

BA Philosophy

Philosophers will argue about anything...even about what philosophy is. So if you disagree with any of the following, you are probably the perfect candidate for Philosophy! Philosophy is for people who find they are bothered by questions that their friends can cheerfully ignore; people who do not want to settle for conventional answers and received wisdom, but want to arrive at answers that stand up to the most searching examination. Students on the BA Philosophy programme rate it extremely highly, with 91% reporting that they are satisfied with the quality of the course in the latest National Student Survey.

Philosophy graduates from Birmingham go on to a wide range of posts once they graduate, including roles in management consultancy, local government, publishing and marketing.

[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)
[\(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

UCAS code: V500

Duration: 3 years

Places Available: 42

Applications in 2013: 178

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

Start date: September

Contact

Admissions Tutor:

[Dr Iain Law](#)

(**<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/philosophy/law-ian.aspx>**) Telephone enquiries:

+44 (0)121 414 6431

Email:

philosophy-ug-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk (**<mailto:philosophy-ug-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk>**)



Details

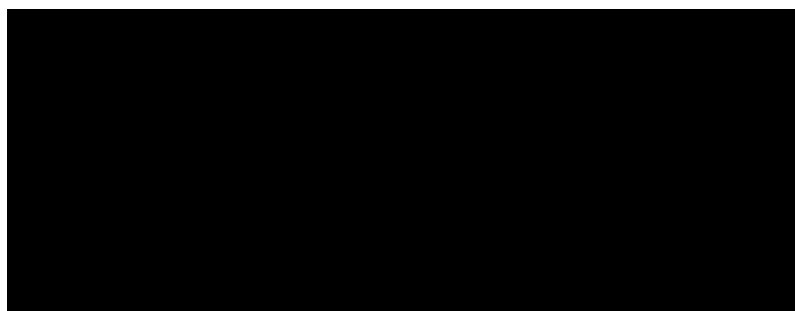
On this degree programme you will meet the great minds of history and of the present day on equal terms, not just learning what they thought, but engaging with them critically. Philosophy requires clarity and rigor of thought, imaginative flexibility and inventiveness. It also means learning to understand what others think and write, and being able to examine their arguments for weak spots and errors. This is an ability that carries over into your whole life. You will win more arguments, you will hear politician's speeches in a whole new way, and you will have a real edge in the jobs market.

The study of philosophy gets divided up into sub-fields, all of which relate to, and interact with, each other. Some of the central ones are: Metaphysics, dealing with appearance and reality, substance, causation, identity, the freedom of the will, and so on; Epistemology, dealing with the foundations, scope and limits of knowledge; Ethics, dealing with the nature of morality, with whether there is an absolute standard of morality, with the basis of justice; and Philosophy of Mind, dealing with the nature of the mind, its relationship with the body, the character of thought and feeling, and the nature of conscious experience. But there are lots of others that you will meet on this course: political philosophy, aesthetics, philosophy of language, philosophical logic, philosophy of science ... and so on, and on!

Philosophy with a year abroad

Subject to satisfactory performance over your first two years, you may have the option of spending your third year studying Philosophy at an overseas university. You will then come back to Birmingham for your fourth and final year.

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



(<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

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



Modules

First year

We offer a thorough grounding in mainly mainstream western philosophy, with some modules based around philosophical problems (e.g. the problem of scepticism, the problem of free will, and so on), some based around important historical figures (e.g. Aristotle, Descartes, Hobbes and Rousseau), and some aimed at providing you with the skills you need to study philosophy in later years.

Single Honours students study most of the modules listed below, while Joint Honours students take the first two, and in addition, two of the optional 10-credit modules.

First year modules include:

- Problems of Philosophy
- Reasoning and Logic

Optional Modules

- Ethics: How Should We Live?
- Epistemology: What and How Do We Know?
- Philosophy of Science: Methods, Ethics and the Limits of Science
- Philosophical Traditions
- Philosophy of Religion

- Political Philosophy: Can Power be Legitimate?

