Philosophy Subject Guide

“The instructor [in higher education] does not lay down principles, he initiates into methods; he is himself an investigator, and he is inviting the pupil to accompany him on his road”

Mark Pattison (1813-1884)

Using this Subject Guide

Follow the links in the Contents (below) to navigate to the information, advice or form you require during your studies. The full Philosophy Programme Specification, which you might like to consult in conjunction with this guide, can be found below in ‘Other resources which you may find useful’. More detailed information about each of your modules will be found on the StudyNet sites for those modules.

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- Year Abroad
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Learning Philosophy

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- Learning Resources
- Electronic Philosophy Resources provided by Learning and Information Services
- How to Read Philosophy
- Extra-Curricular Activities (inc. Philosophy Society and Philosophy Weekend)
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- Employability and the Skills and Attributes of the Philosopher

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Essays

- Planning Your Essay
- How to Write a Philosophy Essay I
- How to Write a Philosophy Essay II
- Writing style
• Formatting Your Essay
• Referencing
• Submitting Essays
• Essay Grading Criteria
Microsoft WORD can calculate readability statistics for your essay (it is an option on the Spelling and Grammar checker). Find out what these numbers mean and how you can use them to improve your writing by searching for ‘word readability statistics’ in your favourite search engine.

Examinations
• How to Succeed in Examinations
• Exam Timetable (This links to the exam timetable on StudyNet)
• Examination Grading Criteria

Presentations
• Giving Presentations
• Presentation Grading Criteria

Philosophy Project

Plagiarism and Collusion

Moderation

Other resources which you may find useful
• Ask Herts website https://ask.herts.ac.uk/ Ask Herts is new and easy way for students to find answers to their questions about all aspects of University life. It is updated frequently and has a user-friendly search facility
• The Humanities Programme Handbook, Index of Modules and Module Guides are freely available
• Philosophy Programme Specification
• Student Code of Conduct
• Statement of Responsibilities and Commitments
• Student Charter
• Equal Opportunities Statements: http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/secreg/upr/EQ03.htm http://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity
• A-Z of the University of Hertfordshire

Appendix 1: Latin Phrases and Difficult Plurals

Appendix 2: Table of Learning Outcomes from Philosophy Modules
Philosophy at UH

Philosophy is a fascinating subject which explores and challenges the concepts and assumptions which frame the way we think, speak and act. It examines questions concerning – for example – the nature of reality, how we should live and treat others, how we should understand the notions of meaning, truth and knowledge, and what it is to be a person. Some modules focus on a particular area of philosophy (such as the Philosophy of Mind) and some modules focus on the work of a particular philosopher (such as Aristotle).

No prior knowledge of Philosophy is required to study it at Level 4. You will be given training to allow you to develop the skills required to engage with philosophical questions and, as you progress through the subject, you should become more sophisticated in dealing with complex, fundamental issues. This will allow you to develop the capacities to articulate and evaluate underlying assumptions in debates on any topic.

Philosophy is primarily taught through lectures and seminars, and the knowledge and skills you learn is assessed through some combination of essays, exams and presentations. (See below for the differences between these and how each module is assessed.) You will be exposed to a diverse range of philosophical styles and approaches, and encouraged to have an open, experimental attitude to philosophy. We provide you with a supportive environment in which you will develop the intellectual and social skills required for you to participate in rational discussion, debate and argument.

All of our Philosophy teaching staff also carry out research. Philosophy achieved excellent results in the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014), with 19% of our research being judged 4 star (‘world-leading’) and a further 47% of it being judged 3 star (‘internationally excellent’). All staff in Philosophy were submitted for this exercise. All of our teaching is informed by our research interests. You will benefit from this by being taught by experts in the field, who can show you how and what philosophy is done at the cutting edge of the discipline.

Philosophy at the University of Hertfordshire ranked 14th out of 48 universities in the Guardian University league table 2016.

We are proud to be a strong, vibrant department dedicated not only to teaching you about Philosophy, but also teaching you to do Philosophy and enjoy where it takes you.
# Philosophy Modules

## Level 4 Module Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Credit Points</th>
<th>% examination</th>
<th>% coursework</th>
<th>% presentation</th>
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<td>Chon Tejedor</td>
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*Coursework comprises a review (10%) and essay (20%) in semester A, and essay (20%) in semester B.

