

## Course Information Sheet

# BA (Hons) Philosophy

**Mode and course length** – Full-Time (4 years)

**Location** – ARU Cambridge Campus

**Awarding Body** – Anglia Ruskin University. As a registered Higher Education provider Anglia Ruskin University is regulated by the Office for Students.

## Overview

Take on the big questions that have mystified humanity since the dawn of consciousness and discover how the greatest minds have tried to answer them. Learn to engage philosophical methods in everyday life, and develop key transferable skills for your future career.

Our BA (Hons) Philosophy degree will introduce you to the biggest puzzles that have fascinated humans for centuries. You'll consider questions such as 'who are we?', 'what can we know?' and 'what should we do to lead worthwhile lives?' - as well as finding out how others have attempted to solve them.

Your studies will provide you with an understanding of the history of the subject, as well as contemporary debates within both the analytic and continental traditions of philosophy, ensuring you graduate with a broad understanding of the subject, while our optional modules will give you the chance to focus on particular areas of interest, such as Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of Art, Ethics, Philosophy of Mind or Political Thought.

By studying the ideas and arguments of the major philosophers from the past and the present and engaging in debates with your fellow students, you'll develop your thinking so it becomes more rigorous, systematic and creative. You'll also pick up transferrable key skills that will be of use throughout your career, including critical analysis, complex problem solving and judgement.

Your studies will be supported by our core team of Philosophy staff, who offer one-to-one personal tutoring and personalised feedback on your assessments (our BA (Hons) Philosophy was voted 2nd in the UK for 'Satisfied with feedback' in the Guardian University Guide 2018). You can also join our Philosophy Society, which organises events such as debates, workshops and quizzes.

## Course Delivery

Our courses are delivered through teaching and learning methods which provide students with the widest possible exposure to a modern and innovative higher education experience.

These methods vary and could include attendance at lectures and seminars, undertaking laboratory exercises or work-based activities, practical work, performances, presentations, field trips, other relevant visits and e-learning through Canvas, our online learning management system.

Each course is divided into a number of 'modules' which focus on particular areas, each of which has a specific approach to its delivery. This information is published to students for each module they take via the Module Definition Form (MDF) and Canvas.

## Assessment

You'll show your progress on the course through a variety of methods likely to be used in the workplace, including presentations, research projects, reviews, reports and portfolios, as well as more traditional essays and your final major project.

## Fees

Information about your course fee including any annual fee increases or deposits (if required) can be found in your offer letter.

## Modules

### Core Modules

#### **Year 1: Foundation in Humanities, English, Media, Social Sciences and Education**

This module will provide students with the necessary skills to begin studying at level 4 in courses related to the Humanities, Social Sciences, English, Media and Education.

Students will be introduced to the core skills necessary to succeed in higher education, including thinking critically, researching, and referencing appropriately, demonstrating appropriate numeracy and ICT skills, and communicating effectively verbally and in writing.

In addition to these fundamental study skills, Students will be given an introduction to a broad range of disciplines whose skills and theories are widely applicable.

Students will study a variety of writing styles in order to recognise, deconstruct and replicate various forms of persuasive, analytical, and informative writing. Students will learn the basics of intercultural studies and how these theories can be applied to real-world problems. Students will consider social perceptions held across western cultures, and the difference between social and self-perception, participating in structured discussion and argument. Students will be introduced to the core principles of psychology and will explore various current applications of psychological theory. Students will also be introduced to ethics and will learn about some of the key theories and thinkers in the development of current ethical considerations in a range of scenarios.

The module is made up of the following 8 constituent elements:

- Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC)
- Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- Critical Thinking
- Intercultural Studies
- Psychology
- Composition and Style
- Ethics
- Social Perceptions

#### **Year 2: Ancient Philosophy**

This module offers an accessible introduction to ancient philosophy. Students will be introduced to key ideas from texts which contribute to the early formation of the philosophical tradition, including pre-Socratics such as Heraclitus and Parmenides and extracts from dialogues by Plato, as well as key extracts from Aristotle. The main issues in metaphysics, epistemology, the philosophy of art, and political philosophy will be explored in the course of the module. Concepts such as being and becoming, appearance and reality, substance and categories, and issues such as the good life, the nature of the state, citizenship and government, education and character, censorship and art, will be introduced in an accessible way. The module will offer a grounding for Level 4 students in key philosophical themes that are explored in more depth in Levels 5 and 6. It will be taught through lectures, which introduce the main issues, and seminars which will allow debate and discussion to take place.

