Programme Specification

1	**Awarding body**	University of London
2	**Teaching Institution**	**Birkbeck College**
3	**Programme Title(s)**	**MA Philosophy**
4	**Programme Code(s)**	TBC
5	**UCAS code**	N/A
6	**Home Department**	Philosophy
7	**Exit Award(s)**	PG Diploma, PG Certificate
8	**Duration of Study** (number of years)	1 year FT; 2 years PT

9	**Mode of Study**	FT	x	PT	x	DL-FT		DL-PT	

10	**Level of Award (FHEQ)**	7
11	**Other teaching depts or institution**	N/A
12	**Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body(PSRB) details**	N/A
13	**QAA Benchmark Group**	N/A

14	**Programme Rationale & Aims**
	This programme provides students with a structured Masters programme in central areas of philosophy. It provides a framework within which preparation for doctoral study can be undertaken, for those who wish to progress to a research degree, but is focussed particularly on provision of a rich and varied experience of studying philosophy at Masters level. Teaching is research-led, delivered by core staff.

15	**Entry Criteria**
	At least a second-class honours degree (or its equivalent) is expected. The degree need not be in philosophy (see below). Admission decisions are made on the basis of (a) academic references; (b) a writing sample; and (c) an interview (by telephone for overseas candidates).

16	**Learning Outcomes**
	Subject Specific: *Students will have:* 1. A detailed grasp of a variety of historical and current philosophical debates across more than one philosophical subject area; 2. A critical command of philosophical concepts and distinctions; 3. An ability to read closely and understand key philosophical texts; 4. An ability to formulate philosophical questions with precision and clarity; 5. An ability to summarise philosophical arguments and positions;

6. An ability to support and challenge philosophical views by constructing arguments and citing relevant considerations;

7. An awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of opposing views, and an ability to formulate the best arguments for those views;

8. Developed abilities in writing, reading and discussing philosophy, attained through a wide variety of learning experiences.

Intellectual:

Students will have:

9. The ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a thinker's position;

10. The ability to formulate their thoughts concisely with clarity and precision;

11. The ability to form, analyse and criticize arguments cogently.

Practical:

Students will have:

12. The ability to draw information from the presentation of complex material;

13. The ability to summarise key points from presented material;

14. The ability to analyse complex thought and argument;

15. The ability to draw information together in what they write;

16. The ability to articulate and evaluate the specific questions underlying a more general question;

17. The ability to present well-structured thought orally;

18. The ability to construct cogent arguments in the course of discussion;

19. The ability to use libraries and, where they have facilities, electronic sources of information;

20. The ability to assess the validity of arguments.

Personal and Social:

Students will have:

21. The ability to form their own philosophical views, argue for those views, and be prepared to defend or amend them in the light of criticism;

22. The ability to read philosophy independently;

23. The ability to formulate one's thoughts clearly and concisely;

24. A developed capacity for independent thought.

17	**Learning, teaching and assessment methods**
	Learning and Teaching on the MA consists in a combination of: • Lectures and Seminars • Individual Supervision • Class Discussion and Student Presentations • Independent Reading • Essay Writing

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

Assessment is predominantly by submitted essays on set topics (though see below for exceptions.) The marking scheme for each module, and for the MA as a whole, is: Fail (49 and below); Pass (50-59); Merit (60-69); Distinction (70 and above).

More specifically:

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— Each of our *optional* modules consists in ten lectures, each followed by a seminar, with set readings to be completed before each session. All optional modules are assessed by submitted essays. Optional modules are taught in all three terms.

— *Introduction to Philosophy*, which is a compulsory module for MA students who do not have a first degree in philosophy, consists in twenty pre-recorded lectures, and small-group tutorials. Assessment is by an essay (worth 50% of the module mark) and a take-home, short-answer exam (worth 50%). The exam is due the week after term ends; the essay is due at the start of Term 2. Students can write a formative (practice) essay during the term, on which they receive written feedback.

— For the *Dissertation*, students receive *four* one-on-one meetings with their supervisors: one initial consultation to establish a topic, plus three supervisions. Students complete their dissertation in Term 1 of 2023/24.

18	**Programme Description**

There are two routes through this programme: one for students with a first degree in philosophy, one for students without ('conversion' students). In addition, the programme may be studied part-time or full-time.

