

## **MA in Philosophy** **For students entering in 2007**

Awarding Institution:  
Teaching Institution:  
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

The University of Reading  
The University of Reading  
Programme length: 12 months f/t  
(24 months p/t)

Date of specification: August 2007  
Programme Director: Dr. J.Preston  
Board of Studies:  
Accreditation:

### **Summary of programme aims**

The MA programme in philosophy aims to enable students

- to build on their undergraduate studies, deepening their knowledge and understanding of chosen aspects of Philosophy;
- to discuss research issues with practising researchers, so as to become aware of current research in Philosophy;
- to develop their research skills and prepare them, where appropriate, for research degrees.

### **Transferable skills**

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which 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. The MA in Philosophy 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; 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.

### **Programme content**

#### **MA in Philosophy (180 credits):**

Students take the following modules:

<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
PPM10	Essay Module 1	30	M
PPM15	Essay Module 2	30	M
PPM20	Essay Module 3	30	M
PPM40	Seminar Presentation	10	M
PPM100	Dissertation	80	M

#### **Postgraduate Diploma (Philosophy) (120 credits):**

Students take the following modules:

	<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
	PPM10	Essay Module 1	30	M
	PPM40	Seminar Presentation	10	M
	PPM100	Dissertation	80	M
<b>or</b>	PPM10	Essay Module 1	30	M
	PPM15	Essay Module 2	30	M
	PPM20	Essay Module 3	30	M
	PPM25	Essay Module 4A (Diploma)	20	M
	PPM40	Seminar Presentation	10	M
<b>or</b>	PPM10	Essay Module 1	30	M
	PPM15	Essay Module 2	30	M
	PPM20	Essay Module 3	30	M
	PPM30	Essay Module 4B (Diploma)	30	M

**Postgraduate Certificate in Philosophy (60 credits):**

Students take the following modules:

	<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
	PPM10	Essay Module 1	30	M
	PPM15	Essay Module 2	30	M

Work for each module must be on a topic in Philosophy including the following:

Philosophy of Mind  
 Epistemology  
 Metaphysics  
 Philosophy of Science  
 Wittgenstein  
 Philosophy of Language  
 Continental Philosophy  
 Ethics  
 Aesthetics  
 Philosophy of Law  
 Early Modern Philosophy  
 Political Philosophy  
 Philosophy of Religion  
 Kant  
 Philosophy of Action  
 Plato and Aristotle

**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:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories:</u>	
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.\*

\*The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied himself or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

## **Summary of teaching and assessment**

### **MA in Philosophy**

Teaching is primarily by means of individually supervised essays and 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 seminar presentation at 10 credits
- 1 x 20,000 word dissertation at 80 credits

Two essays will be written during the Autumn term, one essay and one presentation during the Spring term, and the dissertation from Summer term onwards.

### **Postgraduate Diploma in Philosophy**

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

**or**

- 3 x 6,000 words essays 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 Philosophy:**

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

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

A good degree in Philosophy or a related subject.

Admissions Tutor:

Dr. J.Preston

### **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 this programme 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 the civil service. In the private sector, recent jobs include law, business and IT. In general, there is evidence that IT firms appreciate the logical and analytic skills of the Philosophy graduate. 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 philosophy aims to enable students

- to build on their undergraduate studies, deepening their knowledge and understanding of chosen aspects of Philosophy;
- to discuss research issues with practising researchers, so as to become aware of current research in Philosophy;
- to develop their research skills and prepare them, where appropriate, for research degrees.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### *Knowledge and Understanding*

<p><b>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a range of specific topics in Philosophy</li> <li>• recent research on these topics, including contemporary literature, current debates, alternative theories and positions</li> <li>• one particular topic in depth, through writing of a dissertation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual supervision of essays and dissertation</li> <li>• Small group discussion in seminars and classes led by one or more members of staff</li> <li>• Seminar presentations prepared with assistance from supervisor</li> </ul> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• essays</li> <li>• presentation</li> <li>• dissertation</li> </ul>
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*Skills and other attributes*

<p><b>B. Intellectual skills</b> – able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• critically read, comprehend and evaluate a large range of philosophical texts</li><li>• synthesise information from a range of sources, providing a coherent overview of competing theories and positions on a topic</li><li>• analyse and critically evaluate competing theories and positions, and to argue for the merits of one or another of these</li><li>• comprehend complex philosophical concepts at a reasonably sophisticated level</li><li>• plan and produce a substantial piece of research under supervision, as a potential foundation for further study</li></ul>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>As above, with emphasis on self-directed learning facilitated through the use of research-based teaching materials and methods</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>As above, with extensive feedback on work in progress through regular meetings with supervisors, staff-led group discussion in seminar presentations, as well as written comments on work.</p>
<p><b>C. Practical skills</b> – able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• produce fluent and structured pieces of written work, including an extended piece, with bibliography and footnotes</li><li>• present a fluent and structured presentation, explaining material to staff and students who may or may not have extensive familiarity with the topic</li><li>• 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</li><li>• utilise, at a reasonably sophisticated level, the conceptual tools and problem-solving skills acquired as an undergraduate</li></ul>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>As above for B and C</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>As above for B and C</p>

<p><b>D. Transferable skills – able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage time effectively and prioritise workloads</li> <li>• communicate effectively with a wide range of individuals using a wide range of means</li> <li>• evaluate his/her own performance, and recognise the steps required for improvement.</li> <li>• Utilise problem-solving skills in a variety of theoretical and more practical situations.</li> <li>• use library and IT skills, e.g. word processing, e-mail, Internet-based research tools, bibliographical tools, CD ROMs (Philosophers' Index etc.).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>As above for B and C, plus: special classes at the beginning of the course on research skills.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>As above for B and C</p>
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**Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**