- Ethics: Issues of Life and Death

- Existentialism

- [Detailed descriptions of first year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/phil/philosophy-modules.aspx\)](#)

Second year

You will be given far more freedom of choice, with no modules being compulsory, so that you can pursue the topics and questions that interest and inspire you.

All of the modules below carry 20 credits, so Single Honours students take either six philosophy modules or five (plus an MOMD) and Joint Honours students will normally take three (Joint Honours students may in many programmes take more credits in one of their subjects than in the other, so some Joint Honours students might take 2 or 4 modules). The range of modules on offer may differ a little from year to year, but the following are currently available

- The Mind-Body Problem
- Elements of Logic and Metaphysics
- Feminist Philosophy
- Speaking of Things
- Logic: its Limits and Scope
- Sex, Ethics and Philosophy
- The Ethics of Killing
- The Ethics and Politics of Climate Change
- Experience and Reason: Early Modern Philosophy
- History of Analytic Philosophy

- [Detailed descriptions of second year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/phil/philosophy-modules.aspx#brains\)](#)

Final year

The modules on offer at this level are informed by lecturers' research interests to a greater degree than before, and students should begin to get a real feel for philosophy at the cutting-edge. In addition to four or five modules below, Single Honours students undertake independent research of their own, and with help from a supervisor, write a dissertation on a topic of their own choosing. Joint Honours students may do the same, but if their other subject includes a dissertation they are not obliged to do another in Philosophy.

Final year modules include:

- Minds Brains and Computers
- Topics in Philosophy of Religion
- The Puzzle of Existence
- Global Bioethics
- Prejudice, Race and Gender
- Being Good and Doing Right
- Nietzsche
- Philosophy of Language
- Experience and Reason: Topics in Epistemology
- What there is: Issues in Ontology
- Philosophy of Mathematics

- [Detailed descriptions of final year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/phil/philosophy-modules.aspx#brains\)](#)

Philosophy with a year abroad

Subject to satisfactory performance over your first two years, you may have the option of spending your third year studying Philosophy at an overseas university. You will then come back to Birmingham for your fourth and final year.

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: AAB–ABB

Required subjects and grades: if Philosophy or Religious Studies are taken at A level, we will require at least a grade B in these subjects

General Studies: not accepted

Additional information:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 35 points

Other qualifications are considered – learn more about [entry requirements \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements)

International students:

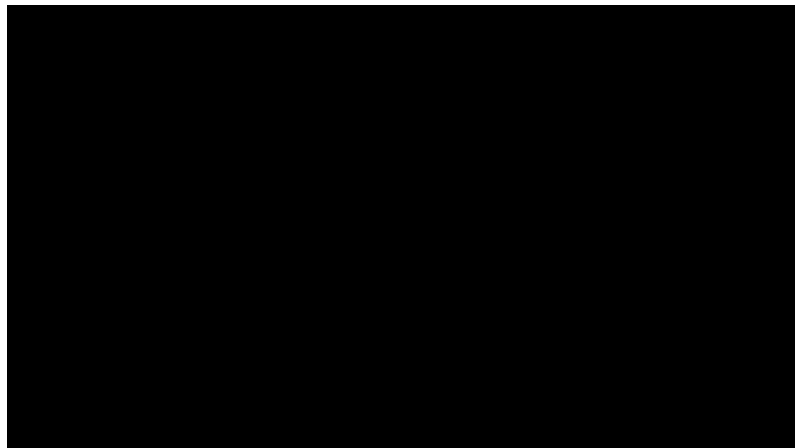
We welcome applications from international students and invite you to join our vibrant community of over 4500 international students who represent 150 different countries. We accept a range of qualifications, our [country pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.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 \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx).

