

BA Philosophy
For students entering Part 1 in 2009/0

UCAS code: V500

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Philosophy
Faculty:	Arts and Humanities Faculty
Programme length:	3 years
Date of specification:	14/Apr/2011
Programme Director:	Dr John Preston
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	Philosophy
Accreditation:	

Summary of programme aims

The BA Philosophy Programme aims to give students an understanding of central philosophical principles, concepts, problems, texts and figures, and to provide a programme of study which introduces progressive intellectual challenges and consolidates previous experience at each new level. To allow students to study in depth some aspects of Philosophy in which they have greater interest and to develop students' aptitude for Philosophy, engender a sense of belonging to a community of inquiry, and encourage intellectual development. Also to prepare students, where appropriate, for possible postgraduate study and provide a supportive learning environment with full access to welfare, pastoral and careers support

Transferable skills

During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills in line with the University's Strategy for Learning and Teaching. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working and use of information technology and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside their curriculum.

The Philosophy degree will help students develop skills such as: presenting a coherent talk delivered from notes, producing concise and accurate written reports, the ability to critically discuss particular issues and arguments, and to engage in discussion of each other's responses as well as articulate the student's own views. The Philosophy degree also encourages the ability to handle abstract ideas and utilise problem-solving skills.

Programme content

Part 1 introduces some major figures from the history of philosophy and introduces students to philosophical examinations of our most fundamental beliefs, for instance about truth and reality, or right and wrong. Part 2 provides students with the opportunity to explore the ideas and approaches emerging in Part 1 in greater depth, including a range of module options on primarily historical modules (e.g. studying Classical Greek thought or the ideas of the British Empiricists) and more topic driven modules (e.g. studying philosophy of mind, or logic). Part 3 encourages increasing specialisation in the subject, allowing students to choose more advanced modules from an extensive range of options. Independent research is also encouraged through the provision of a dissertation option at this level.

Each part comprises 120 credits. In Part 1 the remaining credits can be made up from any optional modules and/or from modules elsewhere in the University. In Parts 2 and 3, up to 20 credits can be taken from modules available elsewhere in the University.

Single honours Philosophy students must acquire a minimum of 40 credits, or a maximum of 60 credits, from the list below. Other credits to be acquired from modules outside the Philosophy programme.

PP1MW	Mind & World	20	4
PP1HN	Human Nature	20	4
PP1VV	Values & Virtues	20	4
PP1CT	Critical Thinking	20	4

Part 2 (three terms)

Compulsory modules

In addition, single honours Philosophy students must take modules totalling 120 credits, at least 100 credits worth of which should be from the list of Part 2 Philosophy modules available from the Philosophy BA Programme Coordinator. (A list of current modules can also be found in the BA Programme Handbook). Up to 20 credits may be acquired from modules outside the Philosophy programme

Part 3 (three terms)

Single Honours Philosophy students must acquire a minimum of 100 credits from the list of options in Philosophy available from the Philosophy BA Programme Coordinator. A list of current options can also be found in the BA Programme Handbook. A wide variety of part 3 options will be available each year, reflecting the research interests of teaching staff. Other credits may be acquired from modules outside the Philosophy Programme.

Progression requirements

To progress from Part 1 to Part 2, students must achieve each of the following:

1. an overall average of at least 40% across the 120 credits in Part 1;
2. a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits taken in Part 1;
3. an average of at least 40% in the Philosophy modules taken;
4. a mark of at least 40% in individual Philosophy modules amounting to not less than 40 credits in Part 1.

To progress from Part 2 to Part 3, students must achieve each of the following:

1. an overall average of at least 40% across the 120 credits in Part 2;
2. a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits taken in Part 2;
3. an average of at least 40% in the Philosophy modules taken;
4. a mark of at least 40% in individual Philosophy modules amounting to not less than 100 credits in Part 2.

Summary of Teaching and Assessment

Teaching within this programme combines lectures and small group seminars, with appropriate visual aides and course materials being provided throughout. The final assessment for the majority of Philosophy modules in all Parts is by a combination of assessed coursework and unseen examination. See the Philosophy BA handbook for further details.

Weighted Finals:

To reflect the notion of progression through the programme, Part 3 examinations will have a greater impact on a student's Final Degree Classification, with Part 2 examinations contributing 33% of the Final grade and Part 3 examinations contributing 67%. The conventions for classification are included in the Programme Handbook.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

Grade C or better in Maths in GCSE and

UCAS Tariff: Either: 320 points from 3 A levels and 1 AS level, or: 300 points from 3 A levels.