#### **Year 2: A History of Ideas in 8 Objects**

In this module you will look at a history of ideas in historical context, introduced through 8 objects that have arguably changed the world, and the way we think about our place in the world. You will be introduced to key philosophical writings that are linked to the objects in question, and we will examine the specific arguments, and the historical changes and transformations that took place, in careful detail.

This module will also offer you the opportunity to undertake structured skill development in identifying and creating an argument,

offering evidence for a specific point of view, preparing a persuasive presentation and writing a researched project to a deadline. These skills are important not only for future employability skills but offer a foundation for academic development through the rest of the degree.

This module is taught through lectures and seminars. It will include a visit to the Fitzwilliam museum to consider selected objects, antiquities and artefacts as part of the study (no financial charge for this field trip).

### **Year 2: Introduction to Philosophy**

This module is a problem-based introduction to philosophy. It looks at four central topics of philosophical inquiry: the relationship between truth and logical validity (When is an argument sound? Can we think about the content of a claim without thinking about reasons for asserting it?), the nature of knowledge (What are the sources and limits of knowledge?), the appearance/reality distinction (What lies beyond the limits of language and thought? Can we talk intelligibly about ultimately reality?), and selfhood (What is the self? Can we believe or want something unconsciously? What is the relationship between the self and others?). This module does not presuppose any prior philosophical training. It is taught by a weekly one hour lecture, introducing the topic, and a weekly one hour seminar, encouraging students to debate and discuss the issues. This module also includes a weekly one hour study skills workshop, focussing on essential skills for studying philosophy.

### **Year 2: Rights and Responsibilities**

People fight for their rights, resent other people's exercise of their rights, claim rights against the state or on behalf of animals. But what are 'rights'? Who is entitled to them? Why? These questions are central to contemporary moral and political philosophy and also to the way in which we think of issues such as medical care, crime and punishment, justice and happiness. The module will draw on a range of perspectives and authors to consider these questions, including e.g. classic authors such as Marx, Mill, Locke, Plato and Kant, but also contemporary political theorists such as Rawls, Dworkin, Nozick, Hayek, Singer, MacIntyre and Sandel. This module is taught by lecture and 2 hour seminar. The lectures will introduce topics and the seminars will encourage participation in discussions about the weekly reading and related questions.

### **Year 2: Words and Language**

In this module we will examine some of the key philosophical debates about language, meaning and usage. How does meaning work? How do we seem to make sense and communicate using language? Does language really describe or represent the world? How do we use language and what are the implications of such usage?

This module will also offer you the opportunity to undertake structured skill development in identifying and creating an argument, offering evidence for a specific point of view, preparing a persuasive presentation and writing a researched project to a deadline. These skills are important not only for future employability skills but offer a foundation for academic development through the rest of the degree.

The module will be taught through a lecture-seminar format.

### **Year 3: Ethics**

This module offers an introduction to the basic issues in moral philosophy, What makes an action right or wrong? Do the consequences or the intention count more when evaluating an action as good or bad? What about the character of the moral agent? Does being authentic matter? These questions will be explored and debated by means of a careful study a series of texts from the history of moral philosophy.

### **Year 3: The Rationalists: Early Modern Philosophy**

The Rationalist Philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries set the modern philosophical agenda by asking fundamental questions concerning the nature of reality and of knowledge, as well as the relationship between freedom and determinism in human life. This course will familiarise students with the work of two or more of the European Rationalists: Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. In addition to preparing students for more advanced study of the key issues in Level 6, this module provides a broad conceptual and historical framework from within which to evaluate the thematic problems in metaphysics and epistemology encountered in level 4. The module is taught through lectures and seminars, where lectures will introduce topics which are discussed and debated in seminars.

