Philosophy

As a student of philosophy, you will have the opportunity to get involved in a variety of co-curricular activities from across the University. Not only do these enhance your experiences as a student, they also make for a more impressive CV.

Ways in which your study of philosophy at Hertfordshire can give you more include:

• Philosophy Weekend: an optional 3-day residential weekend based at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park. An opportunity for staff and students to get to know each other better whilst debating philosophical issues.

• Philosophy Society: student-run programme of seminars which draws distinguished speakers from all over the UK and beyond, and which also acts as a forum for students to debate their own ideas.

• Strong Research Culture: as well as being taught by staff who have strong research records in the areas they teach, UH regularly hosts conferences, attracting speakers from all over the world. Students are welcome to attend and there are opportunities for students to be employed to help in their smooth running.

Find out more...

To come to an Open Day to meet tutors and students and see the facilities. You will find dates on the website. Please do not be shy about emailing staff; they will be happy to help you.

As a student in the School of Humanities, you will benefit from being part of a diverse and active academic community. This means that, whatever your degree subject or subjects, there is a lot more on offer to enrich your studies and support your academic development. Here, student experience, research and community engagement are interdependent.

So, you may find yourself working with a lecturer on a community research project or collaborating with a student from a different subject on an area of mutual interest. By participating in these projects, you will develop your creative and professional skills and contribute to activities that are inspiring and career enhancing. You will also have access to the wide range of modules and pathways that the School of Humanities is able to offer. You will take at least two subjects in your first year - and up to four if you want - even if you have applied for a single honours degree. This helps you to broaden your horizons and gain additional skills - both qualities that are highly valued by employers. You follow a common module in the first year. Engaging with the Humanities, which helps you find your feet in the academic environment, establish ways of working confidently, creatively and collaboratively, and explore areas of common interest between the individual subjects you are following.

Then there are the optional extras,...

• Extra-curricular activities such as clubs and societies, research seminars, writing for the student papers, working on student radio

• A year’s study abroad

• Work placement

These activities will give you that something extra to put on your CV and help you succeed at that graduate interview.

What is it like to study Philosophy?

Philosophy is taught in various ways, ranging from lectures attended by everyone on the module, to smaller seminar groups which allow for in-depth discussion among students, to one-to-one discussion with a tutor. Outside classroom hours, in addition to your private study, you will enhance your knowledge of the subject by joining with others to debate the philosophical issues.

Our tuition is first-class. In independent national assessments, we have achieved the highest possible grades, as well as achieving high scores in the National Student Survey. Our diverse philosophy curriculum will introduce you to a wide range of philosophical problems from a range of philosophical traditions. The aim is to give you first-hand experience of philosophy by doing it: assessing the arguments of others, formulating your own arguments, arriving at your own conclusions on deep and important issues. Not all modules are assessed in the same way. Depending on what is most appropriate for the module, you might be assessed entirely on coursework, or there might also be on an exam or even an assessed presentation. In your final year, you may write a dissertation on a topic of your choice.

Year one modules

Introduction to Philosophy (Core module)
Assessment: 30% coursework and 70% exam

You will be given a basic training in how to read and write essays in philosophy, while exploring perennial questions in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, logic, ethics and the meaning of life. The first section of the course considers issues in metaphysics (What is reality like?), epistemology (Can we know anything at all?), logic (e.g. What is a good argument?), and the philosophy of mind (e.g. Is the mind distinct from the body?). The second section concerns issues in ethics (e.g. What can we be held morally responsible for? Is there an objective basis for moral judgements?). The third section covers issues concerning the meaning of life (e.g. Is there any value to life, given that every relic of our existence will eventually vanish?)

Career Paths

Our graduates have an excellent record of gaining employment in publishing, teaching, business, administration, information management and the media, where their skills in logical analysis and communication are highly valued. The many transferable skills that philosophy students develop - skills not relevant from irrelevant information, presenting an argument in the most effective way, using imaginative ways to solve a problem for which there is no established technique - give them a clear advantage in today’s job market. At the same time, a humanities education enriches your understanding and enjoyment of culture.