International Baccalaureate: complete diploma with a minimum score of 6,6,5 in at least three Higher Level subjects.

Advanced GNVQ: either B in one A-Level plus GNVQ (Advanced) in twelve modules passed with distinction, or GNVQ (Advanced) Distinction plus pass in four additional modules

Scottish Highers: BBBB or above

Irish Leaving Certificate: at least BBBB in five higher-level subjects

Mature Students: Applications from mature students are welcomed. A mature applicant is more likely to receive an offer of a place if he or she has undertaken recent study, for example 2 or more A levels or an Access course, but each case is assessed on its relative merits. We recommend you contact the admissions tutor as soon as possible to discuss your individual circumstances.

International Students: Applications from international candidates are welcomed. If you are not offering A levels we advise you to contact either the EU or the international admissions tutor before applying in order to discuss the acceptability of your qualifications.

Admissions Tutor: Prof. B.Hooker

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Student Employment, Experience and Careers Centre (SEEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and 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 Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see www.reading.ac.uk/student

Within the Department, information and guidance is offered through the Part 1 Handbook, and the B.A Course Handbook (covering Parts 2 and 3). There is also a Part 1 co-ordinator and an Honours Course co-ordinator who can be consulted on module choices within each part of the programme. Finally, the Part-time Programme co-ordinator is available to assist with all issues relating to the Part-time course.

Career prospects

Over the years students who have followed this programme have gone into jobs in both the public and private sectors. In the public sector, jobs include academic and academic related jobs (e.g. lectureships, administrative posts on research boards), and the civil service. In the private sector, recent jobs include working for computer firms and large finance and insurance companies. In general, there is some 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

Students have the opportunity to study abroad for a term (normally in the autumn term of Part 3) either within Europe via the ERASMUS programme, or at one of the University of Reading's non-European partner institutions. They will require the consent of the departmental study abroad coordinator in order to participate. Full details of potential destinations can be found on the ERASMUS & Study Abroad website.

Programme Outcomes

On successful completion of a BA course, students will have:
gained a knowledge and understanding of the main areas of Philosophy and of the views of great figures in the history of Philosophy
gained a deeper appreciation of particular issues in Philosophy, and at the forefront of philosophical debate, through studying a range of units informed by the research interests and professional activities of staff
acquired the abilities to think clearly and reason logically, critically to evaluate arguments, and to question the assumptions of any given viewpoint
acquired transferable skills of use in a wide variety of employment, thus enhancing their career opportunities
developed the skills necessary to pursue academic research or further study.

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. Key historical aspects of Philosophy
2. An appreciation of philosophical ideas and approaches
3. Awareness of philosophical terms and concepts
4. Awareness of current research in the field and its direction.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Lectures; supervisor-led small group discussions; seminar groups with facilitator.

Assessment

Guidance on student progress is given by feedback on coursework essays and seminar presentations; while the module grade is determined by the results of written unseen exams.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - able to:

1. critically read, comprehend and evaluate a large range of philosophical texts
2. synthesise information from a range of sources, providing a coherent overview of positions in logical space
3. analyse the logical construction of arguments
4. produce and defend positions in response to critical pressure

C. Practical skills - able to:

1. present a coherent talk delivered from notes
2. produce concise and accurate written reports
3. critically discuss particular issues and arguments, and to engage in discussion of each other's responses as well as articulate their own.
4. utilise problem-solving skills

D. Transferable skills - able to:

1. manage time effectively and prioritise workloads
2. communicate effectively with a wide range of individuals using a wide range of means
3. evaluate his/her own performance, and recognise the steps required for improvement.
4. Utilise problem-solving skills in a variety of theoretical and more practical situations.
5. use some IT skills, e.g. word processing and e-mail

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

As above, plus: self-directed learning facilitated through the use of research-based teaching materials and methods, and logical exercises.

Assessment

Guidance on student progress is given by feedback on coursework essays and seminar presentations, plus discussion in supervisor-led small groups and seminars. Logical exercises will also be evaluated in the Logic & Critical Thinking module. The module grade is determined by the results of written unseen exams.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Lectures; supervisor-led small group discussions; seminar groups with facilitator.

Assessment

Guidance on student progress is given by feedback on coursework essays and seminar presentations; while the module grade is determined by the results of written unseen exams, or assessed coursework where relevant.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Lectures; supervisor-led small group discussions; seminar groups with facilitator.

Assessment

Coursework; written unseen exams; seminar presentations.

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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.