

**BA Philosophy and Politics**  
**For students entering Part 1 in 2010/1**

**UCAS code: LV25**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Philosophy, Politics.
Faculty:	Arts and Humanities Faculty
Programme length:	3 years
Date of specification:	07/Apr/2011
Programme Director:	Dr John Preston
Programme Advisor:	Dr Jeremy Lester Mrs Patricia Hicks
Board of Studies:	Philosophy
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

Both Departments share the aims and objectives laid down for the Reading graduate in the University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning. The Philosophy strand of the programme specifically aims to provide a grounding in the subject, enabling students to examine critically fundamental beliefs about truth and reality, right and wrong, to comprehend concepts essential for philosophical investigation, to develop an understanding of central philosophical problems, texts and figures, to develop an aptitude and enthusiasm for the subject, to engender a sense of belonging to a community of enquiry, and to prepare where appropriate for postgraduate study. The programme provides a supportive learning environment with full access to welfare, pastoral and careers support.

Three bridge modules (Contemporary Political Philosophy, International Ethics, Dissertation) offer students an opportunity to reflect on philosophical issues in Politics.

The Politics strand aims to give students an appreciation of the normative, methodological and institutional issues involved in the study of politics in relation to one of the three main subfields of the discipline: political philosophy, comparative government and international relations. Students focus on compulsory modules in international relations and associated optional modules. The strand also provides 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 communication, interpersonal skills, learning skills, numeracy, self-management, use of IT and problem-solving 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 strand 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 strand also encourages the ability to handle abstract ideas and utilise problem-solving skills.

The Politics strand lends itself to critical judgement and problem-solving, both through personal engagement with issues and through dialogue and group discussion. Students are encouraged to defend and to challenge established positions through the collection, collation and analysis of substantial quantities of material, the rigour of argument, and effective communication and presentation. The disciplines also prompt an awareness of numeracy through chronology, periodisation, and basic quantification. The strand develops students' familiarity with information technology in the production and presentation of their work and develops their skills in using computers for the location and retrieval of bibliographic and source material, accessing sophisticated databases and exploiting the internet.

**Programme content**

**Part 1 (three terms)**

*Compulsory modules*

<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
PO1IRS	Politics: International Relations and Strategic Studies	20	4

PO1MOG	Modern Government	20	4
PO1IPI	Introduction to Political Ideas	20	4

### **In Philosophy**

Students must acquire a minimum of 40, or a maximum of 60 credits, from the Philosophy modules below.

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

### **Politics optional module**

PO1BRI	British Society	20	4
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### **Part 2 (three terms)**

*Compulsory modules*

<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
PO2SOP	The Study of Politics	20	5
PP2CMS	Career Management Skills	5	5
PO2PHC	Political Classics	20	5

### **In Philosophy**

Students must acquire a minimum of 60 credits.

PP2CMS, 'Career Management Skills', which is compulsory, and is taken under the auspices of the Department of Philosophy, contributes 5 credits worth of marks to the average for Part 2.

### **In Politics**

Optional modules (one of):

PO2AMG	American Government and Politics	20	5
PO2BGP	British Government and Politics	20	5
PO2CGP	Comparative Government and Politics	20	5
PO2EPI	European Political Integration	20	5
PO2RGP	Russian Government and Politics	20	5
PO2THI	Political Thinking	20	5

Of the 120 credits in Part 2, 5 are taken up by Career Management Skills.

In Part 2, up to 20 credits can be taken from modules available elsewhere in the University.

### **Part 3 (three terms)**

A dissertation of 40 credits is compulsory and may be taken in either Philosophy (PP3DIS) or Politics (PO3DIS).

In addition, students must choose modules totalling 40 credits in both Philosophy and Politics.

### **In the Department of Philosophy**

Students must acquire 40 credits from the list of optional modules in the BA Handbook. (Not all optional modules will necessarily be available in any year. Admission to optional modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director).

### **In Politics (40 Credits)**

Students choose two 20 credit modules, one from each of the following lists.

#### **List A**

PO3BFD	British Foreign and Defence Policy since 1945	20	6
PO3MEA	Politics and International Relations of the Middle East	20	6
PO3PES	(The) Politics of Electoral Systems	20	6
PO3UKP	United Kingdom Politics since 1960	20	6
PO3USF	US Foreign Policy since 1950	20	6

## List B

PO3DDP	Democracy and Democracy Promotion	20	6
PO3FPT	Feminism and Political Theory	20	6
PO3MID	Modern Ideologies	20	6
PO3PIE	Politics of the International Economy	20	6
PO3WPE	War, Peace and International Ethics	20	6

### Progression requirements

To progress from Part 1 to Part 2, students must achieve

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.
5. a mark of at least 40% in each compulsory Politics module at Part 1.

To progress from Part 2 to Part 3, students must achieve

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.

### Summary of Teaching and Assessment

Teaching within the Philosophy programme combines lectures, small group seminars and essay supervisions, with appropriate visual aides and course materials being provided throughout. The final assessment for all Philosophy modules in all Parts (bar the Dissertation in Part 3) is by a combination of assessed coursework and unseen examination.

