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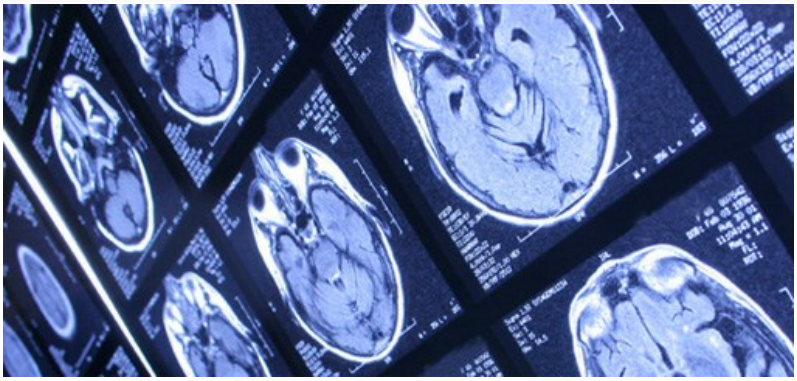
MA Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science



On this programme you will explore issues in philosophy of mind and the cognitive sciences, such as the nature of intentionality, physicalism, philosophical issues concerning rationality and interpretation, and consciousness. You will be taught by a vibrant community of philosophers, who pursue original research on a wide range of topics giving you expert supervision for your dissertation.

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: 1 year full-time; 2 years part-time

Start date: September

Related courses

MA Philosophy (/postgraduate/courses/taught/phil/philosophy.aspx)

MA Philosophy of Health and Happiness (/postgraduate/courses/taught/phil/phil-health-happiness.aspx)

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

Philosophy of Health and Happiness module (/postgraduate/courses/cpd/phil/philosophy-health-happiness.aspx)

Contact

Dr Maja Spener, Director of Taught Postgraduate Programmes for Philosophy
Email: **m.spener@bham.ac.uk (mailto:m.spener@bham.ac.uk)**

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

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

Details

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

- Philosophy of Cognitive Science *or* Philosophy and Mental Health
- Philosophy of Mind
- Research Skills and Methods

Your remaining three modules are optional, and can be chosen from a range of modules in Philosophy, Psychology or Artificial Intelligence offered by the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, the School of Psychology or the School of Computer Science. You will also complete a 15,000-word dissertation.

Modules

You will study three core modules as follows:

Both of:

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.

Philosophy of Mind

What is the place of consciousness in nature? Will we ever understand it in a 'scientific' way? What about thinking in general? Are human minds, essentially, grey wet computers, or do we need altogether distinctive conceptual resources to understand them? These kinds of questions have concerned philosophers of mind for centuries, and in this module we'll address a range that are central to contemporary debates. We begin with the metaphysical question of whether consciousness can be accommodated in a 'physicalist' world view, examining the difficulties faced by various different attempts to analyse it in physical ('scientific') terms. We then move to some fundamental questions about mental states in general: Are they located inside people's heads? Can they be understood in purely descriptive terms, or are they (like moral and other evaluative properties are often held to be) in some sense essentially 'normative'?

Plus one of:

Philosophy of Cognitive Science

This module 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.

Philosophy and Mental Health

This module provides an overview of contemporary debates in philosophy and mental health. In each seminar a new issue will be investigated, but there will be three interrelated threads throughout the module. The first is about the nature of psychiatry. The second is about the sense in which psychiatric disorders are disorders of the self. The third is about how we should respond to people with psychiatric disorders, considered from a wide range of perspectives, including interpersonal, clinical, ethical, legal and public health policy. These themes will be addressed by reference to different aspects of psychiatry (e.g. classification, diagnosis, aetiology, research, treatment), different psychiatric disorders (e.g. addiction, anorexia, dementia, dissociation, schizophrenia, personality disorders, psychopathy), and different disciplinary frameworks.

You will also choose three optional modules from within the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, the School of Psychology or the School of Computer Science.

Fees and funding

We charge an annual tuition fee. Fees for 2014/15 are as follows:

- Home / EU: £5,940 full-time; £2,970 part-time
- Overseas: £13,665 full-time

Learn more about **fees and funding (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/postgraduate/fees.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.

University of Birmingham graduates - including those due to graduate in summer 2014 - may be entitled to a fee reduction through the **College of Arts and Law Alumni Bursary scheme (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/calgs/scholarships/alumni-bursary.aspx)** .

Entry requirements

The programme allows for multi-disciplinary entry. You need an upper second-class Honours degree, or equivalent, in Philosophy or other relevant subjects (Medicine, Psychology, English, etc.) or a Joint Honours degree of which Philosophy or another relevant subject is a component.

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

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/CAL101.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 the philosophy of mind and cognitive science.

You will participate in a weekly Postgraduate Seminar and in the regular meetings of PhilSoc and the Staff Seminar.

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)

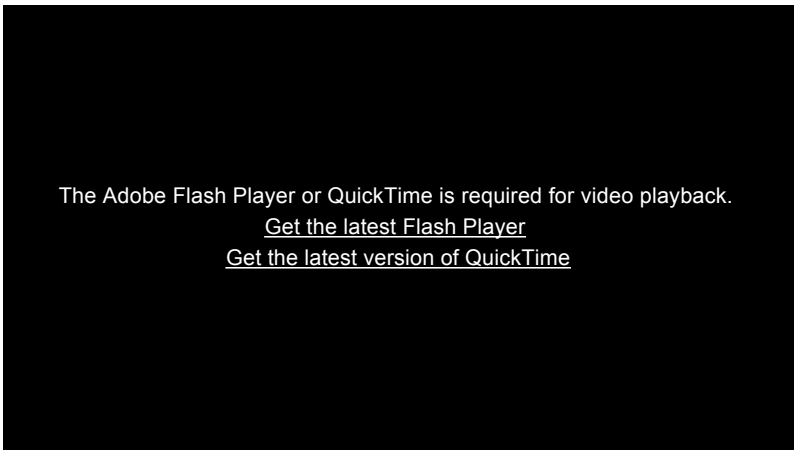
Professor Lisa Bortolotti (/staff/profiles/philosophy/bortolotti-lisa.aspx)

Dr Nikk Effingham (/staff/profiles/philosophy/effingham-nikk.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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