MA (Res) in Ethics and Political Theory
For students entering in 2007

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Programme length	12 months F/T; 24 months P/T
Date of specification	September 2007
Programme Director	Dr Bart Streumer
Board of Studies	Philosophy

Summary of programme aims

The MA (Res) programme in Ethics and Political Theory aims to enable students

- to build upon undergraduate studies in philosophy, history, politics, or social science;
- to master current debates in ethics and political theory;
- to gain familiarity with the major intellectual traditions in the field;
- to develop their research skill and prepare them, where appropriate, for a research degree.

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills that all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to research, communication of complex material (both written and oral), information handling, time management, problem-solving, self-directed learning and use of information technology. Like its sister-MA in Philosophy, the MA in Ethics and Political Theory will help students develop skills such as: synthesising information from a range of sources, providing a coherent overview of competing theories and positions on a topic; analysing and critically evaluating competing theories and positions, and arguing for the merits of one or another of these; and planning and producing a substantial piece of research under supervision, as a potential foundation for further study; utilising, at a reasonably sophisticated level, the conceptual tools and problem-solving skills acquired as an undergraduate. Its openness towards political problems, and issues in applied ethics, will offer students the opportunity to develop more empirical research skills of a social-scientific and historical character.

Programme content

MA (180 credits):

Students take the following modules:

Mod Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
PPMEP1	Essay One	30	M
PPMEP2	Essay Two	30	M
PPMEP3	Essay Three	30	M
PPMEPD	Dissertation	80	M
PPMEPS	Seminar Presentation	10	M

Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits):

Students take the following modules:

	Mod Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
	PPMEP1	Essay Module 1	30	M
	PPMEPD	Dissertation	80	M
	PPMEPS	Seminar Presentation	10	M
	PPMEP1	Essay Module 1	30	M
or	PPMEP2	Essay Module 2	30	M
	PPMEP3	Essay Module 3	30	M
	PPMEP4A	Essay Module 4A (Diploma)	20	M
	PPMEPS	Seminar Presentation	10	M
	PPMEP1	Essay Module 1	30	M
or	PPMEP2	Essay Module 2	30	M
	PPMEP3	Essay Module 3	30	M
	PPMEP4B	Essay Module 4B (Diploma)	30	M

Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits):

Students take the following modules:

Mod Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
PPMEP1	Essay Module 1	30	M
PPMEP2	Essay Module 2	30	M

Work for each module must be on a topic in Ethics and Political Theory, including the following:

Cognitivism and Non-Cognitivism
Naturalist and Non-naturalist Moral Realism

Externalist and Internalist views of normative reasons
Consequentialism, Deontology, and Contractualism
Pluralist Intuitionism
Virtue Ethics and Particularism
Natural Law
Thomas Hobbes
J. S. Mill
John Rawls
Karl Marx
Liberalism and Individual Rights
Conservatism
Anarchism
Distributive Justice within or across States, or between Generations
Moral Responsibility and Retributive Justice
Justice and Gender
Multiculturalism
Animal Ethics
Environmental Ethics
Human Rights and Sovereignty
War, Terrorism, and Security
Jurisprudence
History and Political Theory

Part-time/Modular arrangements

24 months part-time. Students will follow this schedule:

- one essay module due beginning Spring Term
- one essay module due beginning Summer Term
- one essay module due end Summer Term
- presentation during Autumn Term
- dissertation during year 2

Arrangements for Certificate and Diploma will be made as and when necessary.

Progression requirements

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Mark	Interpretation
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
Failing categories:	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 or more
overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation. In addition the total credit

value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For Postgraduate Diplomas

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For Postgraduate Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.

Summary of teaching and assessment

MA (Res) in Ethics and Political Theory

Teaching is primarily by means of individually supervised essays and a supervised dissertation, supplemented by classes according to student interest and staff research activity.

