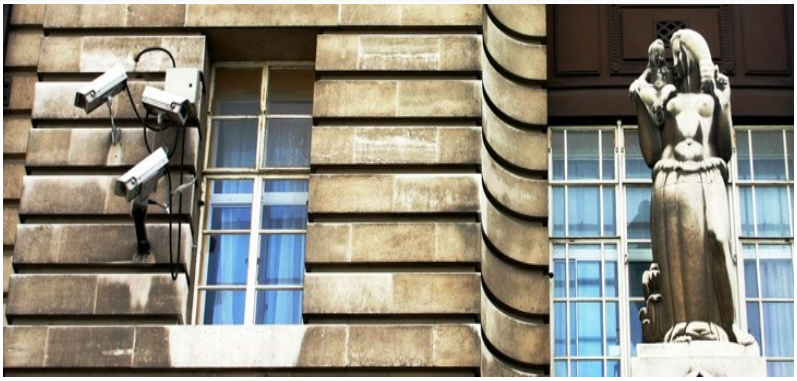
University of Birmingham

MSc Human Values and Human Rights



The programme takes a multidisciplinary approach to human rights and values, drawing on political theory, law, philosophy, theology, international relations and ethics. It allows you to approach the issue from a broad perspective and in the context of global ethics.

The programme provides solid research training and contributes to the professional development of NGO personnel and those working in the public and private sector. It is also suitable if you are a graduate or if you want to go onto further research, such as a PhD, in this area.

Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham has been awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

Type of Course: Taught

Study Options: Full time, part time

Duration: 12 months full-time (including the summer months devoted to the writing of the dissertation); up to 4 years part-time

Start date: September

Related courses

MSc Global Ethics (/postgraduate/courses/taught/phil/global-ethics.aspx)

Contact

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Department of Philosophy (/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/index.aspx)

Details

You will study three core modules:

- Human Rights
- Global Ethics I
- Research Skills and Methods

You will also choose three optional modules from a range including:

- Development Ethics
- Bioethics
- Global Ethics II
- Global Ethics Placement
- Philosophy of Health and Happiness
- Research Seminar

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

Modules

You will take three core modules:

Human Rights

This module introduces you to the contemporary philosophical debates about human rights. It focuses more on human rights understood as moral rights, rather than as legal rights written in international law. We will begin from the very basic question of what human rights are. We will also consider questions such as 'What kind of

human rights are there?', 'Which beings can have human rights?', 'Are human rights inalienable?', and 'What happens when human rights conflict?'. The first half of the module focuses on exploring different philosophical justifications for human rights; we will cover justifications based on the dignity of human agency, international politics, and human flourishing. The second half of the module will focus on philosophical debates about the nature of specific human rights - looking first at some general rights, for autonomy, liberty and wellbeing, and then at more concrete rights to life and privacy. We will also consider objections to human rights based on relativist and utilitarian views in ethics.

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.

Research Skills and Methods

This module is an introduction to the methods of contemporary philosophy. It identifies key philosophical reasoning tools and styles of argument, providing opportunity to apply these to classical philosophical debates. It also highlights the great variety of philosophical theorising on offer by contrasting so-called 'armchair' and empirically-informed philosophy, as well as theoretical and applied philosophy. Throughout there will be an emphasis on honing essential practical skills, namely reading and writing philosophy at postgraduate level. This module will also be useful as a basic refresher course for those who have studied some philosophy already. The sessions are taught by a member of the Department of Philosophy, focusing on discipline-specific topics..

You will also choose three optional modules from within the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion. Options available include:

Development Ethics

Development Ethics explores the ethical dimension of human social development. Students will be encouraged to question the notion of development and to consider how development relates to concepts such as well-being and economic growth. Issues to be addressed include the relationship between development and exploitation, and the place of culture, religion and history in development.

Bioethics

Global Bioethics introduces you to some key issues, including some concerned with genetics, reproductive technologies, commodification, and research in the developing world. Bioethical dilemmas, whether they arise from scientific and technological developments or from the research practices of pharmaceutical companies, raise questions which cannot be effectively addressed at national or regional levels, and which therefore s offer ethical insights into issues of global injustice.

Global Ethics II

This module develops your understanding of key global ethical issues, in particular human rights, poverty, distributive justice, cosmopolitan democracy, governance and humanitarian intervention.

Global Ethics Placement

You will undertake a placement in an organisation of your choice, such as a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) or policy-making organisation. This module allows you to explore the practice of global ethics. Previous students have enjoyed placements with Oxfam, development NGOs in Tanzania and UK-based Human Rights and activist organisations.

Philosophy of Health and Happiness

This 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.

Research Seminar

This is an innovative module which replicates the experience of being a professional academic. You will attend the PhilSoc and choose a topic from those discussed at the seminar. You will then write your own paper on that topic, which is assessed by members of staff as if it was going through the 'peer-review' process for acceptance to an academic journal. You will then present your paper in the Postgraduate Seminar and rewrite it according the comments. This module provides a unique and invaluable experience for students considering continuing in academia.

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

For part-time students, the above fee quoted is for year one only and tuition fees will also be payable in year two of your programme.

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)**

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

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

Entry requirements

The normal entrance requirement is a good first degree in a relevant field or discipline, although appropriate work experience will also be taken into consideration.

Learn more about **entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)**

International students

Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our **country pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx)** show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- by holding an **English language qualification (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx)** to the right level
- by taking and successfully completing one of our **English courses for international students (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx)**

How to apply

Before you make your application

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.

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/CAL104.htm)

Related links

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

Learning and teaching

You will be taught by a vibrant community of philosophers, pursuing original research on a wide range of topics on which expert supervision is available, including ethics, metaethics and global ethics.

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

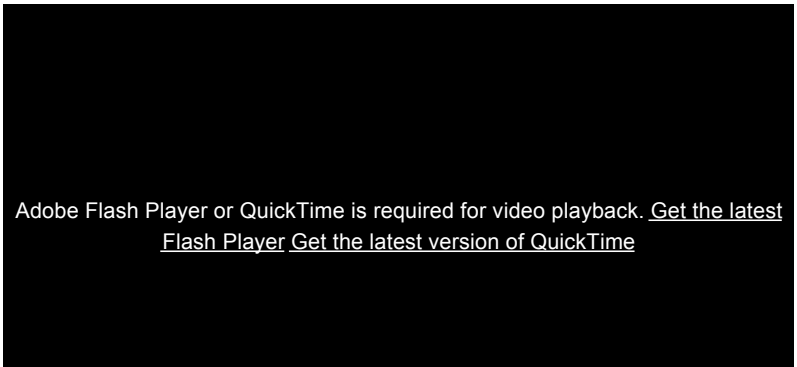
As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx)** which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters 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)** .

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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