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If you have any questions about courses, applications or student life at Bristol, please contact the Enquiries Team.

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Philosophy



Undergraduate study



Courses

Single Honours

BA Philosophy

three years V500

Joint Honours

BA English and Philosophy

three years QV35

BA Philosophy and French

four years RV15

BA Philosophy and German

four years RV25

BA Philosophy and Italian

four years RV35

BA Philosophy and Portuguese

four years RV55

BA Philosophy and Russian

four years RV75

BA Philosophy and Spanish

four years RV45

BA Philosophy and Theology

three years VV56

BSc Mathematics and Philosophy

three years VG51

BSc Philosophy and Economics

three years VL51

BSc Philosophy and Economics with Study Abroad

four years VL54

BSc Philosophy and Politics

three years VL52

BSc Physics and Philosophy

three years FV35

BSc Sociology and Philosophy

three years LV35

MSci Mathematics and Philosophy

four years GV15

MSci Physics and Philosophy

four years FVH5

Why study philosophy at Bristol?

Philosophy is not a subject with a body of truths or theories to learn, but an activity in which you engage when trying to answer very general, abstract questions. Moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia prompt philosophical debate, as do theoretical discussions about the nature of time or consciousness. Philosophy begins with questions like these; they have a common feature.

Although other disciplines such as psychology, sociology and physics may provide relevant facts, they cannot provide the answers to such questions. Indeed, much of philosophy is concerned with basic, sometimes implicit assumptions made in these subjects. If these issues appeal and you find satisfaction in reasoned argument, you may want to study philosophy.

Bristol's Department of Philosophy is very strong academically, with an established reputation for excellence in teaching and research. It is one of the largest philosophy departments in the UK, and all our academics are active researchers. Areas of special strength include philosophy of mind and language, ethics, political philosophy, logic and philosophical logic, philosophy of mathematics and philosophy of science (especially biology and physics). The department is largely based within the 'analytic' tradition in philosophy, but some continental philosophy is taught (eg Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre).

'The lovely thing about philosophy at Bristol is the size of the course and department. It's the perfect mix between being large enough to have lots of friends, and small enough to feel close to the lecturers and students.'

Emily (BA Philosophy)

This leaflet contains information for students planning to start university in autumn 2020. We have made every effort to ensure all details are correct at the time of going to press (May 2019). However, since this information is subject to change, you are advised to check the University's website, bristol.ac.uk/ug-study, for the latest updates.

What will you study?

Our philosophy courses offer you both depth and breadth in three or four years of exciting and challenging study.

Our first-year units introduce you to philosophy and its methods. You will gain a basic knowledge of some of the fundamental problems of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and political philosophy, as well as a competence in both formal and informal logic. You can also choose from a range of optional units, introducing you to some of the central texts in the history of philosophy, for example Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* or John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*.

In the second year you will take one mandatory unit in realism and normativity, and you can choose from a wide range of optional units to broaden your knowledge. Current options include:

- Aesthetics
- Death Dying and Disease
- Texts in Modern European Philosophy I (Sartre)
- Epistemology
- Ethics
- Logic II
- Philosophy of Language
- Philosophy of Mathematics
- Philosophy of Mind
- Political Philosophy
- Space, Time, and Matter
- What is Democracy and How Should it Work?

By the final year you will be in a position to specialise and undertake independent study. Final-year optional units are usually focused on the current research interests of staff. Recent units offered include:

- Classical Chinese Philosophy
- Evil, Deviance, and Crime
- Philosophy and the Environment
- Philosophy in the Digital Age
- Philosophy of Biology
- Philosophy of Medicine
- Philosophy of Physics
- Philosophy of Psychology
- Philosophy of Science
- Probability and Rationality
- Social Epistemology of the Internet
- Themes in Modern European Philosophy II (Hegel)
- The Ethics of Migration and Citizenship
- Themes in Modern European Philosophy II (Marx)
- Virtue and Well-Being.

Teaching methods

Contact hours vary each academic year, but your contact time with academics will mainly be during lectures, seminars, tutorials and problem classes. A certain amount of one-to-one teaching is delivered during essay feedback sessions and extended essay supervision.

Assessment

You will be assessed by a combination of examinations, coursework, final-year extended essays and a variety of other forms of assessment.

Top 10 in the UK for Philosophy

QS World University Rankings by Subject 2019

The Department of Philosophy is based in the Woodland Road complex, a series of converted Victorian villas at the heart of our Clifton campus.



'Studying philosophy leaves me with wide-ranging career options, so whatever I choose to do I know I'll have a strong grounding in academic evaluation and the ability to unpick arguments and think more widely about issues.'

Lucy (BA Philosophy)

Careers and graduate destinations

The skills that arts students traditionally bring to the workplace are valued in every part of the employment market. Our students go on to succeed in careers as diverse as the subjects they study here – commerce, tech start-ups, law, accountancy, theatre, museums, publishing, the charity sector, journalism, politics, education and international relations, as well as sectors not immediately associated with arts disciplines, such as engineering and IT.

The Bristol Skills Framework enables our students to recognise their development in academic writing, problem solving, group work, and individual and group presenting. We will equip you with the tools to market your skills, your achievement and your potential in whatever career path you choose to pursue after you graduate.

Philosophy students acquire a significant package of analytical skills that prepares them for a wide range of careers. Many employers value the flexibility of thought, the capacity for marshalling arguments in a coherent and compelling manner, and the ability to think and write clearly that philosophy tends to foster.

Our recent graduates include those who have entered law, accountancy, computing, commerce and industry, the civil service, media and journalism. Others take their studies in philosophy or related subjects further. A number of well-known professional philosophers were once students at Bristol.

Bristol is the second most targeted university by top UK employers.

High Fliers Research 2019

Making your application

Visit bristol.ac.uk/ug20-philosophy for more information about our courses.

Typical offer for BA Philosophy

A-levels AAA (contextual ABB).

IB Diploma 36 points overall (contextual 32) with 18 at Higher Level (contextual 16).

Our contextual offer is a grade reduction of up to two grades below the standard entry requirements, made to applicants from under-represented groups. Find out more at bristol.ac.uk/contextual-offers.

GCSEs Higher numeracy requirement (6 or B in GCSE Mathematics or equivalent).

Selection process UCAS.

For other accepted qualifications, and for our English language requirements, visit bristol.ac.uk/ug20-philosophy.

Application guidance for philosophy courses

We are looking for students who demonstrate a genuine interest in the central problems of philosophy. Since the subject is not widely taught at A-level, this usually means students who have sought out and read some books about philosophy on their own initiative.

Some indication of the sorts of questions that interest you and have led you to want to study philosophy, and the reading you have done outside the school curriculum to satisfy this interest, is likely to impress selectors.

Further information

Find out more about the Department of Philosophy: bristol.ac.uk/philosophy.

This information is correct at the time of printing (May 2019), but we recommend you check the University website for the latest information: bristol.ac.uk/ug20-philosophy.



Graduate employers

Civil Service
Invictus
Aon
Vervant Media
RBS



Career destinations

Civil Servant
Analyst
Insurance Grad Scheme
Reporter
Contractor

Sources: Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey 2016/17. Find out more at bristol.ac.uk/careers/be-inspired.



Read more about how we support you when you are here:

bristol.ac.uk/students