### **Year 3: Kant and the Empiricists**

The British Empiricists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as Kant, set the modern philosophical agenda by asking fundamental questions concerning the nature of reality and of knowledge, both theoretical and moral. This module will examine in detail the British Empiricists and Kant. In addition to preparing students for more advanced study of the key issues in Level 6, this module provides a broad conceptual and historical framework from within which to evaluate the thematic problems in metaphysics and epistemology encountered in level 4. The module is taught through lectures and seminars, where lectures will introduce topics which are discussed and debated in seminars. The employee attributes developed on this module include cognitive skills such as the ability to identify and solve complex problems, attention to detail and planning and organising. Generic competencies, developed during seminar debate, include skills in relation to influencing others, being sensitive to the opinions of others and the lucid communication of ideas.

### **Year 3: Mind and World**

This module offers a broad exploration of the nature of the mind and examines the different philosophical approaches that have been employed in the study of the mind. Students will be introduced to the historical context of debates about the topic, and will also be encouraged to make comparisons and connections between different traditions in philosophy concerning problems of mind, mental content, consciousness, the body and the external world. Students will be encouraged to think critically and debate a range of ideas and arguments of relevance to the topic. The module is taught with a weekly lecture and seminar, with additional fortnightly workshops.

### **Year 4: Undergraduate Major Project - Philosophy**

The individual final Major Project module allows you to engage in a substantial piece of individual research, focused on a topic relevant to your specific discipline. Normally the topic will be agreed in consultation with academic staff and an appropriate supervisor will be appointed to supervise you in your chosen topic. The topic may also be drawn from a variety of sources including: Anglia Ruskin research groups, previous or current work experience, the company in which you are currently employed, or a professional subject of specific interest (if suitable supervision is available). The project topic will be assessed for suitability to ensure sufficient academic challenge and satisfactory supervision by an academic member of staff.

The chosen topic will require you to identify and formulate problems and issues, conduct literature reviews, evaluate information, investigate and adopt suitable development methodologies, determine solutions, develop software and/or media artefacts as appropriate, process data, critically appraise and present your findings. Regular meetings with the project supervisor and or/group workshops should take place, so that the project is closely monitored and steered in the right direction. The assessment will normally include a substantial written report, including a bibliography.

### **Year 4: Varieties of Scepticism**

This module is an introduction to the relationship between the desire to understand and the ever-present possibility that such understanding is not possible for human beings. Beginning with an account of scepticism in the Ancient world, it proceeds to the rediscovery of sceptical problems in the early modern period and then considers contemporary approaches to philosophical scepticism. Particular emphasis is placed on the question whether the traditional sceptical problem of the external world is one that arises naturally wherever there are reflective human beings or whether it is tied to a particular conception of the nature of human knowledge. The module is taught by lecture and seminar; students are also expected to undertake self-managed learning.

### **Optional Modules**

*(Subject to availability)*

### **Year 2: Issues in Contemporary Philosophy: Knowledge, Reality and Value**

This module will address a number of contemporary debates in one or more of: epistemology, philosophy of science, metaphysics and/or moral philosophy. Questions that will be addressed will include a number of the following: What are the sources of knowledge? What is the value of knowledge? Does science tell us about the nature of reality? How should we understand so-called "paradigm-shifts" in science? How can we acquire moral knowledge? What makes life go well? Teaching is by weekly lectures and seminars. The employee attributes developed on this module include cognitive skills such as the ability to identify and solve complex problems, attention to detail and planning and organisation. Generic competences, developed

during seminar debate, include skills in relation to influencing others, being sensitive to the opinions of others and the lucid communication of ideas.

## **Year 2: A Module from the Anglia Language Programme**

### **Year 3: Philosophy of Art**

What does it mean to think philosophically about art? In this module we will do precisely this by discussing the kinds of judgements that we make about art and whether these judgements have any objective validity or express merely subjective opinion. In the course of the module we will also critically examine a number of different art forms, such as conceptual art, film, music and painting, and will ask questions such as 'Does music express emotion?', 'Does the authenticity of an artwork matter?' 'Is conceptual art genuinely art?'

