

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MRes Philosophy (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Cert
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	Not applicable
Birkbeck Course Code	TMRPLPHY_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	2024-25
Date of last revision to document	30/10/2022

Admissions requirements

The entry requirement for the MRes is at least an upper second-class honours degree (2:1) in philosophy or equivalent, or an MA in philosophy at Merit level or above. Students who do not meet these exact criteria may still be considered for entry if they demonstrate the required level of intellectual potential and commitment.

Course aims

The MRes Philosophy offers research-based training in philosophy at post-MA level and serves as a foundation for starting an individual PhD project. This course gives you the opportunity to interact with renowned philosophers covering broad areas of the discipline and to undertake your own research in an internationally excellent, research-intensive department. This MRes is ideal for self-motivated, committed students who already have a good philosophy qualification and wish to progress to pure research in some area of the subject.

The course will give you a firm philosophical grounding and mastery of complex, specialised areas of philosophical study, enabling you to engage critically and reflectively with current philosophical debates. You will also be equipped with the essential research skills you need to proceed to PhD research. You will complete a substantial supervised research project in a shorter time than that required for a PhD.

The programme is taken in 1 year (FT) or 2 years (PT), and consists of two core modules (30 credits each) and a dissertation (120 credits).

Core module 1, Theoretical Philosophy, is focused on a range of set readings (contemporary or historical) within one or more of Logic, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Language, or the Philosophy of Science.

Core module 2, Practical Philosophy, is focused on a range of set readings (contemporary or historical) within one or more of Moral Philosophy, Political Philosophy, or the Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics.

Together, Core modules 1 and 2 develop individual research competence in two recognisably different aspects of the discipline.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	SSPL157S7	Core Module 1: Research in Theoretical Philosophy	30	Core	T1-2
7	SSPL158S7	Core Module 2: Research in Practical Philosophy	30	Core	T1-2
7	SSPL159Q7	MRes Dissertation in Philosophy	120	Core	T1-3 and summer
Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	SSPL157S7 or SSPL158S7	Core Module 1: Research in Theoretical Philosophy or Core Module 2: Research in Practical Philosophy	30	Core	T1-2

Year 2					
7	SSPL157S7 or SSPL158S7	Core Module 1: Research in Theoretical Philosophy or Core Module 2: Research in Practical Philosophy	30	Core	T1-2
7	SSPL159Q7	MRes Dissertation in Philosophy	120	Core	T1-3 and summer

Note: part-time students begin preparation work for the dissertation in year 1 and complete in year 2.

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 is 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, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Teaching on this course is a combination of seminars and one-to-one supervisions. Each of the core modules in Practical and Theoretical Philosophy has ten associated seminar sessions devoted to discussion of significant philosophical papers, with students also receiving up to three individual supervisions per module on their research essays. In addition, students meet individually with their supervisors to work on their Dissertations. A significant proportion of the learning on this research-based Masters programme takes place outside of scheduled classes under the guidance of assigned supervisors.

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 each of the two core modules, you will be assessed by a single research essay no longer than 5,000 words. The Dissertation is expected to be between 15,000 and 20,000 words.

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:

- Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of philosophical study and be able to engage with current debates about their subject matter;
- Extend your analytical, evaluative, critical and reflective capacities by i) demonstrating critical awareness of the insights and limitations of current work in your chosen field; ii)

evaluating and effectively criticizing existing scholarship in your chosen field; iii) being able to analyse or synthesize existing knowledge in an original manner;

- Develop an effective understanding of appropriate research methods in philosophy;
- Communicate effectively relevant acquired knowledge and understanding in writing and in group discussions;
- Develop transferable skills, including the ability to take responsibility for your own learning; producing oral and written presentations; planning and producing written assignments in accordance with scholarly standards; working independently and in groups; managing their time effectively; and using research tools relevant to their areas of study.

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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