Contact

Dr. Brendan Larvor, Head of Philosophy
b.p.larvor@herts.ac.uk

Reason and Persuasion
Assessment: 40% coursework and 60% exam

This module will explore the reasons why some persuasive efforts work while others do not. It will develop your ability to judge when you ought to be persuaded by the arguments of others and to present your own views in a way that increases their persuasive force. We will explore the psychology of mistakes and the manipulation of opinion.

Philosophy of Film and Literature
Assessment: 40% coursework and 60% exam

The central theme of the module is to investigate what it is possible for film and literature to represent. How do we establish what is true in a fiction? Can anything happen in fiction that can’t happen in reality, or has to be possible in reality? How do we determine the difference between what can be represented in film and what can be represented in literature? We tackle these questions by engaging with various films and works of literature to see how they fit within a philosophical framework for thinking about them.

Year two modules

Themes in Plato’s Republic
Metaphysics
Philosophy of Mind
Logic and Philosophy
The Right and the Good
Knowledge and Discovery
Philosophy of Art
Social and Political Philosophy
Philosophies of Religion
Vices, Virtues and Ethics

Final year modules

Arts

Nietzsche, Genealogy and Morality
Wittgenstein’s Philosophy
Kierkegaard, Philosophy and Religion
Feminist Philosophy
Philosophy of Language
Philosophy Project
Philosophy of Psychology
Contemporary Moral Philosophy
Religion and Modern Thought

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Philosophy Single Honours V500
Philosophy can be combined for Joint Honours with one of the following:
American Studies VT57
Creative Writing VQ63
English Language & Communication VQ51
English Literature VQ53
History VQ51
Jewish Studies VQ54
Media VQ51

Or as Combined Honours with two or three of the following:
A Language - see languages insert for full details.
American Studies VT57
Creative Writing VQ68
English Language & Communication VQ51
English Language Teaching VSX1
English Literature VQ53
Film VSPH
History VQ51
Jewish Studies VQ54
Media VQ51
Journalism VQ5P
Media Cultures VSQ3
New Media Publishing VQ1K
Religious Studies VQ56
Philosophy combined with any two subjects VQ50
Philosophy combined with any three subjects QRVO

Philosophy can also be combined with other subjects such as Law or Computer Science. Please see go.herts.ac.uk/JH for a full list of options.

Website:
go.herts.ac.uk/V500

Entry Requirements:
112 UCAS points. GCSE Maths and English Language at Grade 4 or above (Grade C or above if taken prior to 2015).

Find out more...

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goherts.ac.uk/opendays

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American Studies (Joint or Minor)
American Studies offers you the opportunity to combine modules with an American focus from our Literature, History and Film courses. You can follow a specified route through the Humanities programme, choosing multi-disciplinary American topics at each level, providing a fascinating insight into one of the world’s most influential, complex and multicultural societies. Students on the American Studies pathway also have the option of spending a semester of their second year studying at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

“The thing I find most rewarding about American Studies is the diversity it offers. By incorporating a variety of disciplines into one pathway, I can broaden my learning experience by studying multiple disciplines while majoring in one of them. It has also encouraged me to consider a wider range of ideas and approaches within my historical studies.”

Martin Williams

Contact:
Dr Rowland Hughes Principal Lecturer in Literature and American Studies rw.hughes@herts.ac.uk

Creative Writing (Joint or Minor)
Studying Creative Writing allows you to work creatively and imaginatively within a formal academic programme. It gives you valuable employability skills, at the same time as allowing you to write that story, poem, play or novel you’ve always wanted to. Creative Writing complements the single and major disciplines (Philosophy, Literature, History, English Language & Communication), particularly through its control over the production and communication and presentation of ideas.

“Creative Writing helped me to become a better scriptwriter and poet, and gave me skills that I’ll have for life. My eye for detail is a lot sharper, as are my editing and re-drafting skills. The support I’ve received over the years from my tutors has been incredible and boosted my confidence in my writing immensely.”

