

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes **Single, Joint and Minor Honours Degree Programmes in Philosophy**. The specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2014**.

(A) The aims of the Single honour degree in Philosophy are:

- to expose students to a broad and coherent philosophical curriculum that draws on both the European and Anglo-American traditions;
- to present an appreciation of philosophy that stresses its pertinence to other areas of intellectual inquiry;
- to provide students with sufficient choice to allow them to pursue their philosophical interests where possible;
- to engender a range of subject-specific and general intellectual skills through a variety of learning activities geared to the study and practice of philosophy;
- to develop a friendly, stimulating, and supportive academic environment that encourages each student to strive to achieve their potential in philosophy;
- to inculcate an active sense of the interplay between the intellectual-historical and ahistorical dimensions of philosophical inquiry;
- to present philosophy's significance both for one's self-understanding and for one's critical engagement with issues of public importance;
- to enable students to take an active role in shaping the development of their philosophical interests;
- to expose students to some major issues at the frontiers of philosophical debate and research;
- to enable students to develop independent critical thinking and judgement by taking progressive responsibility for their own learning, concluding the process in the final year through the production of an extended piece of philosophical writing.

(B) The aims of Joint degrees with Philosophy as an equal component are:

- to expose students to a broad and coherent philosophical curriculum that draws on both the European and Anglo-American traditions;
- to present an appreciation of philosophy that stresses its pertinence to other areas of intellectual inquiry;
- to provide students with sufficient choice to allow them to pursue their philosophical interests where possible;
- to engender a range of subject-specific and general intellectual skills through a variety of learning activities geared to the study and practice of philosophy;
- to develop a friendly, stimulating, and supportive academic environment that encourages each student to strive to achieve their potential in philosophy;
- to inculcate an active sense of the interplay between the intellectual-historical and ahistorical dimensions of philosophical inquiry;
- to present philosophy's significance both for one's self-understanding and for one's critical engagement with issues of public importance;
- to provide the conceptual tools with which students can deepen their intellectual engagement with their combined subject;
- to prepare students to engage critically with the work of contemporary philosophers;
- to enable students to develop independent critical thinking and judgement by taking progressive responsibility for their own learning.

(C) The aims of the Minor degree in Philosophy are:

- to expose students to a broad and coherent philosophical curriculum that draws on both the European and Anglo-American traditions;
- to present an appreciation of philosophy that stresses its pertinence to other areas of intellectual inquiry;
- to provide students with sufficient choice to allow them to pursue their philosophical interests where possible;
- to engender a range of subject-specific and general intellectual skills through a variety of learning activities geared to the study and practice of philosophy.

Programmes are delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which the student must follow courses to the value of four units made up of an equivalent number of whole (1.0) and half (0.5) units (one unit is equivalent to 30 national credits).

For Minor programmes, one unit each year is taken from a list of approved courses validated specifically for philosophy programmes. Each year three units are taken in the Major subject.

For Joint programmes, two units each year are taken from a list of approved philosophy courses, which includes both those validated specifically for philosophy programmes and a selection from those offered by PIR and other departments that help realise the programmes' aims. Each year two units are taken from the cognate disciplinary area.

For Single honours philosophy, four units each year are taken from a list of approved courses, which includes both those validated specifically for philosophy programmes and those offered by PIR and other departments that help realise the programmes' aims.

Through a balance of compulsory courses and options, the programmes instantiate a progressive structure wherein students acquire both an increasing knowledge and understanding of philosophy and, in the case of Joint degrees, a deepening awareness of how that both extends and is in turn extended by their combined subject of study. This conception of progression and the students' growing intellectual independence is reflected in the requirement, at stage three, that all Single honours students complete a dissertation in philosophy.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

Single Honours

- a grounding in many of the central theories in the fields of logic, epistemology, metaphysics, moral and political philosophy, aesthetics and philosophy of mind;
- a critical engagement with some of the topics that are of interest to philosophers working today;
- a critical appreciation of the wide application of the techniques of philosophical reflection to the concerns of contemporary society;
- the knowledge to situate historically and conceptually the central figures in the history of philosophy, and the diversity of philosophical methods, styles and problems;

- an ability to interpret and critically engage with key philosophical texts, constituting a variety of traditions and ranging historically from the Ancient through to the contemporary;

Joint Honours

- a grounding in some of the central theories in the fields of logic, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and philosophy of mind;
- an informed awareness of some of the topics that are of interest to philosophers working today;
- a grasp of the methodological and conceptual relations between philosophy and other disciplines;
- the knowledge to situate historically and conceptually some of the central figures in the history of philosophy, and a range of philosophical methods, styles and problems;
- an ability to interpret and critically engage with key philosophical texts, constituting a variety of traditions and ranging historically from the Ancient through to the contemporary;

Minor

- an introduction to some central theories in the major areas of philosophical inquiry;
- exposure to some of the topics that are of interest to philosophers working today.