Progression to level 5 requires a minimum of 60 credits at level four and passes in 30 credits of Philosophy at level 4, including *Introduction to Philosophy*, or equivalent.

## Level 5 Module Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Credit Points</th>
<th>% examination</th>
<th>% coursework</th>
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Progression to level 6 requires a minimum of 60 credits at level five and passes in 30 credits of Philosophy at level 5.

To study Philosophy as a single subject at Level 6, students must complete 60 credits of Philosophy at Level 5.
Philosophy Subject Guide

How to decide which modules to choose

In choosing modules, students should seek advice from Philosophy staff (primarily through the module choices advice sessions) and consult the table in Appendix 2 at the end of this Subject Guide (reprinted from the Philosophy Programme Specification), which explains how the learning outcomes of the Philosophy Programme are met by various modules. In addition, the following diagram shows how various areas of philosophy are developed throughout the degree. The diagram should not be taken to indicate pre-requisites for any modules. For instance, a student may take level 6 Feminist Philosophy without having taken level 5 Knowledge and Discovery. Nevertheless, there is a natural progression from Knowledge and Discovery to Feminist Philosophy, which a student may want to pursue.

**Studying the Philosophy Project (6HUM0002) requires the successful completion of at least four modules in Philosophy (60 credits) at Level 5 (or equivalent), an average mark of at least a 2.1 standard in all level 5 Philosophy modules taken, the submission of an approved research proposal, and must be taken in addition to four taught modules in Philosophy at level 6.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 6 Module Titles</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Credit Points</th>
<th>% examination</th>
<th>% coursework</th>
<th>% presentation</th>
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<td>0</td>
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### Philosophy Subject Guide

#### Level 5 Modules

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<th>Themes in Plato’s Republic</th>
<th>The Right &amp; The Good</th>
<th>Philosophies of Religion</th>
<th>Virtues, Vices &amp; Ethics</th>
<th>Social &amp; Political Philosophy</th>
<th>Philosophy of Mind</th>
<th>Knowledge &amp; Discovery</th>
<th>Philosophy of Mind</th>
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<th>Logic &amp; Philosophy</th>
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<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Social &amp; Political</td>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
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<td>Logic</td>
<td>Language</td>
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<td>Primary area of focus</td>
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<td>Logic</td>
<td>Language</td>
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#### Level 6 Modules

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<th>Philosophy Project</th>
<th>Religion and Modern Thought</th>
<th>Topics in the Philosophy of Hegel</th>
<th>Kant’s Critical Philosophy</th>
<th>Kieperkegaard, Philosophy and Religion</th>
<th>Nietzsche, Genealogy and Morality</th>
<th>Aristotle</th>
<th>Contemporary Moral Philosophy</th>
<th>Feminist Philosophy</th>
<th>Political Philosophy</th>
<th>Wittgenstein’s Philosophy</th>
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<td>Social and Political</td>
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<td>Philosophy of Psychology</td>
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### Introduction to Philosophy

- Set Text (from the history of philosophy)
- Ethics
- Meaning of Life/Religion
- Epistemology
- Philosophy of Mind
- Metaphysics
- Logic
- Social & Political
- Language
- Ethics
- Logic

### Aesthetics

- Social & Political
- Ethics
- Metaphysics
- Language

### Reason and Persuasion

- Literature
- Ethics
- Metaphysics
- Logic
Year Abroad

Philosophy students may elect to take a year abroad between taking level 5 and level 6 modules.  (Click here for details.)
### Key Dates for Academic Year 2015-2016

#### Dates relevant to Semester A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 28th September-Friday 18th December</td>
<td>12 weeks teaching Semester A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 28th September-Friday 2nd October</td>
<td>Induction week level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 28th September, 2015- Friday 9th October</td>
<td>Personal Tutor meetings with level 5 and 6 tutees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4th January – Friday 8th January 2016</td>
<td>Reading week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4th January 2016</td>
<td>School Deadline&lt;br&gt;Semester A (including referrals/deferrals from Semester A modules of previous year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 11th January – Saturday 16th January 2016</td>
<td>Semester A Exam period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 22nd January 2016</td>
<td>Semester A Serious Adverse Circumstances submission deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 11th April 2016</td>
<td>REFERRED/ DEFERRED COURSEWORK DEADLINE (Semester A)</td>
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</table>