### **Year 3: Applied Ethics**

At the heart of this module are a number of moral dilemmas that remain both perplexing and largely unresolved at the start of the twenty-first century. The main focus is upon three themes: taking life; giving life; and, equality. The first of these deals with issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and animal rights. The second looks at health care matters; including IVF and the rationing of health care services. The final category is concerned with global poverty, punishment, and sexuality. Whilst many of us may have well formed opinions on these topics the aim of the module is to reveal both the differing opinions and the complexity of debates surrounding such issues as a woman's right to have a termination or the right of a terminally ill patient to die sooner rather than later. The main method of the module is to introduce students to a general understanding of moral thought, by assessing the merits of various contemporary approaches to ethics, and to then apply this theoretical understanding to the aforementioned topics. This method will provide the basis for an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of arguments from politicians, interest groups, and other significant actors involved in contemporary moral debates. The module incorporates both a sociological and philosophical perspective to the subject matter. The module will be taught through weekly lectures and seminars. There will be an accompanying module guide and reader. Students will be expected to read at least one excerpt from the module reader each week and obtain sufficient knowledge of the course content through attending lectures and reading key texts.

### **Year 3: Existence and Authenticity**

This module focuses on questions concerning existence and authenticity in philosophy. These questions concern the nature of human existence, history and language. What is our place in nature? Does history have a purpose? How should we live? What may we hope for? Are we free? What can philosophy tell us about the human condition? The module content will revolve around one or more of the following philosophers: Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Wittgenstein. The employee attributes developed on this module include cognitive skills such as the ability to identify and solve complex problems, attention to detail and planning and organising. Generic competencies, developed during seminar debate, include skills in relation to influencing others, being sensitive to the opinions of others and the lucid communication of ideas.

### **Year 3: Working With Philosophy**

Philosophy fosters many skills and aptitudes that have relevance to the world of work. Studying Philosophy also encourages a reflective approach to many aspects of human organisation and practice, including those of the workplace. This module will encourage you to develop awareness of your own strengths and skills, apply theoretical knowledge and insights gained through your studies on your degree, and investigate possible careers for which a degree in Philosophy would be relevant. The module may help you to obtain credit for work that you already do, or help you to think about the work you might do after graduation, or to offer reflections on theoretical issues in practice or the relationship between theory and practice itself.

The module requires that you undertake 35 hours of work in any field, full or part-time, paid or unpaid. You will arrange this work yourself, with help and support from the Employability Service and/or the SU Volunteering programme. ARU is one of the biggest employers in the region, so the work may also consist of employment within ARU.

Alternatively you may chose to undertake a research project about philosophy in practice, exploring the practical features or implications of philosophy in an area of work or policy in the real world. In this case the 35 hours would be embedded in a research project relevant to the objectives of this module.

Examples of workplaces might include charities, eg Mind, Headway, Age Concern, Citizen's Advice Bureau etc, a school, a small business, an art gallery or museum, a local government organisation or political group, or a university (such as ARU). You might reflect on the sorts of activities that are typical of such organisations or types of work, and how your skills are relevant to work in such organisations.

If you choose to undertake a research project, this might consist of, for example: an analysis of certain features of Philosophy degrees in the UK, an analysis of an aspect of philosophy in the media, a report on specific areas of policy and practice in HE, or a review of policy relevant to philosophy in areas such as medical ethics or political decision-making.

There will be a series of workshops to support the module and students will also receive supervision from the Module Leader or Tutor.

The assessment will consist of a self-reflective report or work journal. The report will record hours, activities and tasks, responsibilities and achievements relevant to the objectives of this module. It will contain a short reflective account of the relationship of these activities to key skills identified as essential to the Philosophy degree.

### **Year 3: Aspects of Artificial Intelligence**

Machine technology has fundamentally changed our lives over recent decades. There is no reason to think that this rate of change will slow down, and every reason to think it will continue, perhaps at an exponential rate. We are reaching a point where machine intelligence is becoming a part of our everyday lives, from search engines to personal assistants (like Alexa), from driverless cars to health care. How will this impact our lives in the short, medium and long term? What will the nature of AI be? Will it become autonomous? Will it be truly 'intelligent'? Should we think of it as having a 'mind'? What ethical principles will, or should, it run on? What epistemic principles will, or should, it run on? What ethical rights should AI have? How will AI affect law, social relations, work, the economy, education, health-care, sex, war and our understanding of ourselves? This module will examine all of these future-directed questions, and will look at the philosophical implications of AI within relevant areas, from our understanding of what it is to think, to our understanding of the rights and responsibilities of AI, to the impacts that it will have on our work, social and home lives. The module is assessed through a portfolio containing a report and essay, and will be taught by a weekly lecture/seminar.