Alex MacGregor

Contact:
Dr Jennifer Young Creative Writing Coordinator jm.young@herts.ac.uk

English Language & Communication (Major, Joint or Minor)
English Language & Communication is taught in various ways, ranging from lectures attended by everyone on the module, to smaller seminar groups which allow for in-depth discussion among students, to workshops. Outside classroom hours, in addition to your private study, one-to-one tutorials and group work will further enhance your knowledge of the subject. We offer a unique mix of modules, focusing on: the English language itself, its sounds, words and structure, how it has developed, how it is used to communicate, how it is learned by children, when it goes wrong and how we can teach it as a foreign language.

“The way the course is structured, the content involved and the way the lecturers deliver the topic is outstanding.”

Melissa Ellis

Contact:
Dr Christina Schelletter Head of English Language c.schelletter@herts.ac.uk

English Language Teaching (Minor only)
English Language Teaching focuses on learning a second language and the different motivations, techniques and outcomes this may have; on-dominant approaches to teaching and learning; and on the roles of English in the contemporary world. It’s a practical subject with an interdisciplinary focus that combines well with other Humanities subjects as well as English Language & Communication.

“English Language Teaching is an opportunity for speakers of English, whether as a first or a second language, to learn how to pass on this fabulous communication tool.”

Liz Rameses

Contact:
Dr Tim Parke Principal Lecturer in English Language & Communication t.parke@herts.ac.uk

English Literature (Major, Joint or Minor)
As a student of English Literature you will attend a variety of different sorts of teaching session including lectures, small seminar groups, 2-hour workshops, one-to-one discussions and one-to-one tutorials. In your final year you will receive individual tuition as you write a dissertation on a topic of your choice. You will need to enjoy reading widely and be prepared to challenge yourself. We offer a curriculum that familiarises students with significant authors, movements and periods from literary history, whilst also introducing them to more marginal writers, texts and genres.

“I could never have imagined how truly engaging the subject would prove to be. The teaching staff all have not only great teaching skills and an excellent work ethic, but such passion about their subject that it is quite infectious. A wonderful experience I wholeheartedly recommend!”

Kate de-Gregorio

Contact:
Dr Andrew Maunder Head of English Literature a.maunder@herts.ac.uk

Film (Minor only)
Studying Film as a combined subject helps you develop both practical and theoretical skills in film and television analysis, via an understanding of cinema’s history and contexts. Such skills are of value in a wide range of careers including: teaching, research, curation and journalism. The course includes a focus on specific subjects such as: European film, Cult film and TV forms, gender and representation; film and TV adaptation, and the opportunity to gain practical experience in digital film-making (in fiction, non-fiction and via the developing video essay form).

“Provides an excellent insight into film analysis and theory. There is also the opportunity on the course for practical filmmaking and work experience, both of which are very useful in enhancing future employability.”

Adam Jones-Lloyd

Contact:
Dr Darren Elliott-Smith Film Coordinator delliott-smith@herts.ac.uk

History (Major, Joint or Minor)
History is taught in various ways, ranging from three-hour workshops, to lectures attended by everyone on the module, to smaller seminar groups which allow for in-depth discussion among students, to one-to-one discussions with a tutor. In your final year, you may write a dissertation on a topic of your choice. Our course also offers you the possibility of undertaking a placement in a local museum, archive or heritage site, allowing you to gain credit and valuable work experience.

“Studying at the University of Hertfordshire has allowed me to engage with History in both an academic and non-academic setting, I have been given the opportunity to use my skills and work with the local community to provide history to the public.”

Abi Wilson

Contact:
Dr Clara Meehan Head of History c.meehan@herts.ac.uk

As a student on the Humanities Programme, you choose to study at least one of the following “Major” subjects throughout each of your three or four years here: English Language & Communication, English Literature, History and Philosophy. During your first year, you also choose between one and three additional subjects, making two to four subjects in total, including at least one major subject. This opportunity to pursue another subject, enriches your programme of study and could take your degree in a new direction. After the first year, you can either continue with the additional subjects you chose in your first year, or drop any or all of your additional subject(s). Additional subjects can be major, joint or minor subjects.
**Journalism (Joint or Minor)**

This course gives you a range of journalistic skills, and hands-on experience of producing work in a variety of styles, for different markets. You will be introduced to the concept of "news" and "features" in the print medium and what they constitute, along with a variety of journalistic skills to help you to source and write them. We encourage you to take work placements in the vacations and many of our students have been published in the local press and worked in TV or radio before they graduate. Students will also have the opportunity to meet and network with a wide variety of industry-relevant speakers. Previous speakers have included award winning magazine editor Carol Bronze, sports journalist and broadcaster Andrew Bontiff and journalist and news presenter Martine Croxall.