#### Dates relevant to Semester B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 18th January – 19th February</td>
<td>12 weeks teaching Semester B (Reading week comes after teaching week 5, the Easter break comes after teaching week 9. Please note that Good Friday is the Friday of teaching week 9, so no classes will take place then.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 22nd February – Friday 26th February 2016</td>
<td>READING WEEK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 29th February – Friday 11th March 2016</td>
<td>Personal Tutor meetings with students to discuss semester A results and deadline for Personal Tutors to monitor students’ progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 25th March – Friday, 8th April 2016</td>
<td>EASTER VACATION (2 weeks 1 day)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 22nd April 2016</td>
<td>SCHOOL DEADLINE SEMESTER B (INCLUDING REFERRALS/DEFERRALS FROM SEMESTER B MODULES OF PREVIOUS YEAR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 3rd May – Friday 20th May 2016</td>
<td>Semester B Examinations Period</td>
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<td>Monday, 9th May 2016</td>
<td>Serious Adverse Circumstances submission deadline for Coursework and Attendance Semester B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 23rd May 2016</td>
<td>Serious Adverse Circumstances submission deadline for Exams Semester B</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 week period – Tuesday 21st June to Friday 1st July 2016</td>
<td>Referral/Deferral Examination period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 27th June 2016</td>
<td>REFERRED / DEFERRED COURSEWORK DEADLINE (Semester B)</td>
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Communication with Philosophy Staff and Students

Contacting Staff

Outside classroom hours, you can ask questions of the staff by e-mail, StudyNet or phone, or during the Student Support and Advice hours, which can be found on StudyNet module sites or outside the staff member’s office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Craig Bourne</td>
<td>Acting Head of Philosophy for 2015-16</td>
<td><a href="mailto:c.bourne@herts.ac.uk">c.bourne@herts.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>5635</td>
<td>R345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Sam Coleman</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer in Philosophy</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.coleman@herts.ac.uk">s.coleman@herts.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>5657</td>
<td>R345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Brendan Larvor</td>
<td>Reader in Philosophy (on leave 2015-2016)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:b.p.larvor@herts.ac.uk">b.p.larvor@herts.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>5659</td>
<td>R345</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof John Lippitt</td>
<td>Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j.a.lippitt@herts.ac.uk">j.a.lippitt@herts.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>5682</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Danièle Moyal-Sharrock</td>
<td>Reader in Philosophy</td>
<td><a href="mailto:d.moyal-sharrock@herts.ac.uk">d.moyal-sharrock@herts.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>5645</td>
<td>R345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Constantine Sandis</td>
<td>Professor of Philosophy</td>
<td><a href="mailto:c.sandis@herts.ac.uk">c.sandis@herts.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>R348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Chon Tejedor</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer in Philosophy</td>
<td><a href="mailto:c.tejedor@herts.ac.uk">c.tejedor@herts.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>77691</td>
<td>R345</td>
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To find out what further support is available to you as a Humanities student, see the ‘Support Available in Humanities’, which can be found in ‘Module Information’ on your module StudyNet sites.

How Will You Give Feedback?

Students will be able to give feedback on a range of issues by means of the Module Feedback Questionnaire (MFQ), which is administered at the end of each course. This is your primary means of being heard, as your comments and ratings are used in the annual monitoring and enhancement of modules and programmes. The Subject Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report (including MFQ data) is freely available.

Staff-Student Meetings

The philosophy group organises student representative meetings once a semester. Representatives are philosophy students, drawn from all levels and all programmes. These meetings enable staff and students to raise concerns, disseminate information and monitor developments. Students are encouraged to make their views known concerning philosophy-related issues to these representatives or to post them directly on Philos-q – the email discussion list for philosophy students at Hertfordshire (see below).
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Philosophy operates an internal e-mail discussion list, Philos-q. This list is intended to be an open forum for philosophy students and staff. You can use it to discuss philosophy, raise problems, find books, or beg for help. Staff also use it to make announcements. All students studying philosophy are automatically members. To send a message to everyone on the list, address it to: philos-q@herts.ac.uk

Remember: Do not send requests to join or leave a list to the list address. The other list members will not thank you for filling their mailboxes with such messages. This website gives instructions on joining and leaving philos-q (note: this works only from on campus).