Programme Description – Route 1 (for students with a first degree in Philosophy)

Full-time

Students take 120 credits worth of optional modules across the three terms, with three 15 credit options in each of T2 and T3 of 2022/23, and then 30 credits (i.e., one 30 credit option) and a Dissertation in T1 of 2023/24.

Part-time

Year 1: Students take 60 credits worth of optional modules across the three terms (with an even number of modules taken in T2 and T3 of 2022/23, and a maximum of three per term), and make a start on their Dissertations.

Year 2: Students take 60 credits worth of optional modules across the three term (with a maximum of three per term), and complete their Dissertations.

Please note the Philosophy Pro-seminar available to students starting October 2022, is not available for students entering January 2023 onwards on this route.
Programme Description – Route 2 (for students without a first degree in Philosophy)
Full-time

In the Spring Term students take *Introduction to Philosophy*, which consists in 20 pre-recorded lectures and small-group tutorials. They take 90 credits worth of optional modules, with an even number of options taken in T2 and T3 of 2022/23, and a maximum of three per term. Students also write a Dissertation.

Part-time

Year 1: Students take *Introduction to Philosophy* in the Spring Term, which consists in 20 pre-recorded lectures and small-group tutorials. They take 90 credits worth of optional modules over the course of the two years, with an even number of modules to be taken in T2 and T3 of 2022/23, and a maximum of three per term. Students make a start on their Dissertations.

Year 2: Students take the remaining credits of optional modules, out of a total of 90 over the course of two years, with a maximum of three per term. Students also complete their Dissertations.

The following is a representative list of optional modules (please note that not all modules are taught every year, and that the list is subject to change):

- Ancient Philosophy
- Aristotle's Biology and Ethics
- Art and Value
- Biology of Evil
- Early Modern Philosophy of Mind
- Epistemology
- Evolution and Philosophy
- Ethics
- Idea of Freedom
- Kant and German Idealism
- Metaethics
- Metaphysics
- Philosophy of Mind
- Morality, Nature and Evolution
- Modern Philosophy
- Moral Responsibility
- Nietzsche
- Philosophy, Business and Society
- Philosophy and Gender
- Rationality: Formal and Theoretical Approaches
- Political Philosophy
- Power of Art: Historical Themes
- Philosophy of Science
- Social Epistemology
- Spinoza

| 19 | Programme Structure – Route 1 (for students with a first degree in Philosophy) |

Full-Time programme – 1 year, January 2023 start

Year 1

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	Varies	120 credits worth of optional modules (year 1), with three 15 credit options taken in each of T2 and T3 of 2022/23, and 30 credits (i.e., one 30 credit option) taken in T1 2023/24.	15/30	Optional
7	SSPL025D7	Dissertation, MA Philosophy	60	Core

Part Time programme – 2 years, January 2023 start

Year 1 and 2

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status
7	Varies	120 credits worth of optional modules (year 1), with an even number taken in T2 and T3 of 2022/23, and a maximum of three per term.	15/30	Optional
7	SSPL025D7	Dissertation, MA Philosophy	60	Core

Programme Structure – Route 2 (for students without a first degree in Philosophy)

Full-Time programme – 1 year, January 2023 start

Year 1

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status
7	SSPL074S7	Introduction to Philosophy	30	Compulsory
7	Varies	90 credits worth of optional modules, with an even number of options to be taken in T2 and T3 of 2022/23, and a maximum of three per term.	15/30	Optional
7	SSPL025D7	Dissertation, MA Philosophy	60	Core

Part Time programme – 2 years, January 2023 start

Year 1 - 2

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status
7	SSPL074S7	Introduction to Philosophy **(year 1)**	30	Compulsory
7	Varies	90 credits worth of optional modules **(year 1 - 2)**, with an even number to be taken in T2 and T3 of 2022/23, and a maximum of three per term.	15/30	Optional
7	SSPL025D7	Dissertation, MA Philosophy (students start their dissertation in year 1, completing and submitting year 2)	60	Core

Status*

CORE – Module must be taken and passed by student; COMPULSORY – Module must be taken, mark can be reviewed at sub-exam board; OPTIONAL – Student can choose to take this module

20	**Programme Director**	Dr Sarah Patterson
21	**Start Date** *(term/year)*	Prior to 2008/9
22	**Date approved by TQEC**	Prior to 2008/9
23	**Date approved by Academic Board**	Prior to 2008/9
24	**Date(s) updated/amended**	15 September 2022