"This course pushes you to produce the best work that you can. From writing news stories to feature stories and the importance of interviews and getting quotes. There is never a dull moment, especially when you see your work published."

Rebecca McAleese

**Contact:**
Philip Cowan  Journalist Coordinator
P.Cowan@herts.ac.uk

**Languages – French, German, Japanese, Mandarin and Spanish (Minor only)**

Learn a language as part of your degree and become the graduate that employers want: an excellent communicator, open-minded, adaptable and good at analysing situations. The UK has a shortage of people who can combine language skills with other specialisms so find a successful career in today’s global market with your knowledge of a language. French, German and Spanish are each offered at beginners, intermediate or advanced level. "Advanced" means you have taken an A-level (or equivalent) in the subject. Japanese and Mandarin are offered only at beginner level. You can only take one language and may only do so as a minor subject.

"The world is becoming globalised more and more every day, which makes communication in between different cultures very important. The ELC course with Japanese has allowed me to both broaden my language horizons and think about communication in a completely different way."

Nathalie Vinatzer

**Contact:**
Nicole Duplain  Subject Leader for Languages
languages@herts.ac.uk

**New Media Publishing (Minor only)**

Graduates wishing to work in the media industry will need to be technologically literate. Publishing is a cross platform industry with print and on-line brand extension. This subject will enable you to develop practical skills from web design to magazine layout and producing short digital films.

Graduates taking this course have gone on to work as web editors, content managers, book publishers, teaching with IT specialism, PR and postgraduate study.

"The skills I have picked up over the last three years will aid me endlessly in my career to come and I would do it all again in a blink."

Emma Champion

**Contact:**
James Nichols  New Media Publishing coordinator
j.nichols3@herts.ac.uk

**Public History (Minor only)**

Public History is a unique and innovative course. Students will investigate the ways in which history and heritage are put to use in a wide variety of contexts in Britain and internationally: in museums, monuments, turns of phrase, commemorations, digital media, film and fiction, for example. Through exploring professional, popular and community engagements with the past, you will become aware of the practices and methodologies of public history. A major element of the Public History course is the work placement in your second year, which will enable you to apply your learning and gain first-hand experience of the public history/heritage sector.

"Public History opens your eyes to the fact that history is all around us. Studying Public History has enabled me to appreciate the ways in which history is, or isn’t, remembered and how it is presented to the public."

George Worby

**Contact:**
Dr Ciara Meehan  Head of History
c.meehan2@herts.ac.uk

**Religious Studies (Minor only)**

Religion is central to many social, political and ethical controversies. Understanding how people live their different faiths is crucial to navigating a globalised world. The Religious Studies pathway enables you to gain a deep understanding of the ideas, beliefs and practices of some of the major world religions including their historical development and engagement with the contemporary world. It explores these traditions from a multi-disciplinary perspective that brings together philosophy, theology, psychology, sociology, phenomenology and media studies. The Religious Studies pathway is equally appropriate to students who have not previously taken the subject and those who have studied it before and desire to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

"Religion is an integral part of many of the humanities subjects . . . The religious studies pathway has an independent appeal, but additionally has the potential to enrich students’ understanding of their other subjects."

Alex Lloyd

**Contact:**
Professor John Lippitt  Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion
j.a.lippitt@herts.ac.uk

**Contact:**
S.Magerstadt  Media Cultures coordinator
S.Magerstadt@herts.ac.uk
The sheer depth of the subject has always kept me interested in my next essay or presentation. It’s a credit to philosophy itself, a discipline which hones writing skills and critical thinking, but mostly the thanks goes to the consistent excellence of the teaching. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Jamie Cawthra