Social Media

Philosophy Staff will also send messages via Facebook (www.facebook.com/UHphilosophy) and Twitter (@UHPhilosophy)

Netiquette

When you join an e-mail list, the list owner may send you a welcome message. This message may include a few rules of conduct. You should take these regulations seriously, as they are usually the result of lengthy trial and error. They are normally not very onerous, however, and you will not go far wrong if you stay on the topic for which the list was established and resist the temptation to ridicule fellow contributors. When you join a list it is worth ‘lurking’ for a while before you post any messages to it, so that you can get a feel for its style and level of expertise.

Be warned that if you fail to follow the rules in the welcome message, the listowner may ban you from the list. Do not make the mistake of thinking that an e-mail list is a public space, like a street. For ethical purposes, it is more like a seminar room. In other words, it is a facility made available to those members of the public who agree to abide by the house rules.

Lectures and Seminars in Philosophy

Details concerning the content of lectures and seminars, when and where they will be held, and what you are expected to prepare for them, will be available on the relevant StudyNet module sites.

The Purpose of Lectures

Lectures are often relatively formal sessions that set a context for your studies (although some lectures might contain more discussion than others). They are intended to help you get a sense of the general philosophical topic, issue, position,
idea, theory or approach. They enable lecturers to highlight specific points or issues (or the interpretation of them) where questions can be raised and to show the differences in approach between various thinkers. Sometimes they will cover material that you also read about, so that you can compare several versions of the same thought (this will help you to see what is essential to it). They are designed to form a basis for your own reading, research and investigation.

Lectures do not contain all the information you need to understand a module. Most of your learning will take place in private study.

It is appropriate to ask questions during a lecture if you need clarification.

**Note Taking**

It is a good idea to take your own notes on each lecture but do not let this interfere with your concentration on what is being said. If you find this is happening it is probably a good idea to write down what you remember about the lecture immediately after it has taken place. This will provide a good indication of what you need to work on. Any lecture slides will be posted on the module StudyNet site. In some modules, you will be given handouts – but you must review these handouts to test your understanding. In any case, you should write up your lecture notes before the next week’s lecture. Otherwise, you will find yourself trying to revise from a lot of unhelpfully cryptic notes.

**The Purpose of Seminars**

Seminars are opportunities for you to do philosophy, as opposed to reading or hearing about it. You must prepare for seminars by reading the set material, by thinking about your observations and by preparing questions in advance. Some seminars will require you to have done some exercises beforehand. Seminars vary in structure. For example, they may focus on a directed task or exercise, such as group discussion on anonymous short written pieces, discussion of prepared essays drafts, and so on. The aim is to explore plausible ideas and arguments and to see where they lead.

You will not get much out of a seminar if there is some set task you should have done but have not done.

A seminar is an opportunity for you to talk, so arrive with something to say.

**Attendance Requirements**

All Humanities modules operate a minimum attendance threshold of 75%. You are expected to attend all scheduled teaching for a module and to complete the assigned reading and preparatory work for each session. Of course, unexpected occurrences such as illnesses may happen from time to time to prevent students from attending, which is why the attendance requirement is set at 75% rather than 100%. If such incidents mean that you miss more than 25% of classes, then it is imperative that you submit a ‘Claim to Serious Adverse Circumstances’ form with the appropriate
evidence attached to explain their absence. The details can be found under ‘Module Information’ on your module StudyNet sites.

At **level 4** the attendance requirement for a module is as follows:

Students are expected to attend all timetabled sessions. Attendance at all scheduled learning and teaching sessions is required on this module. If attendance falls below 75% in seminars (and other sessions at which it is advised attendance will be recorded), a student will normally be deemed to have failed the module at the first attempt and will not be permitted to undertake referred assessment in the module.

