

BA Philosophy, Religion and Ethics



What is the meaning and goal of life? How do different religions, cultures and philosophies understand the human predicament? Are there shared human values? Can we prove the existence of God? Can different religions coexist peacefully? What is spirituality? Is there a resurgence of religion? What are the challenges for contemporary religious thinking and practice?

These are just a few of the questions that you might encounter as part of the BA in Philosophy, Religion and Ethics at Birmingham. If you are interested in pursuing such questions with intellectual curiosity and academic rigour then we would like to hear from you.

In a major boost to the department's staff and its international reputation, last year saw the appointment of highly regarded academics to the Department of Philosophy. World-renowned expert in epistemology Professor Scott Sturgeon joined the department in January 2013, choosing to vacate a chair at Oxford in order to come to Birmingham. Dr Maja Spener, also from Oxford, joined us in March 2013. Philosophy at Birmingham is already flourishing and is set to grow and develop even further and be a truly exciting place to study over the next few years.

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

Course fact file

UCAS code: VV56

Duration: 3 years

Places Available: 17

Applications in 2013: 115

Typical Offer: ABB (**[More detailed entry requirements and the international qualifications accepted can be found in the course details \(? OpenSection=EntryRequirements\)](#)**)

Start date: September

Contact

For more information, please contact

Admissions Tutor:

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

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

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

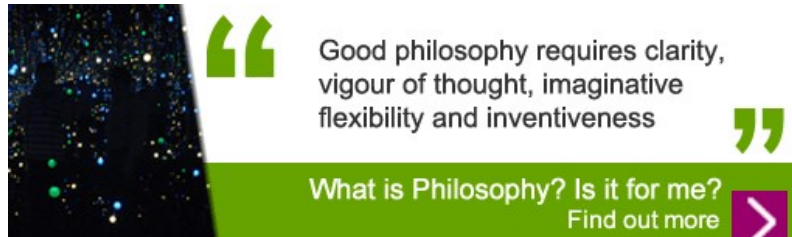
SATISFACTION*

Details

The programme is situated in the **[School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion \(/schools/ptr/index.aspx\)](/schools/ptr/index.aspx)**, and draws on some of the strongest aspects within the School in terms of expertise and teaching excellence, including two research centres: **[The Centre for Global Ethics \(/research/activity/globalethics/index.aspx\)](/research/activity/globalethics/index.aspx)** and the **[John Hick Centre for the Philosophy of Religion \(/research/activity/philosophyofreligion/index.aspx\)](/research/activity/philosophyofreligion/index.aspx)**. The programme will allow you to address issues and questions that occur at the 'borderlands' between Philosophy and Theology/Religion. In doing so, it will seek to provide you with an understanding and appreciation of key areas in philosophy, ethics, theology and the study of religion, develop your interest in and enthusiasm for critical issues and foster within you good argumentative skills, critical and reflective thinking, and a familiarity with a range of academic methods. Finally, it aims to provide you with the opportunity to engage with a range of expertise and internationally recognised research undertaken within the School.

Why study this course

- **Friendly and relaxed atmosphere** – our academic staff within the **Department of Philosophy** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/index.aspx>) know students by name and are always happy to talk about philosophical questions, provide additional feedback on academic performance and discuss any problems you might be having with your degree programme
- **Taught by experts in the field** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/staff/index.aspx>) - the Department of Philosophy has a growing international reputation as a centre of excellence for research in analytical philosophy, especially in metaphysics and epistemology, philosophy of language and mind, and ethics and ethical history
- **Intellectually challenging and stimulating environment** – focused on ensuring you're a fully supported and active learner
- **High-quality student support** You'll have your own personal tutor as well as the department's welfare tutor and the university's support services
- **Flexibility** – you will have the opportunity to specialise more and more as you progress, culminating in a final-year dissertation that allows you to carry out in-depth individually supervised research into topics of your choice
- **Study abroad** – in your third year there is the option to study at an overseas university
- **Extra-curricular activities** – we have a highly active Philosophy Society which runs a programme of social events, visiting speakers and debates throughout the academic year
- **Employability** – our unique degree programme is designed to provide both academic excellence and vocational development; a balance that's highly sought after by employers in today's intellectual and creative industries
- **Centre for the Study of Global Ethics** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/globalethics/index.aspx>) - the first of its kind in the UK where it addresses the practical and theoretical issues raised by globalisation
- **John Hick Centre for Philosophy of Religion** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/philosophyofreligion/index.aspx>) – dedicated to promoting critical thinking about the metaphysical, epistemological and moral questions concerning religion, belief and reality. The Centre is named after John Hick, Emeritus H.G. Wood Professor of Theology at the University of Birmingham and one of the most prominent philosophers of religion in our time



“ Good philosophy requires clarity, vigour of thought, imaginative flexibility and inventiveness ”

What is Philosophy? Is it for me?
Find out more >

(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/phil/what-is-philosophy.aspx>)

Dr Darragh Byrne gives the Philosophy talk at the Undergraduate Open Day September 2014

Modules

First year

We offer students a broad foundation for the academic study of philosophy, religion and ethics. At this stage the modules are mainly compulsory and introduce the broad themes and issues in philosophy, religion and ethics. Single Honours students take the three core modules, a 'module outside the main discipline' (MOMD) and any 40 credits from the optional modules.