- 3 x 6,000 word essays at 30 credits each
- 1 x 20,000 word dissertation at 80 credits
- 1 x seminar presentation at 10 credits

Two essays will be written during the Autumn term; in the Spring term, students will write one essay and deliver a substantial (20-25 minute); the latter will receive formative assessment. From the Summer term onwards, students will work on their dissertations.

Postgraduate Diploma in Ethics and Political Theory

- 1 x 6,000 word essay at 30 credits
- 1 x 20,000 word dissertation at 80 credits
- 1 x seminar presentation at 10 credits

or

- 3 x 6,000 word essay at 30 credits each

- 1 x 4,000 word essay at 20 credits
- 1 x seminar presentation at 10 credits

or

- 4 x 6,000 word essays at 30 credits each

Postgraduate Certificate in Ethics and Political Theory

- 2 x 6,000 word essays at 30 credits each

Admission requirements
Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

A 2.1 in Politics, History, Philosophy or a related subject.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Bart Streumer

Support for students and their learning
University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Career prospects

Over the years students who have followed the MA programmes in Philosophy and Political Theory and Public Ethics have gone into jobs in both the public and private sectors. Some go on to further study at PhD level and obtain academic and academic-related jobs (e.g. lectureships, administrative posts on research boards, schoolteaching). Some enter thinktanks or the civil service. In the private sector, recent jobs include law, business, journalism, and IT. In general, there is evidence that IT firms appreciate the logical and analytic skills of philosophers. Furthermore, a survey by the Royal Institute of Philosophy found that graduates with British Philosophy degrees consider their degree course to have been very relevant to their jobs, and report a very high level of job satisfaction.
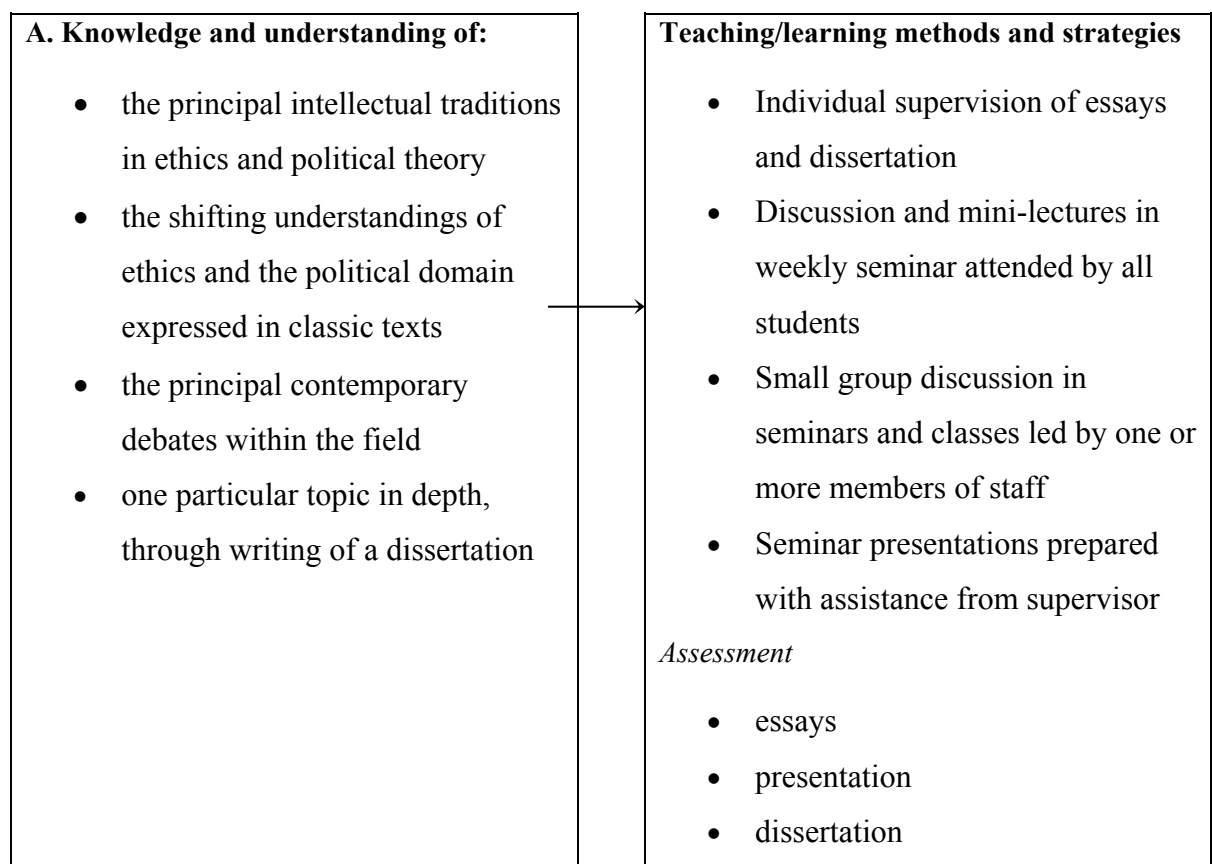
Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