At **levels 5 and 6** the attendance requirement for a module is as follows:

Attendance at all scheduled learning and teaching sessions. If attendance falls below 75% but not lower than 50% and the student passes the assessment, the module grade will be capped at the pass mark. If attendance falls below 75% and a student fails the assessment, or attendance falls below 50%, the student will normally be deemed to have failed the module at the first attempt and will not be permitted to undertake referred assessment in the module.

**Philosophy Learning Resources**

[Learning and Information Services](#) provide a guide to electronic resources for philosophy, including electronic journals and databases. The library catalogue system is called [Voyager](#).

**The World-Wide Web**

Depending on what topic you are working on, you may find that the internet holds some interesting resources. For example, if you are researching a particular philosopher you may find that there’s a site (or sites) dedicated to his or her work. The same goes for specific topics. However, many of these sites are unregulated and there is no guarantee of the quality of the information they provide. Therefore, it is important that you only use recommended sites. You can do this by following the links from within [StudyNet](#) module pages.

Please note that there are skills sessions scheduled by the LRC on the use of the internet.
Library Status

Depending on expected demand, a book or article may be given a specific type of borrowing status by the lecturer in charge of the course. It may be designated: Four week loan, One week loan (OWL) or Short loan (SL).

Lecturers will also make some material available in the form of:

Reprints I, (which are photocopied articles available for short-term borrowing).

You will find that advice on reading and indications of the library status of particular items can be found in individual module guides.

Inter-Library Loans

The Learning Resources Centres are connected to a worldwide network dedicated to the exchange of materials between academic and research institutions. You can access this global network quite easily and use it to secure materials that are not available at UH. To access the service, go into Voyager and choose the option ‘Request Material from Other Libraries.’ You will need to enter your ID number (printed on the front of your UH ID card, under the bar code). You will then be asked to enter the details of the material you require: give as much information as you possibly can, as this will speed up the search process. Once you have entered the details, your request can be sent electronically. Make sure that you check your email regularly to see whether your material has arrived. The British Library delivers directly to the LRC two to three times a week. Articles generally arrive within two weeks, but books (particularly if they are a bit obscure) can take longer.

How to Read Philosophy

Reading philosophy is a skill in itself. Allow yourself much more time to read a work of philosophy than you would to read a piece of fiction of the same length. **Always read with a notebook and pen to hand.** If a question occurs to you as you read (e.g. "Why is the author discussing Y when this is supposed to be about X?")), write it down. See if you can answer your question based on your reading so far. If you think you can, write down your answer. Is it an answer that the author of the work could accept? If not, then you may have the beginning of a criticism.

Read on. Perhaps you will find more questions and answers as you go--write them down too. When you get to the end, look back at your notes. What questions remain unanswered? Do the answers that you wrote down as you were reading still seem plausible? If you have unanswered questions, or doubts about the answers you have given yourself, you may have to go back and re-read selected passages of the text. On the whole it helps to read a work of philosophy with a specific question in mind (e.g. "How does the author reconcile his remarks on page 20 with the claim he
makes on page 68"). Reading a work of philosophy without a question in mind is like reading a map without a destination in mind.

One question you should try to answer (perhaps with the help of secondary literature) is: **why did the author bother to write this?** Writing philosophy is hard work, people do not usually do it on a whim. If you have no sense of what motivated the author, you are unlikely to make much sense of the text.

**Philosophy Society and Research Seminars**

**Philosophy Society**

The University's Student Union has an active, student-run Philosophy Society. To find out more, visit the society’s FaceBook page.

The student Philosophy Society meets on **Thursdays, 4:15-5:15**. These talks are free of charge and open to staff, students and members of the public.

The Philosophy Society works closely with the staff-run Research Seminar, which holds its talks at **2.15 on Thursdays**. This is an opportunity to hear a philosopher from another university give a talk on their research.

The Philosophy Society also hosts a Philosophy Tea (again free of charge) between the Research Seminar and the Philosophy Society talk. Everyone is warmly invited to attend to meet other Philosophy students and Philosophy staff.

**Annual Philosophy Weekend**

The Philosophy Society also organises an annual Philosophy Weekend at which students and staff spend time away from the University discussing philosophy, giving and listening to a programme of talks and getting to know one another in an informal setting. As is our tradition, the venue will be Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park.