How to apply

Apply through UCAS at [www.ucas.com \(http://www.ucas.com/\)](http://www.ucas.com/)

Learn more about [applying \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply)



Joint Honours combinations

- [Classical Literature & Civilisation and Philosophy BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/classical-literature-and-civilisation-and-philosophy.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/classical-literature-and-civilisation-and-philosophy.aspx)
- [English Literature and Philosophy BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/english-literature-and-philosophy.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/english-literature-and-philosophy.aspx)
- [English Language and Philosophy BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/english-language-and-philosophy.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/english-language-and-philosophy.aspx)
- French Studies and Philosophy BA
- [History and Philosophy BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/history-and-philosophy.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/history-and-philosophy.aspx)
- [Mathematics and Philosophy BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/mathematics-and-philosophy.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/mathematics-and-philosophy.aspx)
- [Philosophy and Sociology BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/philosophy-and-sociology.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/philosophy-and-sociology.aspx)

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.

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.

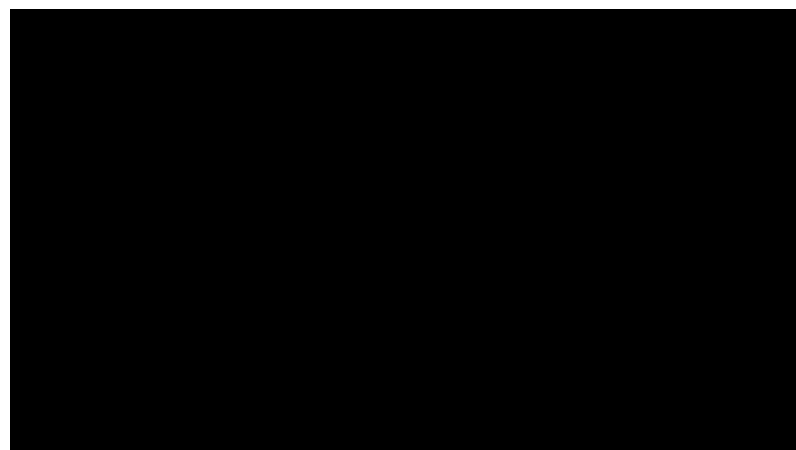
From the outset, you will be assigned your own **Personal Tutor** who will get to know you as you progress through your studies, providing academic and welfare advice, encouraging you and offering assistance in any areas you may feel you need extra support to make the most of your potential and your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

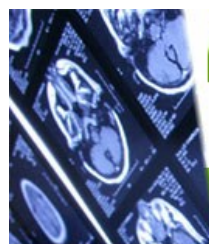
You will be assessed in a variety of ways, and these may be different with each module that you take. You will be assessed through coursework which may take the form of essays, group and individual presentations and formal exams (depending on your chosen degree).

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

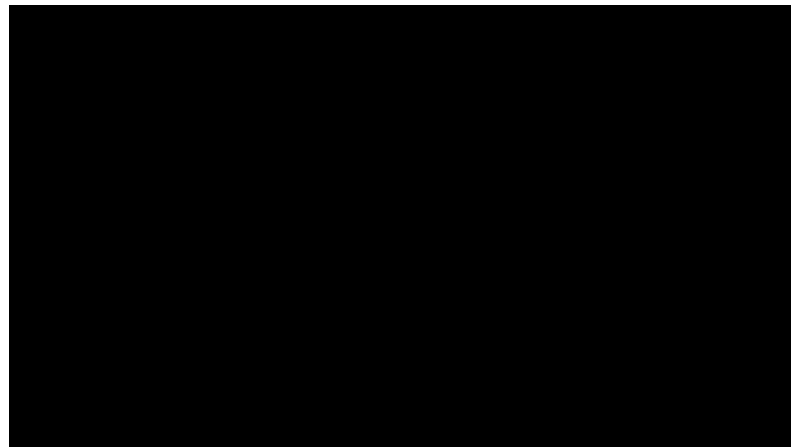


<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/alumni/index.aspx>

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.

92% Students agreed staff are good at explaining things

BA (Hons) Philosophy
Full time



To see more details and compare with other courses

Visit
UNISTATS ▶

Official data collected by HEFCE