N/A

Educational aims of the programme

The MA programme in Ethics and Political Theory aims to enable students

- to build on their undergraduate studies, deepening their knowledge and understanding of chosen aspects of moral and political theory;
- to work in sustained contact, including individual supervision, with practising researchers in the field;
- to undertake close reading of complex texts;
- to apply the conceptual equipment required in novel intellectual situations
- to develop their research skills and prepare them, where appropriate, for research degrees.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
• the principal intellectual traditions in ethics and political theory • the shifting understandings of ethics and the political domain expressed in classic texts • the principal contemporary debates within the field • one particular topic in depth, through writing of a dissertation	• Individual supervision of essays and dissertation • Discussion and mini-lectures in weekly seminar attended by all students • Small group discussion in seminars and classes led by one or more members of staff • Seminar presentations prepared with assistance from supervisor *Assessment* • essays • presentation • dissertation

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
• comprehend and evaluate a range of complex texts of broadly philosophical character • synthesise information from a range of sources, providing a coherent overview of competing theories and positions on a topic • analyse and critically evaluate competing theories and positions, and to argue for the merits of one or another of these • expound complex philosophical concepts at a reasonably sophisticated level • apply such concepts to novel ethical and political problems • plan and produce a substantial piece of research under supervision, as a potential foundation for further study	As above, with emphasis on self-directed learning facilitated through the use of research-based teaching materials and methods. Students will additionally be asked • to produce a critical literature review on some specialised topic • to interrogate an external speaker about a pre-circulated text • to take part in a formal debate on some ethical or political issue. *Assessment* Besides the summative assessment noted in A, students will receive informal feedback though individual meetings with supervisors, staff-led group discussion of presentations, and written comments upon drafts and the literature review.

C. Practical skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
- produce fluent and structured pieces of written work, including an extended piece, with bibliography and footnotes - present a fluent and structured presentation, explaining material to staff and students who may or may not have extensive familiarity with the topic - critically discuss particular theories and positions both orally and in writing, and to engage in discussion of each other's work as well as articulating their own - undertake web-based and library research on both philosophical and social-scientific topics - produce a convincing grant/studentship proposal on some topic in the field	As above for B *Assessment* As above for B

D. Transferable skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
- manage time effectively and prioritise workloads - communicate effectively with a wide range of individuals using a wide range of means - evaluate his/her own performance, and recognise the steps required for improvement. - Utilise problem-solving skills in a variety of theoretical and more practical situations. - use library and IT skills, e.g. word processing, e-mail, Internet-based research tools, bibliographical tools, CD ROMs (Philosophers' Index etc.).	As above for B and C, plus: special classes at the beginning of the course on research skills. *Assessment* As above for B and C