Skills and other attributes

- an ability to summarise complex philosophical arguments and to present critical evaluations both orally and writing;
- command of a wider vocabulary and appropriate critical and theoretical terminology;
- the capacity to work in groups in order to further understanding, and to communicate and defend arguments to peers;*
- competence in the analysis of arguments, and an awareness of such features as persuasion and intended audience;*
- bibliographical skills appropriate to the subject including accurate citation of sources and consistent use of conventions in the presentation of scholarly work;
- the capacity to evaluate and adjudicate between competing normative claims;*
- the ability to assimilate and communicate complex ideas.*

Additionally, students studying Joint programmes will develop:

- the ability to both read sensitively and contrast critically philosophical works from different periods and exemplifying different styles of reasoning;
- confidence in the planning and execution of essays and project-work.*

Additionally, students studying Single honours philosophy will develop:

- the confidence to work autonomously in pursuit of one's own philosophical interests, and the requisite abilities to identify efficiently potential sources of knowledge and understanding.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching, learning and assessment methods serve the programme aims by recognising the students' expanding knowledge and command of correlated skills as they progress from stage one to stage three and both acknowledging and encouraging their increased intellectual independence. Consequently, at stages one and two the primary method of teaching is to combine lectures, which are used to map out a conceptual area and help orientate students in it, with small-group seminars where students are able to test their developing understanding through presentations and discussion and focussed learning tasks (précis, timed analysis, etc.). In the case of Single Honours students this approach is exemplified in the compulsory stage one course Tutorial Special Study. These formative modes are supplemented with summative essays and examinations. From stage two onwards the emphasis on independent learning arising from the students' growing knowledge, and their desire to follow their interests is reflected in more specialised courses for which a formal distinction between lecture and seminar is no longer entirely appropriate. Here the shift in formative assessment is towards presentations of work-in-progress and one-to-one advice on essay planning at both the conceptual and structural level. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department of Politics and International Relations](#).

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Details of the programme structure(s)

Please note that the list of options offered is subject to change and not all courses run each year. A full list of courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department website](#).

Single Honours Degree programme

Stage one:

Students must take:

- PY1541 Introduction to Ancient Philosophy (½ unit)
- PY1101 Epistemology and Metaphysics (½ unit)
- PY1102 Tutorial Special Study (½ unit)
- PY1104 Introduction to Political Philosophy (½ unit)
- PY1002 Introduction to Modern Philosophy (½ unit)
- PY1106 Introduction to Aesthetics and Morals (½ unit)
- PY1105 Mind and Consciousness (½ unit)
- PY1103 Introduction to Logic (½ unit)

Stage two:

Students must take:

- PY2001 Introduction to European Philosophy 1: From Kant to Hegel (½ unit)
- PY2002 Mind and World (½ unit)

and choose options equal to the value of **three** units from the Departmental list of available stage two courses of which no more than one unit can be PR-coded.

Stage three:

Students must take:

- PY3001 Dissertation

and choose options equal to the value of **three** units from the Departmental list of available stage three courses of which no more than one unit can be PR-coded.

Joint Honours Degree programmes with Philosophy as an Equal Component

Students must take:

Stage one:

Students must take:

- PY1541 Introduction to Ancient Philosophy (½ unit)
 - PY1101 Epistemology and Metaphysics (½ unit)
 - PY1002 Introduction to Modern Philosophy (½ unit)
- and choose **one** course from the following:
- PY1106 Introduction to Aesthetics and Morals (½ unit)
 - PY1105 Mind and Consciousness (½ unit)
 - PY1103 Introduction to Logic (½ unit)
- plus specified courses in the other subject

Stage two:

Students must take:

- PY2001 Introduction to European Philosophy 1: From Kant to Hegel (½ unit)
- PY2002 Mind and World (½ unit)

and choose options equal to the value of **one** unit from the Departmental list of available stage two courses.

plus specified courses in the other subject

Stage three:

Students have a free choice equal to the value of **two** units from the Departmental list of available stage three courses, of which no more than one unit can be PR-coded.

Joint honours students with a good academic record may be allowed to take PY3001 Dissertation subject to the approval of the Philosophy Programme Director (and if they are not taking an equivalent course in their other subject). If PY3001 is chosen the remaining **one** unit must be taken from PY- or CL-coded options.

plus specified courses in the other subject

Combined Honours Degree programmes with Philosophy as a Minor Component (including PPE)

Stage one:

Students must take:

PY1101 Epistemology and Metaphysics (½ unit)

and choose **one course** from the following:

PY1106 Introduction to Aesthetics and Morals (½ unit)

PY1105 Mind and Consciousness (½ unit)

PY1103 Introduction to Logic (½ unit)

plus specified courses in the other subject

Stage two:

Students must take:

PY2001 Introduction to European Philosophy 1: From Kant to Hegel (½ unit)

PY2002 Mind and World (½ unit)

plus specified courses in the other subject

Stage three:

Students have a free choice from the Departmental list of available stage three PY- and CL-coded options.

plus specified courses in the other subject

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Progression and award requirements

The progression and award requirements are essentially the same across all Honours Degree programmes at Royal Holloway. Students must pass units to the value of at least three units on each stage of the programme. On some programmes there may be a requirement to pass specific courses in order to progress to the next stage, or to qualify for a particular degree title (see programme structure). Students are considered for the award and classified on the basis of a weighted average. This is calculated from marks gained in courses taken in stages two and three, and gives twice the weighting to marks gained in stage three. In order to qualify for the award, students must gain a weighted average of at least 35%.

