University of Birmingham

MA Philosophy of Religion and Ethics (Distance Learning)

This distance learning programme will explore the key issues in the fields of Philosophy of Religion and Ethics – for example: Are there shared human values? How do we negotiate different belief systems in pluralistic societies? Is there a conflict between science and religion? Do people with different religious views have the same morals? Is life without God meaningless?

We also offer an on-campus programme over one or two years – for more information, see **Philosophy of Religion and Ethics MA (/postgraduate/courses/taught/phil/phil-religion-ethics.aspx)** .

Course fact file

Type of Course: Continuing professional development, distance learning

Study Options: Distance learning, full time, part time

Duration: 12 months full-time, up to 36 months part-time

Start date: September

Related courses

MA/Diploma Philosophy of Religion and Ethics (/postgraduate/courses/taught/phil/phil-religion-ethics.aspx)

MA Philosophy of Health and Happiness (Distance learning) (/postgraduate/courses/distance/philosophy/philosophy-health-happiness.aspx)

Contact

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School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion (/schools/ptr/index.aspx)

College of Arts and Law Graduate School (/schools/calgs/index.aspx)

Department of Theology and Religion (/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/index.aspx)

Details

You will study six modules in total, three of which are core Philosophy modules:

- Research Skills and Methods
- God, Freedom and the Meaning of Life
- Global Ethics *or* Bioethics

Your remaining three modules are optional. The following Philosophy modules are available as distance learning modules:

- Philosophy of Health and Happiness
- Philosophy of Cognitive Science
- Global Ethics *(if not taken as core)*
- Bioethics *(if not taken as core)*

You can also choose to do one module outside your main discipline as one of your optional modules. The following modules are available by distance learning:

- Evangelical and Charismatic Approaches to Music and Worship
- Heritage and Memory
- Heritage and Popular Culture
- History of Evangelicism and Pentecostalism
- Shakespeare's Legacy
- Valuing and Representing Cultural Heritage

Please note: You do have the option to take your optional module on campus, which will give you access to further modules in the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion.

You will also complete a 15,000-word dissertation.

Why study this course

The University of Birmingham has a vibrant community of philosophers, pursuing original research on a wide range of topics on which expert supervision is available. The main advantage of studying this programme by distance learning is the flexibility. You can study at home, in your own time and at your own pace, so you can combine achieving a qualification with work or family commitments.

Career changing

A qualification from the University of Birmingham can be the springboard to promotion with your current employer, the platform from which to launch a new career or

simply a way to become more effective in your current role.

Studying by distance learning has the benefit of allowing you to develop your career without having to leave employment. It also means that you can apply new knowledge and insights to your working life while you are still studying; many students choose to tackle work-related topics in their dissertations.

Studying at the University of Birmingham is a rewarding and enriching experience that brings about significant personal development.

Support

Although self-study is central to doing a programme distance learning support is always available from tutors at the University. Our programmes are designed to keep you in touch with fellow students and tutors. The 'virtual learning environment' provides a focal point and helps provide a structure for your learning.

Materials

Our study materials are produced by academic staff in the specialist areas and are available online through the University's 'virtual learning environment'. They contain aims and objectives, reading lists, summaries of readings, activities and commentaries, discussion and reflection tasks, indexes and details of assignments required. On joining you are provided with a handbook that introduces you to the team, provides details of their roles and expertise and gives all the contact information you will need including email addresses so that if you have any difficulties or questions you will know who to contact for help and guidance.

Personal tutors

You will be assigned a personal tutor. Personal tutors are available to answer questions regarding the content of your programme, and also to give advice and provide clarification if you don't understand something, for example what an assignment question demands.

Modules

You will study three core Philosophy modules:

Research Skills and Methods

This module consists of ten sessions of core skills, which will include generic research skills as well as looking at discipline-specific topics.

God, Freedom and the Meaning of Life

The module provides an introduction to a number of philosophical issues that have a relevance to the philosophy of religion, such as: Are there sound arguments for/against the existence of God? Is freedom compatible with God's foreknowledge? Why is there something rather than nothing? Is life meaningless without God? Can there be morality without God?

Global Ethics I

This module aims to introduce you to key concepts and debates in global ethics. First, we will explore several prominent traditions in ethical theory; next we will apply these normative ethical theories to concrete ethical questions. In investigating these theories and applications, you will be encouraged to question your presumptions about the nature of ethics and moral values. The module also develops critical reasoning and argumentative skills through philosophical discussion and writing. The theoretical tools of analysis and argument can be applied in all aspects of global ethics.