### **Year 4: Experiencing God**

This module examines a number of issues in the philosophy of religion, including the forms of religious diversity, arguments for and against the existence of God, the phenomenon of religious experience, the nature of faith and the relation between religion and science in the contemporary age. The aim of the module is to familiarise students with a wide range of perspectives and arguments, traditional and modern, and to contribute to the critical evaluation of particular positions.

### **Year 4: Enlightenment and Modernity: The Philosophical Legacy**

This module looks at key philosophical debates about the legacy of the Enlightenment in the context of modernity. Students will be introduced to key ideas from readings of primary texts that have contributed to debates about history, truth, morality and political power, the nature of interpretation and the role and status of reason and knowledge in the post-Enlightenment era. The module will offer an opportunity for students to explore political and philosophical questions about morality, aesthetics, reason and knowledge. It will be taught through lectures, which introduce the main issues, and seminars, which will allow debate and discussion to take place.

### **Year 4: Philosophies of Language and the Body**

In this module you will focus on language as a symbolic system and practice where meaning is produced and reproduced under specific cultural conditions and is characterised by fragmentation and conflict as much as by cohesion and consensus. You will relate the study of language to issues concerning, for example, identity, cultural power and domination, representation, and real life. You will explore post-structuralist critiques of linguistics, which may include theories of language as a means by which identity is produced through the interconnectedness of language and ideology. In addition, you will encounter the physical body not as 'natural' but as a linguistic phenomenon: where the body is a text to be read. Challenging binaries such as mind/body and biological/textual, you will query the role of language in creating bodies and the ways in which the flesh has been historically created through discourse. You will also look at the ways the body has transgressed these discourses. In examining the relationships between language, power and bodies, you will explore the links between language, power, knowledge, 'truth' and

identity, and extend these links to ecological concerns and the connectedness of the human to the nonhuman and nature. You will learn to question how truth and knowledge are challenged in post-structuralist/ deconstructionist projects, and how this challenge can lead to what is known as posthuman ethics and the ecological revolution: currently known in linguistic philosophy as 'ecosophy'. You will be expected to give short presentations in class, based on your preparatory reading.

#### **Year 4: Capitalism, Power and the Discontented**

In studying this module you will look at theoretical accounts of capitalism and the nature of power and the state in the modern world, and consider how these structures have been contested and critiqued. You are encouraged to critically reflect on how the capitalist economy works, examining both sympathetic and critical accounts of its core functions. You will also develop an understanding of why and how resistance to the system emerges. Capitalism is not just considered as an economic system however, but also as a political, cultural and social phenomenon. As such, while some readings and issues are drawn from political economy, you will engage with a range of theoretical writing on power, race, feminism, hegemony, and alternatives to the status quo, which each offer differing conceptions of how capitalism, power and mass discontent might be understood. You will also engage with a range of intellectual sources from cultural studies, politics and international relations, history, and sociology. Theoretical positions will be contextualised through the modern and contemporary context of neoliberal globalisation. How has the post-financial crisis political landscape been transformed? What debates are emerging over how and if the market economy might be changed? Why does resistance occur? What is the nature of power? What strategies can be effective in building a more humane society?

The module is taught by lectures and seminars each week.

#### **Year 4: Concepts of Good and Evil**

What role, if any, does the concept of evil play in our moral vocabulary? Is it a narrowly theological notion or does it usefully describe certain kinds of act and/or character? This module examines contemporary accounts of evil, as well as looking at the concept of evil in the history of philosophy from Leibniz to the present. In addition to considering theoretical discussions of evil, the module also treats phenomena such as war and terrorism and asks whether the concept of evil helps us to understand them. The module is taught by lecture and seminar; students are also expected to undertake self-managed learning.

#### **Year 4: Philosophy Special Subject**

This module offers you the opportunity to study in-depth one or more of the classic texts in the history of philosophy, ranging from the ancient to the modern period. Topics will vary, year on year. The module is designed to prepare you for the possibility of advanced philosophical research at postgraduate level. The approach will be text-based and the content will reflect the current research interests of the module leader. The delivery pattern is via lecture and seminar. The key employability skill developed on this module will be problem-solving (via the ability to address contemporary debates within the secondary literature about an issue within the primary text).