**Feedback**

Mutual criticism is the water of academic life. We improve our ideas by exposing them to criticism. This is often emotionally hard to take. If you have poured yourself into a piece of work, it can feel devastating when someone gives it a scalding review. Lecturers try to give helpful feedback that does not inflict unnecessary psychic pain. However, criticism can never be entirely painless, and it is a lecturer’s duty to give you an honest judgment about your work so that you can do better next time.
Lecturers live by the same discipline and suffer the same highs and lows. The lecturer who gives your essay a low mark will have received more than one rejection letter from editors of academic journals or publishers. At academic conferences, we present our research to experts and have it criticised, in person and in public.

**Informal Feedback**

Lecturers will give you verbal feedback at seminars and may sometimes ask you to complete exercises that you or other students will evaluate. You should not underestimate the value of this kind of feedback. It should help give you a sense of philosophical etiquette and style. Philosophers generally do not shrink from explaining why they think a given view is false or confused.

You may find it easier to participate in these discussions if you distance yourself from your thoughts. Instead of declaring ‘I think X!’ ask, ‘What if someone were to say “Y”?’

**Essay Tutorials**

Essay tutorials have a variety of forms. In all cases, they are used to check your progress and provide feedback. For example, sometimes they are used to discuss how you have done on assignments or presentations you have already completed. At other times, they are used to give formative feedback before you submit your assignments. The times and places of these meetings differ in individual modules and will be arranged by tutors.

In advance of these formative essay tutorials, you must prepare a skeletal essay plan. This should be no longer than one side of A4 and it should show how you intend to approach your essay. You should order the sections and detail the links between the sections. This should show how you intend to develop the structure of your essay. These plans are not assessed. They are provisional working documents that provide a means for you to formulate your thoughts and act as a basis for guidance and reflection. You must also supply a plan of proposed reading. This should be no longer than half a side of A4. If these plans are received in advance, they can form the basis for discussion of an action plan. It is your responsibility to take written note of any suggestions (using, for example, an Essay Tutorial form). You should refer to this action plan while developing your essay.

**Assignment Appraisal**

Marked coursework is both summative and formative. It is summative in the sense that your work is being marked and judged. Cumulatively, your marks determine whether or not you are able to progress and, at levels 5 and 6, they play a role in determining your final degree classification. The feedback from lecturers or tutors, in the form of comments on your work, plays a vital formative function. By reviewing these comments carefully, you will be able to see your strengths and weaknesses. In this way, you can develop and improve your subsequent work. For this reason, it is a mistake to focus solely, or primarily, on your marks.
When you work on an essay, re-read the feedback on your last few pieces of written work. Is there a pattern? Is there a common fault?

**The Return of Coursework and the Provision of Feedback**

Philosophy staff will try to return coursework as soon as they reasonable can, maximally within four weeks of receipt. However, all coursework must be internally moderated and sometimes externally moderated. This often causes delays in its return.

**Employability and the Skills and Attributes of the Philosopher**

All philosophy students are invited to attend a workshop in semester B called *The Skills and Attributes of the Philosopher*. The focus on the session is to encourage the students themselves to think about their skills (rather than be told this by staff) and, e.g., for students to give presentations on what skills they have gained throughout their undergraduate degree to the other students (ranging from first year to final year). The workshop is a collaborative effort between Philosophy staff, students and the Careers, Employment and Enterprise Service. Part of the workshop will be led by a Careers Service adviser, so that students can get some practical job-hunting suggestions, tailored specifically for Philosophers, from someone with expertise in the area. The session will include reflection on the UH Graduate Attributes (see below), which philosophers are well placed to gain. In getting students to reflect on the skills and attributes they have gained, they will have a greater sense of awareness of how much they have developed and, in having a place in which to talk about their development, they will have more confidence in articulating how they have developed in the context of promoting themselves to employers.

**Graduate Attributes**

[http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/secreg/upr/TL03.htm](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/secreg/upr/TL03.htm)

The University is committed to providing a culturally enriched and research-informed educational experience that will transform the lives of its students. Its aspiration for its graduates is that they will have developed the knowledge, skills and attributes to equip them for life in a complex and rapidly changing world.