OR

Bioethics

This module introduces you to the increasing number of dilemmas in bioethics that cross national boundaries and transcend domestic regulation. Bioethical dilemmas, whether arising from scientific and technological developments or from the research practices of pharmaceutical companies, raise issues which cannot be effectively addressed at national or regional levels. Bioethics clearly calls for global solutions to what are global dilemmas and you will be introduced to some of the key bioethical issues which arise in the contemporary global context.

Your remaining three modules are optional. The following Philosophy modules are available as distance learning modules:

Philosophy of Health and Happiness

The module will examine debates at the forefront of current research in the philosophy of health and happiness. You will explore conceptual problems (e.g. what ‘health’ and ‘disease’ are) and question contemporary lifestyle issues (for instance, regarding how health, happiness and meaning relate, as well as whether there is a correlation between income and life satisfaction). You will also be asked to consider how technological advances (such as those in genetics) are changing these understandings.

Philosophy of Cognitive Science

Philosophy of Cognitive Science covers a range of advanced topics in empirically-informed philosophy of mind. In any given year, some of the following topics will be addressed in detail: theories of intentionality, differences between human and animal cognition, pathologies of belief such as delusions and self-deception, theories of emotion, accounts of cognitive rationality, the relationship between ownership and authorship of thoughts, the narrative view of the self, the psychology of wisdom and expertise.

Plus

Global Ethics I or **Bioethics** (see descriptions above), if not taken as core.

You can also choose to do one module outside your main discipline as one of your optional modules:

- Evangelical and Charismatic Approaches to Music and Worship
- Heritage and Memory
- Heritage and Popular Culture
- History of Evangelicism and Pentecostalism
- Shakespeare's Legacy
- Valuing and Representing Cultural Heritage

Fees and funding

We charge an annual tuition fee. Fees for 2015/16 are as follows:

- Home/EU: £6,210 full-time; £3,105 part-time
- Overseas: £14,140 full-time; £7,070 part-time

Please note: The part-time programme can be completed over up to three years, but fees are payable over two years; in each of years one and two, the fee payable will

be half the full-time rate.

Tuition fees can either be paid in full or by instalments.

Eligibility for Home/EU or Overseas fees can be verified with Admissions. Learn more about **fees for international students (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/International/students/finance/fees.aspx)**

Learn more about **postgraduate tuition fees and funding (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgt-fees/index.aspx)** .

Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's **Postgraduate Funding Database (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx)** .

Entry requirements

The normal entrance requirement is an upper second-class Honours degree in a relevant discipline (to be determined by the Admissions Tutor – usually Philosophy, Theology or Religious Studies).

Additional information: Other qualifications are considered - learn more about **entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements)**

How to apply

Before you make your application

Please refer to our **six step process (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/calgs/postgraduate-research/howtoapplyforanartsphd.aspx)** on applying for PhD, MA by Research and MRes opportunities for Arts subject areas.

You may wish to **register your interest with us (https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate)** to receive regular news and updates on postgraduate life within this Department and the wider University.

Additional Guidance for **applicants to the PhD Distance Learning study (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/calgs/distancelearning/dl-applicants.aspx)** mode.

Making your application

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the **How to apply pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx)**

Apply now (https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL147.htm)

Related links

Postgraduate funding - Department of Philosophy (/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/postgraduate/funding.aspx)

Learning and teaching

Although much of the course is delivered through our 'virtual learning environment,' support is always available. You will have a personal tutor and dissertation supervisor to guide you and answer any questions, and you have access to a wide range of online resources too.

You also have the opportunity to meet other students and academic staff through online chats and discussion forums.

Transcript (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/accessibility/transcripts/artsandlaw/calgs/distance-learning.aspx)

You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx)** which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the **English for International Students Unit (EISU) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/insessional/index.aspx)** .

Related staff

Dr Jussi Suikkanen (/staff/profiles/philosophy/suikkanen-jussi.aspx)

Dr Iain Law (/staff/profiles/philosophy/law-ian.aspx)

Professor Yujin Nagasawa (/staff/profiles/philosophy/nagasawa-yujin.aspx)

Employability

The University of Birmingham has been ranked 8th in the UK and 60th in the world for post-qualification employability in the latest global survey of universities commissioned by the International Herald Tribune.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for employment and this will be further enhanced by the employability skills training offered through the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.

Birmingham?s Philosophy postgraduates develop a range of skills that are highly desirable in the job market, including: articulacy; precise analytical thought; clarity; rigour in formulating complex problems; and the ability to analyse and construct sound arguments.

Over the past five years, over 93% of Philosophy postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation. Due to the transferable nature of their skills, Philosophy postgraduates traditionally enter a wide range of employment areas, from the Civil Service to finance. Employers that graduates have gone on to work for include: Afrikids (child rights organisation); Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust; Muslim Scout Fellowship; Rights and Humanity; University of Birmingham; and University of Edinburgh.

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