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# 1 Structure of the qualifications

## Qualifications

### 1.1

The following named qualifications are awarded under the Philosophy programme:

- x Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy
- x Diploma of Higher Education in Philosophy
- x Certificate of Higher Education in Philosophy

## Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy (BA)

### 1.2

The BA consists of 12 courses as follows:

#### Level 4 courses

The following four courses:

- x Introduction to philosophy [PY1020]
- x Ethics: historical perspectives [PY1095]
- x Epistemology [PY1025]
- x Logic [PY1070]

#### Level 5 courses

Four courses chosen from the following:

- x Greek philosophy: Plato and the Pre-Socratics [PY1085]
- x Modern philosophy: Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume [PY1065]
- x Ethics: contemporary perspectives [PY3115] (Prerequisite: PY1095)
- x Metaphysics [PY3075] (Prerequisite: PY1070)
- x Methodology: induction, reason and science [PY3035]

#### Level 6 courses

Three courses chosen from the following:

- x Modern philosophy: Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant [PY3125] (Prerequisite: PY1065)
- x Greek philosophy: Aristotle [PY3120] (Prerequisite: PY1085)
- x Continental philosophy: Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche [PY3190] (Prerequisite: PY3125)
- x Aesthetics [PY3130]
- x Philosophy of language [PY3210]
- x Philosophy of mind [PY3100]
- x Political philosophy [PY3090]

- x Philosophy of religion [PY3110]

One compulsory Level 6 course:

- x The Dissertation [PY3500]

## Diploma of Higher Education in Philosophy (DipHE)

### 1.3

The DipHE consists of eight courses, as follows:

#### Level 4 courses

The following four courses:

- x Introduction to philosophy [PY1020]
- x Ethics: historical perspectives [PY1095]
- x Epistemology [PY1025]
- x Logic [PY1070]

#### Level 5 courses

Four courses chosen from the following:

- x Greek philosophy: Plato and the Pre-Socratics [PY1085]
- x Modern philosophy: Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume [PY1065]
- x Ethics: contemporary perspectives [PY3115] (Prerequisite: PY1095)
- x Metaphysics [PY3075] (Prerequisite: PY1070)
- x Methodology: induction, reason and science [PY3035]

## Certificate of Higher Education in Philosophy (CertHE)

### 1.4

The CertHE consists of four courses, as follows:

#### Level 4 courses

The following **four** courses:

- x Introduction to philosophy [PY1020]
- x Ethics: historical perspectives [PY1095]
- x Epistemology [PY1025]
- x Logic [PY1070]

### 1.5

*Introduction to philosophy* [PY1020] is offered as a credit-bearing stand-alone Individual course. If you successfully complete the assessment for the *Introduction to philosophy* course with a mark of 50% or above, you will be considered for transfer to the CertHE.

## 1.6

You may apply to change your choice of course at any stage in your studies until you enter the examination for that course. If you have entered for an examination, your application will not be considered until after the examination results for that session have been published.

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## 2 Registration

### Effective date of registration

#### 2.1

Your effective date of registration will be 30 November in the year that you initially registered. This allows you to sit your first examinations in the following May.

### Period of registration

See the [Programme Specification](#) for the minimum periods of registration applicable to these qualifications. See the [General Regulations](#) for the maximum periods of registration applicable to these qualifications.

#### 2.2

The minimum and maximum periods of registration to complete the programme are counted from your effective date of registration.

If the maximum registration period for your qualification changes during your studies, you will retain the period of registration initially given to you on registration. Your period of registration may still change if you change qualification as set out in Programme Regulations.

#### 2.3

If you transfer from the CertHE to the DipHE or BA, or DipHE to BA, your period of registration will be effective from your initial date of registration on the

## 4 Course selection

[Appendix A](#) provides details of the programme structures and course titles.

### 4.1

The examination for *Introduction to philosophy* [PY1020] must be taken in the year in which you first enter for an examination.

### 4.2

Some of the courses (at Level 5 and above) have prerequisites. Prerequisite courses must either:

- x be passed in a previous examination **or**
- x be taken in the same examination period as the courses for which they are prerequisite.

## 5 Assessment for the programme

### Assessment methods

#### 5.1

Level 4 and 5 courses are each assessed by one two-hour unseen written examination. Level 6 courses are each assessed by one three-hour unseen written examination (with the exception of the Dissertation).

An examination is defined as an element of assessment that takes place in a controlled environment. You will be given details of how the courses on your programme are assessed, the specific environment or location that is permitted and the time allowed for the assessment.

All examinations are scheduled using an online delivery method. You must ensure that your device is kept up to date and complies with [University Computer Requirements](#).

Wherever they are held, all examinations take place on the same dates and at specific times in line with the published timetables.

See [General Regulations](#)

**5.5**

You are responsible for submitting Dissertation assessment items







## Appendix A Syllabuses

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### Level 4 courses

#### **Introduction to philosophy [PY1020]**

An introduction to the subject matter and methods of philosophy by means of a study of certain fundamental philosophical problems and texts. In this course, students will be introduced to the methods and content of philosophy by considering, at an elementary level and in a carefully guided way, some of the central problems that arise within the subject. Topics covered include: the problem of free-will and determinism, the nature of the self, the relation of the mind to the body, the nature of knowledge, the ideal of equality, issues raised by portrayals of tragedy, the reality of qualities, and our understanding of moral dilemmas.

