPL243S7	Contemporary Epistemology	30
L7	SSPL243S7	Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science	30
L7	SSPL246S7	Ethical Traditions	30
L7	SSPL249S7	Evolution, Science and Morality	30
L7	SSPL252S7	Free Will and Moral Responsibility	30
L7	SSPL255S7	Language and Metaphysics	30
L7	SSPL258S7	Metaphysical Traditions, Ancient and Modern	30
L7	SSPL261S7	Philosophy, Art and Literature	30
L7	SSPL264S7	The Ethics of Life and Death: Humans, Animals and the Environment	30
L7	SSPL267S7	Themes in Twentieth-Century French and German Philosophy	30
L7	SSPL270S7	Theories of Value: Aesthetics and Ethics	30
L7	SSPL273S7	Topics in Early Modern Philosophy	30
L7	SSPL276S7	Women in Philosophy	30
L7	SSPL278H7	Special Topics I	15
L7	SSPL280H7	Special Topics II	15
L7	SSPL171S7	Ancient and Medieval Philosophy	30
L7	SSPL151S7	The Biology of Evil	30
L7	SSPL109S7	Philosophy of Science	30
L7	SSPL106S7	Philosophy, Business and Society	30
L7	SSPL004S7	Political Philosophy	30
L7	SSPL112S7	The Idea of Freedom	30
L7	SSPL114S7	The Philosophy of Nietzsche	30

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. Introduction to Philosophy seminars occur twice a week, while seminars/classes in all other modules occur once a week.

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.

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, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic understanding of central areas of philosophy, including historical and contemporary debates, and the interrelations between different areas of philosophy
- Display a thorough understanding of different ideas, contexts and frameworks deployed by philosophers; their strengths and weaknesses; and the ways in which they affect the shape of philosophical arguments
- Develop critical responses to different philosophical arguments and theories, while suggesting new approaches
- Flexibly and creatively apply knowledge to critically challenge philosophical responses to key arguments, while situating these in relation to different theories in philosophy
- Understand and communicate complex ideas and information at a high level of abstraction while demonstrating a grasp of a range of sources
- Construct detailed, complex arguments for thought-out positions which appropriately deploy advanced philosophical methodologies
- Demonstrate a capacity for original and independent thought while developing the capability to effectively communicate in a range of complex and specialised contexts
- Autonomously implement and evaluate improvements to performance, taking into account reflection, feedback and philosophical best practice

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:

- 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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