Core modules

- Introduction to Study of Religion (20)

- Problems of Philosophy(20)
- Reasoning (10)
- Moral Problems: An Introduction to Practical Ethics (10)
- Ethics (10)
- Philosophy of Religion (10)
- MOMD (20)

Optional modules

- Introduction to Islam (10)
- Defining Jews, Jewishness and Judaism(s) (10)
- Introduction to the Study of the Holocaust (10)
- Themes in Christian Theology (20)
- [Detailed descriptions of first year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/phil/philosophy-modules.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/phil/philosophy-modules.aspx)

Second year

In the second year there is a focus on 'paradigms of belief': the different structures, worldviews and systems that inform and direct human life and activity in its global variety. The range of optional modules – divided into philosophical/ethical and religious/theological streams – allows students freedom to develop their own interests and specialisations. Students take the core module Paradigm of Belief and any 100 credits from the optional modules available.

Core module

- Paradigms of Belief (20)

Optional modules

At least 40 credits should be chosen from each group (lists are indicative and subject to variation each year):

Group A (Theology and Religion)

- Dissertation Preparation (10)
- Theological Ethics (20)
- Religion in Contemporary Society (20)
- Hinduism (10)
- Sikhism (10)
- Buddhism (10)
- Sufism: Belief and Practice (10)
- Placement (20)

Group B (Philosophy)

- The Mind Body Problem (20)
- Sex, Ethics and Philosophy (20)
- Speaking of Things (20)
- The Ethics of Killing (20)
- Feminist Philosophy (20)
- The Ethics and Politics of Climate Change (20)
- History of Analytic Philosophy (20)
- Experience and Reason: Early Modern Philosophy (20)
- [Detailed descriptions of second year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/phil/philosophy-modules.aspx#second\)](/undergraduate/courses/phil/philosophy-modules.aspx#second)

Final year

In the final year there is one compulsory element: a major module in the Philosophy of Religion. Similar to Year Two, there are a range of optional modules and opportunities for independent study - divided into philosophical/ethical and religious/theological streams. Students will take the core module and any other 100 credits from the optional modules available.

Core modules

- Philosophy of Religion (20)

Optional modules

At least 20 credits should be chosen from each group (lists are indicative and subject to variation each year):

Group A (Theology and Religion)

- Set Texts A(10)
- Set Texts B(10)
- Short dissertation (10)
- Christian/Muslim Relations (10)
- Contemporary Sufi Movements (10)
- New Age and Alternative Spiritualities (20)

- Jewish Religious Responses to the Holocaust (20)
- Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology (T&R 20)
- The Bible and Sacred Space (10)
- Theology: Transgressive Travels with the Goddess (20)
- Special Study (20)

Group B (Philosophy)

- Philosophical Project(20) (note that this module begins during the summer term of Year Two)
- Virtue Ethics(20)
- Global Bioethics(20)
- Nietzsche (20)
- Philosophy of Nature: Science, Explanation and Reality (20)
- Meta-ethics (20)
- Consciousness (20)
- Perception (20)
- Prejudice, Race & Gender (20)
- Social Justice (20)
- Aesthetics (20)
- Ethical Theory (20)
- Existentialism (20)
- Kant (20)
- Special Subject (20)
- **[Detailed descriptions of final year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/phil/philosophy-modules.aspx#final\)](/undergraduate/courses/phil/philosophy-modules.aspx#final)**

Fees and funding

Standard fees (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/fees/standard>) apply

Learn more about **fees and funding** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/feesandfinance/loans.aspx>)

Scholarships

Learn more about **scholarships and awards** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/feesandfinance/funding/index.aspx>)

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: ABB

General Studies: accepted

Additional information:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 34 points

Other qualifications are considered – learn more about **entry requirements** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements>)

International students:

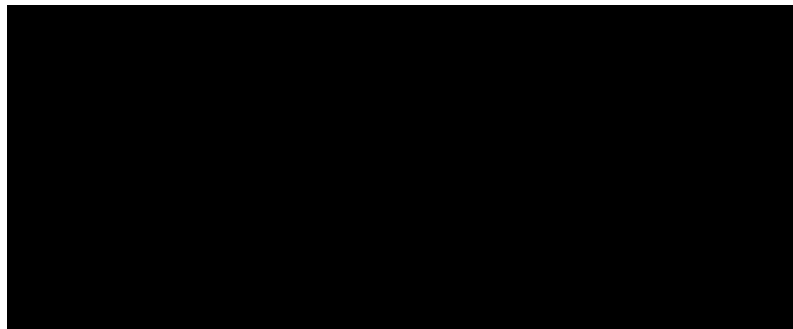
We welcome applications from international students and invite you to join our vibrant community of over 4500 international students who represent 150 different countries. We accept a range of qualifications, our **country pages** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx>) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

Depending on your chosen course of study, you may also be interested in the Birmingham Foundation Academy, a specially structured programme for international students whose qualifications are not accepted for direct entry to UK universities. Further details can be found on the **foundation academy web pages** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx>).

How to apply

Apply through UCAS at **www.ucas.com** (<http://www.ucas.com/>)

Learn more about **applying** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply>)



Key Information Set (KIS)

Key Information Sets (KIS) are comparable sets of information about full- or part-time undergraduate courses and are designed to meet the information needs of prospective students.

All KIS information has been published on the Unistats website and can also be accessed via the small advert, or 'widget', below. On the [Unistats website \(http://unistats.direct.gov.uk\)](http://unistats.direct.gov.uk) you are able to compare all the KIS data for each course with data for other courses.

The development of Key Information Sets (KIS) formed part of HEFCE's work to enhance the information that is available about higher education. They give you access to reliable and comparable information in order to help you make informed decisions about what and where to study.

The KIS contains information which prospective students have identified as useful, such as student satisfaction, graduate outcomes, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods, tuition fees and student finance, accommodation and professional accreditation.

Related news and events

Video: Closer to Truth ([/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/news/2013/closer.aspx](http://schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/news/2013/closer.aspx))

Learning and teaching

As a Birmingham student you are part of an academic elite and will learn from world-leading experts. At Birmingham we advocate an enquiry based learning approach, from the outset you will be encouraged to become an independent and self-motivated learner, qualities that are highly sought after by employers. We want you to be challenged and will encourage you to think for yourself.

Your learning will take place in a range of different settings, from scheduled teaching in lectures and small group tutorials, to self-study and peer group learning (for example preparing and delivering presentations with your classmates).

Support

To begin with you may find this way of working challenging, but rest assured that we will enable you to make this transition. You will have access to a comprehensive support system that will assist and encourage you, including personal tutors and welfare tutors who can help with both academic and welfare issues, and a formal transition review during your first year to check on your progress and offer you help for any particular areas where you need support.

Our **Academic Skills Centre** also offers you support with your learning. The centre is a place where you can develop your mathematical, academic writing and general academic skills. It is the centre's aim to help you to become a more effective and independent learner through the use of a range of high-quality and appropriate learning support services. These range from drop-in sessions to workshops on a range of topics including note taking, reading, writing and presentation skills.

From the outset, you will be assigned your own **Personal Tutor** who will get to know you as you progress through your studies, providing academic and welfare advice, encouraging you and offering assistance in any areas you may feel you need extra support to make the most of your potential and your time here at Birmingham.

The **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS)** will provide you with individual support from an academic writing advisor and postgraduate subject-specialist writing tutors. You will receive guidance on writing essays and dissertations at University-level which can be quite different from your previous experiences of writing. Support is given in a variety of ways, such as small-group workshops, online activities, feedback through email and tutorials.

Student experience

Supporting you throughout your transition to University, offering research opportunities and study skills support and helping you develop and prepare for your post-University careers - our **Arts and Law Student Experience Team** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/index.aspx>) strive to help you get the most out of your academic experience.

Interactive classes are offered in modules which don't feature separate seminars. Here, lecturing time and discussion time are part of the same session and the structure of the classes can be very flexible.

Assessment methods

Studying at degree-level is likely to be very different from your previous experience of learning and teaching. You will be expected to think, discuss and engage critically with the subject and find things out for yourself. We will enable you to make this transition to a new style of learning, and the way that you are assessed during your studies will help you develop the essential skills you need to make a success of your time at Birmingham.

You will be assessed in a variety of ways, and these may be different with each module that you take. You will be assessed through coursework which may take the form of essays, group and individual presentations and formal exams (depending on your chosen degree).

During your first year you will undergo a formal 'transition' review to see how you are getting on and if there are particular areas where you need support. This is in addition to the personal tutor who is based in your school or department and can help with any academic issues you encounter.