#### **Ethics: historical perspectives [PY1095]**

An exploration of the history of moral philosophy, including the views of

## Level 5 courses

### Greek philosophy: Plato and the Pre-Socratics [PY1085]

The interpretation of the extant fragments of Pre-Socratic philosophy dialogues, including (but not limited to) *The Republic*, *Symposium*, *Theatetus*, *Phaedo*, *Philebus* and *Parmenides*. The course focuses on the work of the predecessors of Plato – collectively known as the pre-Socratics – as well as on the main dialogues of Plato. It has been said that all of philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato. While this is certainly an exaggeration, it points to the fundamental importance to philosophy of its history, and in particular of the part played in that history by Plato.

### Modern philosophy: Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume [PY1065]

Study of the main metaphysical, logical and epistemological views of Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. The philosophers Locke, Berkeley and Hume are generally reckoned to be the main representatives of the empiricist tradition, whereas Descartes is seen as one of the forerunners of the rationalist school. However, the work of the empiricists can be seen as a reaction – in part – to Descartes and rationalism generally, so this first subject in modern philosophy begins with

–Socratics and Aristotle, among others). It is generally understood as covering the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries – a period in which there was a decisive break with ancient philosophy.

### Ethics: contemporary perspectives [PY3115]

**Prerequisite:** **Ethics: historical perspectives** must be taken at the same time or already have been passed.

An investigation of the central questions in moral philosophy including such issues as: the metaphysical status of moral value, morality and truth, theories of the good, moral relativism and moral conflict, consequentialism and moral accountability. Ethics or moral philosophy is the inquiry into the nature of moral value. It is concerned with questions about goodness, right and wrong, the virtues and the nature of the worthwhile life. One way into a consideration of moral philosophy is to read the works of those who have made substantial contributions to our understanding of moral questions: Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Mill and others. (This is the subject matter of the other course in ethics). But a historical approach needs to be complemented by the more direct

distinction, the nature of moral truth, the universalisability of moral principles, and much besides. These sorts of issue form the basis of this course.

### Metaphysics [PY3075]

**Prerequisite:** **Logic** must be taken at the same time or already have been passed.

An exploration of the main questions of metaphysics, including those raised by the nature of substance, problems of identity and individuation, as well as issues involving time, causation and universals. Specific metaphysical questions are so various and important that discussion of some of them has come to form separate branches of philosophy, for example *Philosophy of mind* and *Philosophy of religion*, both of which are in the list of optional courses. However, the central and more general questions of existence and reality remain part of this course, and give rise to more specific ones that are also studied, namely: What is time? Are particulars more basic than events? Do human beings have free will? What is causality? Are there universals? Does the world exist independently of our knowledge of it?



### **Aesthetics [PY3130]**

An investigation of problems such as: the nature and value of art, aesthetic judgement, representation, expression and interpretation. Included will be a historical approach to these issues involving writers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Nietzsche and Collingwood. Wide reading in the history of aesthetics is necessary for a proper approach to the course. Issues in contemporary aesthetics are illuminated by their treatment throughout history, and the understanding and assessment of the views of past thinkers is facilitated by reflection on the problems they deal with. Aesthetics, done properly, is as hard and as rewarding as any branch of philosophy. It is philosophy turning its attention to the nature of aesthetic experience and judgement, and to questions about art, the different art forms, how they relate to the world and to the mind, and what value they may have.

### **Philosophy of language [PY3210]**

An exploration of the notion of meaning as well as an investigation into the more detailed problems arising from study of natural language. Included are topics such as metaphor, reference and the nature of rules and language. Philosophy of language is organised around general questions of language and meaning. The nature of language has long been an obsession of philosophers. More recently it has also become the focus of empirical investigation in linguistics. The course considers general methodological considerations about meaning

respect, the course provides a student with an opportunity to apply their general philosophical acumen to a body of important questions concerning theism. Among the questions raised are: the existence of God; the coherence of theism; the compatibility of divine omniscience and human freedom; the problem of evil; and immortality.

### **Dissertation [PY3500]**

Prerequisite: You may only enter for the Dissertation once you have passed all four courses at Level 4 and a minimum of four courses at Level 5 and/or Level 6.

A dissertation of 7,500 words on a topic to be negotiated with a member of the staff at Birkbeck, University of London. Students will receive feedback on a one-page outline (consisting of a working title, a summary of the main sections of the dissertation, and a short bibliography), and comments on a complete drafts, if required.

A dissertation can be on any topic in philosophy that falls within the area of competence of a member of the Department. Producing one allows students the chance to call on their accumulated knowledge of the subject. Most students feel that this module rounds off their degree, giving them a real sense of achievement.

## Appendix B Assessment Criteria

Examinations and dissertations are assessed using the following criteria (not in order of importance):

- x Relevance of answer to question set.
- x Coverage of answer: appropriate range of facts, ideas and sources.
- x Accuracy of information.
- x Structure and organisation of argument.
- x Quality of analysis, argumentation and critical evaluation.
- x Quality of expression and presentation.
- x Display of capacity for independent thought.

These criteria are used to categorise answers to exam questions and dissertations into the following classes.

| Grade | Class equivalent | Assessment criteria |
|-------|------------------|---------------------|
|-------|------------------|---------------------|