

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes **Honours Degree programmes in Politics and Philosophy and Politics with Philosophy**. For Joint and Combined Honours Degree programmes, please also refer to the equivalent document(s) for the other subject(s). The specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2010**.

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.

The aims of all Politics and International Relations degrees are:

- to provide a systematic understanding and knowledge of political theory and institutions in both a domestic and international context.
- to encourage critical awareness of current political problems at national and international levels.
- to provide theoretical insights and methodological techniques relevant to the development and interpretation of knowledge in Politics and International Relations and to the evaluation of current research and scholarship in the field.
- to foster an independent learning ability for continued intellectual development.

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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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:

The outcomes of all degrees with Philosophy are:

#### *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.\*

The outcomes of degrees in Politics and International Relations are:

#### *Knowledge and understanding*

The programmes are designed to enable students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following aspects of the discipline:

- extensive knowledge and critical understanding of recent and current developments in the field of political science and international relations, and of the issues and controversies associated with these developments.
- a sound basic understanding of social science and international relations methodology.
- a critical understanding of result and data relating to the field of political science.
- familiarity with a broad selection of the principal classic and contemporary texts in the fields of politics and international relations.
- a sound knowledge of the theories, techniques and concepts used to further our understanding of the issues, processes and phenomena associated with the field of politics and international relations.
- a sound understanding of the principal approaches and current issues in a range of options taught during the second and third years of the programme.

#### *Skills and other attributes*

The programme fosters the development of a range of personal skills and attributes that will strengthen a student's abilities to engage in continuing professional development, engage in further academic research and contribute to the wider academic community. It is also designed to allow students to acquire competence in the following range of discipline-specific and transferable (denoted with an asterisk\*) skills:

- assess the merits of theories, models and explanations in political science, and situate them in a wider disciplinary context.
- apply the concepts and methods used in political science and international relations to the analysis of political theories and institutions within the international system.
- analyse qualitative and quantitative data relating to the field of politics and international relations.
- evaluate current research and scholarship in the field, and evaluate and, where appropriate, develop critiques of the methodologies employed by political scientists.
- gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of sources, and assess their nature and value.
- carry out an independent investigation of a political topic or issue and produce a coherent written account.
- communicate complex ideas and present arguments and complex information in a clear and concise manner in writing.\*
- analyse and interpret complex issues, and develop reasoned arguments and make sound, critical judgements in the absence of complete data.\*
- use literature, internet and database searches to gain necessary information.\*
- develop the intellectual autonomy and self-direction needed for independent investigation of intellectual problems, taking responsibility for one's learning, and developing habits of reflection on that learning.\*
- exercise of initiative and personal responsibility.\*
- ability to take decisions in complex and uncertain situations.\*
- the ability to work autonomously and collaboratively with others.\*
- self-awareness and self-management of research.\*
- awareness of one's responsibility as a local, national and international citizen.\*
- ability to learn independently and to take advantage of life-learning.\*
- skills of oral presentation.\*

\* transferable skills

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

Teaching, learning and assessment methods subserve 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 Classics and Philosophy](#) and 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 of Classics and Philosophy](#) and the [Department of Politics and International Relations](#).

### **The Joint Honours Degree programme where Philosophy is an equal component to Politics and International Relations**

#### 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)

PR1520 Classic and Contemporary Readings in Politics and International Relations (1 unit)

*plus one unit from*

PR1400: Introduction to Politics and Government (1 unit)

PR1500: Introduction to International Relations (1 unit)

PR 1600: Introduction to Research Methods in Politics and International Relations (1 unit)

#### Stage Two:

Students must take:

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

PY2002 Mind and World (½ unit)

*plus*

Two units from available Departmental Stage Two courses, at least one unit of which must be from the following:

PR2440 International Relations Theory (1 unit)

or

PR2490 Contemporary Political Theory (1 unit)

or

PR2560 Modern Political Thought (1 unit)

#### Stage Three:

Students must take:

*Either*

PY3001 Dissertation (1 unit) and choose options equal to the value of **one** unit from the Departmental list of available Stage Three courses

*plus*

Two units of Stage Three courses in the other subject

*Or*

PR3000 Dissertation (1 unit) plus options equal to the value of one unit from the list of available Stage Three courses in Politics and International Relations

*plus*

Choose options equal to the value of two units from the Departmental list of available Stage Three philosophy courses, of which courses to the value of one unit must be PY coded courses

## **Politics with Philosophy**

### **Stage One:**

Students must take:

PY1001 Fundamental Questions in Philosophy (1 unit)

*plus* the following Politics courses:

PR1400 Introduction to Politics and Government (1 unit)

PR1520 Classic and Contemporary Readings in Politics and International Relations (1 unit)

PR1600 Introduction to Research Methods in Politics and International Relations (1 unit)

### **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 subject of Politics.

### **Stage Three:**

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

*plus*

PR3000 Dissertation (1 unit)

and two further units from specified courses in the subject of Politics.

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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 above). 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 Education Support Office for students with special needs.

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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.

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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.

In the 2008 RAE, 70% of the Politics and International Relations Department's research publications were judged to be in the top three categories, from 'internationally excellent' to 'world leading'. These results ranked the Department in ninth place among departments of politics and international relations with fewer than 20 staff and second place among departments with fewer than 15 staff. Staff teaching on the philosophy component of the degrees are also known nationally or internationally for their work either in philosophy specifically or in the more theoretical aspects of their particular disciplines.

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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 Politics and International Relations and in Philosophy are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The QAA subject benchmark statements in Politics and International Relations and in Philosophy describe the general features which one might expect from Honours Degree programmes in the subjects, 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 programme with Philosophy as a minor component**

BA Politics with Philosophy (L2V5)

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

BA Politics and Philosophy (LV25)

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