At the beginning of each module, you will be given information on how and when you will be assessed for that particular programme of study. You will receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so that you can learn from and build on what you have done. You will be given feedback on any exams that you take; if you should fail an exam we will ensure that particularly detailed feedback is made available to enable you to learn for the future.

Each module is assessed independently by exams, essays or other forms of written assignment. Some modules are completely assessed by coursework. Most first-year modules are assessed by both an essay written during the year and an exam at the end of the year, with each given equal weight. The assessment for second- and third-year modules also varies. Many modules are assessed by two essays, while some are assessed by an essay and an exam. The Philosophical Project module is assessed by a single long essay of about 6,000 words.

Employability



Philosophy students have for decades had an impressive employability record.



Why not do something practical like Philosophy?

Find out more



<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/phil/why-do-philosophy.aspx>

As a student of Philosophy you will have an excellent opportunity to develop skills that are highly prized by employers. Our graduates understand complex information, write clearly and effectively, can build a case for a particular view, strategy or course of action, respect the views of others even if they disagree with them, and generally think for themselves. If you're taking the year abroad option, you'll develop real confidence and independence that's valued in the working world.

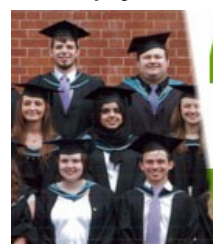
50% of job vacancies advertised for new and recent graduates don't specify a degree subject, so as a graduate of Philosophy you've a vast potential to enter a wide range of careers, including law, journalism and teaching, as well as commerce and industry. Some also decide to pursue postgraduate study.

University of Birmingham Philosophy graduates are very successful after graduation. Our Philosophy graduates have a high average starting salary of £18,000 per year. Recent graduates have started careers with employers including Government departments, local councils, charities and companies in many business sectors, in roles as diverse as Assistant Literary Agent, Management Consultant, Marketing Assistant and Programmes Officer.

Whether you have a clear idea of where your future aspirations lie or want to consider the broad range of opportunities available once you have a Birmingham degree, our **Careers Network** (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/index.aspx>) can help you achieve your goal. This is a unique careers guidance service tailored to your academic subject area, offering a specialised team who can give you expert advice. This includes individual careers advice and events to give you insight into the professions and employers of interest to arts graduates.

Our 'Creative careers' series is always popular with our students, and features events with employers and professionals from areas such as advertising, PR and communications, media, journalism, publishing, advertising and politics. We also hold events covering careers in teaching, event management, marketing and working with charities, and our internship officer develops links with local arts organisations to create some amazing opportunities for students.

Philosophy alumni profiles



I would recommend it to anyone who wants a varied, challenging, academic and thought-provoking degree.



Vanessa Lipman

H R Management Graduate Trainee



<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/alumni/index.aspx>

Extra-curricular activities

To enhance your career prospects even further, you will need to think about engaging in some extra-curricular activities while you're at university to broaden your skills and your network of contacts. This can include the many societies at the Guild of Students and also the many voluntary opportunities offered with local arts organisations. Our employer-endorsed award-winning **Personal Skills Award** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/psa.aspx>) (PSA) recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.

Our College of Arts and Law **undergraduate research scholarship scheme** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/studentexperience/urs/index.aspx>) enables interested students to work on a current academic research project being run by one of the College's academic researchers. Undergraduate research scholars gain work experience over the summer after their first or second year and have the chance to develop skills in both collaborative and independent research.

Cultural Internships

Our innovative **Cultural Internships** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/culture/volunteering/regionally.aspx>) offer graduates the opportunity for a six month paid internship at a leading cultural institution in the West Midlands. These internships are a unique opportunity to learn fundamental, transferable business and interpersonal skills, through experience of real work in an established cultural institution. Our current partners include Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham REP, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust and the Library of Birmingham. We have plans to expand the scheme to include our own major cultural assets, such as Winterbourne House, the Lapworth Museum, and the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. This scheme will give you professional experience to set you apart in a competitive graduate market.

We also offer voluntary work which complements your studies by helping you gain practical experiences in occupational settings while contributing back to society. This can bring new skills that will be useful throughout your future and can make a positive impact on your learning whilst at university. Volunteering enables you to develop skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, self-confidence and self-discipline all of which can be transferred into your studies.

Your Birmingham degree is evidence of your ability to succeed in a demanding academic environment. Employers target Birmingham students for their drive, diversity, communication and problem-solving skills, their team-working abilities and cultural awareness, and our graduate employment statistics have continued to climb at a rate well above national trends. If you make the most of the wide range of services you will be able to develop your career from the moment you arrive.

Additional accreditation

No



To see more details and compare with other courses

Visit

UNISTATS ▶

BA (Hons) Philosophy, Religion and Ethics
Full time

Official data collected by HEFCE

