

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes **Joint and Minor Honours Degree Programmes in Philosophy**. The specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2012**.

The aims of all degrees with Philosophy are:

- to expose students to a broad and coherent philosophical curriculum that draws on both the European and Anglo-American traditions;
- to present an appreciation of philosophy that stresses its pertinence to other areas of intellectual inquiry;
- to provide students with sufficient choice to allow them to pursue their philosophical interests where possible;
- to engender a range of subject-specific and general intellectual skills through a variety of learning activities geared to the study and practice of philosophy.

Additionally, Joint degrees with Philosophy as an equal component aim:

- to develop a friendly, stimulating, and supportive academic environment that encourages each student to strive to achieve their potential in philosophy;
- to inculcate an active sense of the interplay between the intellectual-historical and ahistorical dimensions of philosophical inquiry;
- to provide the conceptual tools with which students can deepen their intellectual engagement with their combined subject;
- to present philosophy's significance both for one's self-understanding and for one's critical engagement with issues of public importance;
- to prepare students to engage critically with the work of contemporary philosophers;
- to enable students to develop independent critical thinking and judgement by taking progressive responsibility for their own learning, concluding the process in the final year through the production of an extended piece of writing.

Programmes are delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which the student must follow courses to the value of four units made up of an equivalent number of whole (1.0) and half (0.5) units (one unit is equivalent to 30 national credits).

For Minor programmes, one unit each year is taken from a list of approved courses validated specifically for philosophy programmes. Each year three units are taken in the Major subject.

For Joint programmes, two units each year are taken from a list of approved philosophy courses, which includes both those validated specifically for philosophy programmes and those offered by other departments that help realise the programmes' aims. Each year two units are taken from the cognate disciplinary area.

Through a balance of compulsory core courses and options, the programmes instantiate a progressive structure wherein students acquire both an increasing knowledge and understanding of philosophy and a deepening awareness of how that both extends and is in turn extended by their combined subject of study. This dual-aspect progression and the students' growing intellectual independence is reflected in the requirement, at stage three, that all students complete a dissertation, either in philosophy or in their other subject.

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## [List of programmes, with details of awards, degree titles, accreditation and teaching arrangements](#)

This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

### **Learning outcomes**

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

#### *Knowledge and understanding*

- a grounding in some central theories in the fields of logic, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics and philosophy of mind;
- an informed awareness of some of the topics that are of interest to philosophers working today.

Additionally, students studying Joint programmes will develop:

- a grasp of the methodological and conceptual relations between philosophy and other disciplines;
- the knowledge to situate historically and conceptually central figures in the history of philosophy, and the diversity of philosophical methods, styles and problems;
- an ability to interpret and critically engage with key philosophical texts, constituting a variety of traditions and ranging historically from the Ancient through to the contemporary;

#### *Skills and other attributes*

- an ability to summarise complex philosophical arguments and to present critical evaluations both orally and writing;
- command of a wider vocabulary and appropriate critical and theoretical terminology;
- the capacity to work in groups in order to further understanding, and to communicate and defend arguments to peers;\*
- competence in the analysis of arguments, and an awareness of such features as persuasion and intended audience;\*
- bibliographical skills appropriate to the subject including accurate citation of sources and consistent use of conventions in the presentation of scholarly work;
- the capacity to evaluate and adjudicate between competing normative claims;\*
- the ability to assimilate and communicate complex ideas.\*

Additionally, students studying Joint programmes will develop:

- the ability to both read sensitively and contrast critically philosophical works from different periods and exemplifying different styles of reasoning;
- the confidence to work autonomously in pursuit of one's own philosophical interests, and the requisite abilities to identify efficiently potential sources of knowledge and understanding;
- confidence in the planning and execution of essays and project-work.\*

\* transferable skills

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### **Teaching, learning and assessment**

Teaching, learning and assessment methods serve the programme aims by recognising the students' expanding knowledge and command of correlated skills as they progress from stage 1 to stage 3 and both acknowledging and encouraging their increased intellectual independence. Consequently, at stage 1 and 2 the primary method of teaching is to combine lectures, which are used to map out a conceptual area and help orientate students in it, with small-group seminars where students are able to test their developing understanding through presentations and discussion and focussed learning tasks (précis, timed analysis, etc.). These formative modes are supplemented with summative essays and examinations. From stage 2 onwards the emphasis on independent learning arising from the students'

growing knowledge, and their desire to follow their interests is reflected in more specialised courses for which a formal distinction between lecture and seminar is no longer entirely appropriate. Here the shift in formative assessment is towards presentations of work-in-progress and one-to-one advice on essay planning at both the conceptual and structural level. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department of Politics and International Relations](#).

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### **Details of the programme structure(s)**

Please note that the list of options offered is subject to change and not all courses run each year. A full list of courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department website](#).

#### Joint Honours Degree programmes with Philosophy as an Equal Component

##### **Stage One:**

Students must take:

PY1001 Fundamental Questions in Philosophy (1 unit)

PY1002 Introduction to Modern Philosophy (½ unit)

CL1541 Introduction to Ancient Philosophy (½ unit)

*plus* specified courses in the other subject

##### **Stage Two:**

Students must take:

PY2001 Introduction to European Philosophy 1: From Kant to Hegel (½ unit)

PY2002 Mind and World (½ unit)

and choose options equal to the value of **one** unit from the Departmental list of available Stage Two courses.

*plus* specified courses in the other subject

##### **Stage Three:**

Students must take:

*Either*

PY3001 Dissertation and choose options equal to the value of **one** unit from the Departmental list of available Stage Three courses.