All first year students on Single, Joint or Combined Honours programmes offered all or in part by departments or schools in the Faculty of Arts & Social Science are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%. Certificates of Distinction are awarded to students who achieve at least 80% in the quiz. Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [College's Undergraduate Regulations](#) (Section: Conditions for progression to the next stage) but fail to pass the Moodle-based quiz will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study at the College.

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Student support and guidance

- All students are allocated a personal adviser, who meets with them regularly throughout the programme. The adviser's role is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- Representation on the Student-Staff Committee.
- All teaching staff, course co-ordinators, seminar leaders and administrative staff provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- All staff are available and accessible through a dedicated office hours system.
- Students are able to make appointments to see the Philosophy Programme Director and Head of Department.
- Detailed student handbooks and course resources.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College libraries and computer centre.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Employability Lead.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, and the Educational Support Office for students with special needs.

- A dedicated Information Consultant from the Library Services Academic Liaison is available to support Philosophy students in the use of the extensive range of print and online resources and services provided by the Library (including a range of training sessions and one-to-one help).
- Representation on the Staff-Student Committee

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Admission requirements

The Department's standard conditional offer is available on the [Course Finder](#) web page. However, the Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

Philosophy minor programme

For details of admission requirements for Honours Degrees with a Minor in Philosophy please consult the programme specification for the Honours degree programme that constitutes the major part of the programme.

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Further learning and career opportunities

The range of skills and conceptual acuity developed through the study of Philosophy provide students with the sort of flexibility that opens up a wide variety of career and postgraduate opportunities (although there is no comparable study in the UK, statistics in the US show that Philosophy students score highest in the GRE verbal section, second on the GMAT, and third on the LSAT). Comparable universities in the UK show that within six months their graduates who chose not to pursue a postgraduate qualification (including law and teaching) are likely to be in jobs ranging from financial analyst and management consultant through to editorial assistant, policy advisor, and rights activist. For further details please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

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Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 18th for 3* and 4* research.

Staff teaching on the Philosophy degree are known nationally or internationally for their work either in philosophy specifically or in the more theoretical aspects of their particular disciplines. For further indicators of quality and standards please refer to the programme specifications for the other component of the Degree programmes.

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List of programmes

All the programmes are taught by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and lead to awards of the University of London. Programmes in Philosophy are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The QAA subject benchmark statement in Philosophy describes the general features which one might expect from Honours Degree programmes in the subject, and can therefore be used as a point of reference when reading this document (see www.qaa.ac.uk). UCAS codes are given in parentheses (see www.ucas.ac.uk).

Single Honours Degree programmes in Philosophy

- BA Philosophy (V500)

Joint Honours Degree programmes with Philosophy as an equal component

- BA Ancient History and Philosophy (VV15)
- BA Classical Studies and Philosophy (QV8M)
- BA Classics and Philosophy (QV85)
- BA Comparative Literature and Culture and Philosophy (QV25)
- BA Drama and Philosophy (WV45)
- BA English and Philosophy (QV35)
- BA French and Philosophy (RV15)
- BA German and Philosophy (RV25)
- BA History and Philosophy (VV51)
- BA Italian and Philosophy (RV35)
- BA Music and Philosophy (WV35)
- BA Politics and International Relations and Philosophy (LV25)
- BA Spanish and Philosophy (RV45)

Combined Honours Degree programmes with Philosophy as a minor component

- BA Ancient History with Philosophy (V1V5)
- BA Classical Studies with Philosophy (Q9V5)
- BA Classics with Philosophy (Q8V5)
- BA Comparative Literature and Culture with Philosophy (Q2V5)
- BA Drama with Philosophy (W4V5)
- BA English with Philosophy (Q3V5)
- BA Film Studies with Philosophy (W6V5)
- BA French with Philosophy (R1V5)
- BSc Mathematics with Philosophy (G1V5)
- BA Multilingual Studies with Philosophy (R9VM)
- BA Music with Philosophy (W3V5)
- BSc Physics with Philosophy (F3V5)
- BA Politics with Philosophy (L2V5)
- BA/BSc Politics, Philosophy and Economics (L0V0)
- BA Spanish with Philosophy (R4V5)

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