In Politics, Part 1 modules contain both lectures and seminars. Compulsory Part 2 modules in Politics involve both lectures and seminars. All Politics modules other than Study of Politics and the Dissertation are assessed by a mixture of coursework (25%) and examination (75%).

Weighting between Part 2 and Part 3 for classification purposes is 33% and 67%.

### Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

Grade C or better in English in GCSE; and achieved

UCAS Tariff: 320 points from three subjects, and 340 from 3 A level and 1 AS level

International Baccalaureat: 30 points

Irish Leaving Certificate: BBBCC in 5 Higher Level subjects

Two AS grades are accepted in place of one A-Level

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 an 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:** Dr Bart Streumer (Philosophy), Dr O.Tansey (Politics)

### 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 (SECC), In-sessional 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](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

Within the Philosophy Department, information and guidance is offered through the Part 1 Handbook, and the B.A Course Handbook (covering Parts 2 and 3). There are 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.

From the Politics Department, students are provided with Departmental Handbooks that outline the programme, provide guidance on study skills, and contain information on staff, facilities and specialised sources of help within the University. Additional support is given in the study of Politics module in Part 2. Support for students in their studies is provided through the University's Personal Academic Record (PAR) scheme, in which students meet their personal tutors regularly to review their progress.

### **Career prospects**

This degree can lead to a wide range of jobs, such as the public services (civil service, local government, public corporations, hospital management, etc), the social services (child care, youth employment, probation, etc), advertising, journalism, radio and television, management traineeships in industry, professions such as accountancy and law (barristers and solicitors alike), banking and insurance, and various research agencies. There is some evidence that IT firms appreciate the logical and analytic skills of developed especially in Philosophy's Logic module.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

Students may choose to spend part of their second year studying at a University in another European country, via the Socrates programme. Subject to the availability of places, there may also be the opportunity to study for a semester in the United States under the American Studies programme. While such exchanges may involve some additional financial expenditures and some adjustments to coursework at Reading, the Department believes these exchanges offer an excellent opportunity to broaden educational and life experience. In the first instance, interested students see their personal tutor.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

##### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

1. Fundamental concepts of Philosophy and of Political Theory and major texts from the Greeks to the present time.
2. The comparative analysis of government institutions, political movement and the social bases of politics.
3. The various approaches and the study of Modern International Relations.
4. Some current research in philosophy
5. A range of selected specialized subjects within the fields of Political Theory, Comparative Government and International Relations.

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Lectures, seminar discussions, and individual essay feedback, prescribed and recommended reading, and the writing of essays and a dissertation. In Part 1 and Part 2 students attend both lectures and seminars, which in Part 3 most teaching is through seminars. Part 1 modules introduce 1, 2 and 3. Part 2 modules deepen and develop students' understanding of these areas. The optional modules in 4 & 5 build on modules in 1,2 and 3.

##### *Assessment*

Most knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework and formal examination. Dissertations and oral contributions also contribute

#### **Skills and other attributes**

##### **B. Intellectual skills - able to:**

1. think logically about Philosophical and Political arguments and issues

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Teaching methods and strategies  
As above plus teaching focuses on the quality of

2. produce and defend positions in response to critical pressure
3. organise tasks into a structured form
4. transfer appropriate knowledge from one area to another
5. react productively to the growth of knowledge

Optional:

6. plan, conduct and write a longish independent dissertation on an appropriate topic

### **C. Practical skills - able to:**

1. gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of primary and secondary sources.
2. identify, investigate, analyse and formulate problems and defend solutions
3. engage in discussion of each other's responses
4. reflect on their own learning and seek and make use of feedback
5. manage their own learning self-critically.

### **D. Transferable skills - able to:**

1. communicate effectively in speech and writing
2. use communication and I.T. for the retrieval and communication of information
3. work independently, demonstrating initiative, organisation and time management
4. collaborate with others to achieve common goals
5. plan their career.

argumentation and on the carefulness with which positions are thought out. These are qualities sought in the reading material and prized in the students' written work and oral presentations. Students are encouraged to link core and optional modules and also to use knowledge from modules in the dissertation.

#### *Assessment*

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

### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- 1 is taught through lectures and seminars.
- 2 )and 3 are acquired through seminar discussions, written work and oral presentations.
- 3 and 4 are developed through more independent learning, especially the dissertation

#### *Assessment*

1 and 2 are tested formatively and summatively in examinations. 3 is assessed formatively in seminars. 4 is assessed through examination of student progress. 5 is assessed particularly through the dissertation.

### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- 1 is embedded in all modules.
- 2 is demonstrated by the use of I.T. based exercises.
- 3 is an essential requirement for the timely and effective completion of the programme.
- 4 is developed through active participation in seminars.
- 5 is developed by the study in Careers Management Skills in Part 2.

#### *Assessment*

- 1, 2 and 3 are assessed through coursework and examinations.
- 4 is assessed through seminar participation.

**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.**