*plus* specified courses in the other subject

*Or* (if students take a dissertation or extended essay in their other subject)

Choose options equal to the value of two units from the Departmental list of available Stage Three courses; courses to the value of one unit must be Philosophy (PY) coded courses

#### Combined Honours Degree programmes with Philosophy as a Minor Component

##### **Stage One:**

Students must take:

PY1001 Fundamental Questions in Philosophy (1 unit)

*plus* specified courses in the other subject

##### **Stage Two:**

Students must take courses to the value of one unit from the Departmental list of available Philosophy (PY) coded courses

*plus* specified courses in the other subject

##### **Stage Three:**

Students must take courses to the value of one unit from the Departmental list of available Philosophy (PY) coded courses

*plus* specified courses in the other subject

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### **Progression and award requirements**

The progression and award requirements are essentially the same across all Honours Degree programmes at Royal Holloway. Students must pass units to the value of at least three units on each stage of the

programme. On some programmes there may be a requirement to pass specific courses in order to progress to the next stage, or to qualify for a particular degree title (see programme structure).

All first year students on single joint or combined honours programmes offered all or in part by departments or schools in the Faculty of Arts & Social Science are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%. Certificates of Distinction are awarded to students who achieve at least 80% in the quiz. Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [College's Undergraduate Regulations](#) (Section: Conditions for progression to the next stage) but fail to pass the Moodle-based quiz will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study at the College.

Students are considered for the award and classified on the basis of a weighted average. This is calculated from marks gained in courses taken in stages two and three, and gives twice the weighting to marks gained in stage three. In order to qualify for the award, students must gain a weighted average of at least 35%.

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### **Student support and guidance**

- All students are allocated a personal adviser, who meets with them regularly throughout the programme. The adviser's role is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- Representation on the Student-Staff Committee.
- All teaching staff, course co-ordinators, seminar leaders and administrative staff provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- All staff are available and accessible through a dedicated office hours system.
- Students are able to make appointments to see the Philosophy Programme Director and Head of Department.
- Detailed student handbooks and course resources.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College libraries and computer centre.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Careers Service liaison officer.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, and the Educational Support Office for students with special needs.
- A dedicated Information Consultant from the Library Services Academic Liaison is available to support Philosophy students in the use of the extensive range of print and online resources and services provided by the Library (including a range of training sessions and one-to-one help).

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### **Admission requirements**

The Department's standard conditional offer is available on the [Course Catalogue](#) web page. However, the Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

#### *Philosophy minor programme*

For details of admission requirements for Honours Degrees with a Minor in Philosophy please consult the programme specification for the Honours degree programme that constitutes the major part of the programme.

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### **Further learning and career opportunities**

The range of skills and conceptual acuity developed through the study of Philosophy provide students with the sort of flexibility that opens up a wide variety of career and postgraduate opportunities (although there is no comparable study in the UK, statistics in the US show that Philosophy students score highest in the GRE verbal section, second on the GMAT, and third on the LSAT). Comparable universities in the UK show that within six months their graduates who chose not to pursue a postgraduate

qualification (including law and teaching) are likely to be in jobs ranging from financial analyst and management consultant through to editorial assistant, policy advisor, and rights activist. For further details please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

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### **Indicators of quality and standards**

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4\* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4\* standard and 18th for 3\* and 4\* research.

Staff teaching on the Philosophy degree are known nationally or internationally for their work either in philosophy specifically or in the more theoretical aspects of their particular disciplines. For further indicators of quality and standards please refer to the programme specifications for the other component of the Degree programmes.

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### **List of programmes**

All the programmes are taught by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and lead to awards of the University of London. Programmes in Philosophy are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The QAA subject benchmark statement in Philosophy describes the general features which one might expect from Honours Degree programmes in the subject, and can therefore be used as a point of reference when reading this document (see [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)). UCAS codes are given in parentheses (see [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)).

### **Combined Honours Degree programmes with Philosophy as a minor component**

- BA Ancient History with Philosophy (V1V5)
- BA Classical Studies with Philosophy (Q9V5)
- BA Classics with Philosophy (Q8V5)
- BA Comparative Literature and Culture with Philosophy (R9V5)
- BA Drama with Philosophy (W4V5)
- BA English with Philosophy (Q3V5)
- BA French with Philosophy (R1V5)
- BA German with Philosophy (R2V5) last cohort entry September 2011
- BA Italian with Philosophy (R3V5) last cohort entry September 2011
- BSc Mathematics with Philosophy (G1V5)
- BA Film and Television Studies with Philosophy (W6V5)
- BA Multilingual Studies with Philosophy (R9VM)
- BA Music with Philosophy (W3V5)
- BSc Physics with Philosophy (F3V5)
- BA Politics with Philosophy (L2V5)
- BA Spanish with Philosophy (R4V5)

### **Joint Honours Degree programmes with Philosophy as an equal component**

- BA Ancient History and Philosophy (VV15)
- BA Classics and Philosophy (QV85)
- BA Classical Studies and Philosophy (QV95)
- BA Comparative Literature and Culture and Philosophy (QV25)
- BA Drama and Philosophy (WV45)
- BA English and Philosophy (QV35)
- BA French and Philosophy (RV15)
- BA German and Philosophy (RV25)
- BA Italian and Philosophy (RV35)

- BA Spanish and Philosophy (RV45)
- BA Music and Philosophy (WV35)
- BA Politics and Philosophy (LV25)