In addition to subject expertise and proficiency, the University’s graduates will have the following attributes:
1. Professionalism, employability and enterprise
The University promotes professional integrity and provides opportunities to develop the skills of communication, independent and team working, problem solving, creativity, digital literacy, numeracy and self-management. Our graduates will be confident, act with integrity, set themselves high standards and have skills that are essential to their future lives.

Being encouraged to approach problems using creative uses of the imagination, as well as reason, makes Philosophy particularly well-suited for students to become adept at problem solving, lateral thinking, and predicting and pre-empting problems to proposed solutions. Philosophical debate relies on effective and precise communication skills, and providing opportunities for students to hone their communication skills gives them confidence in being able to express their ideas. And not only do students have the opportunity to practise their communication skills, there is also provision for them to reflect on the very notion of communication and how it works (such as in level 4 Reason and Persuasion and level 6 Philosophy of Language).

In being encouraged to stand on their own feet by constructing their own arguments (whether it be in seminars, or in coursework assignments, or in informal conversation) students have a strong sense of having to be independent and of having responsibility for their own position on matters of importance.

Students will typically work together informally in seminar groups and may take those modules offering the opportunity of being assessed by group presentations. This promotes team work, especially the ability to negotiate disagreements to find an optimal solution.

Students are taught to argue well, which involves as much critical evaluation of their own arguments as the arguments of others. This fosters the notion of integrity as being central to how philosophers should conduct themselves. Indeed, provision is also made within the Programme for students to reflect on the very notion of integrity itself and the kind of virtue it is.

2. Learning and research skills
The University fosters intellectual curiosity and provides opportunities to develop effective learning and research abilities. Our graduates will be equipped to seek knowledge and to continue learning throughout their lives.

The nature of Philosophy itself is to seek knowledge (of various kinds, not just about the world but also about oneself) and to foster an enquiring approach to life. Indeed, exploring the nature of knowledge itself lies at the heart of much philosophical enquiry. It is, for example, the topic of the level 5 module Knowledge and Discovery.

Almost all of the coursework and practical components of the assessment in the Philosophy Programme involves students having to conduct their own research in order to produce their own arguments by reflecting critically on the topic under consideration.

3. Intellectual depth, breadth and adaptability
The University encourages engagement in curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that deepen and broaden knowledge and develop powers of analysis, application, synthesis, evaluation and criticality. Our graduates will be able to consider multiple perspectives as they apply intellectual rigour and innovative thinking to the practical and theoretical challenges they face.
The nature of Philosophy is to engage in depth with a wide range of fundamental questions concerning ourselves, others and the nature of the universe we find ourselves in, allowing the Programme to help students acquire intellectual depth and breadth. The skills acquired are transferable to a wide range of situations and occupations, allowing the Programme to help students acquire adaptability.

Intellectual curiosity is encouraged throughout the Programme, partly through the modules selected. This ranges from introducing students to traditions and thinkers they may be unfamiliar with – asking them to engage with them both empathetically and critically – to asking them to engage imaginatively with unfamiliar positions on philosophical questions on which they may already have a standpoint. And intellectual curiosity is encouraged also through co-curricular activities, such as the Philosophy Society, the annual Philosophy residential weekend at Cumberland Lodge and, occasionally, ad hoc reading groups.

4. Respect for others

The University promotes self-awareness, empathy, cultural awareness and mutual respect. Our graduates will have respect for themselves and others and will be courteous, inclusive and able to work in a wide range of cultural settings.

Considering multiple perspectives (including critical reflection on one’s own perspective) is part and parcel of what it is to engage someone in argument or to construct a theory or interpretation of something – it is the business of philosophy. It is key to taking others seriously, and thus lies at the core of respect for others. Respect for others is not only practised in curricular and non-curricular activities but also forms the subject matter itself for critical reflection, such as in modules involving ethical, religious, social and political issues. This is also true of empathy and self-awareness, which might be considered not only from the ethical perspective but also from the perspective of the philosophy of mind, epistemology, and aesthetics. The Philosophy Programme promotes equality and awareness of global perspectives and other cultural settings. This is done through the topics raised in various modules, as well as in the practice of the Philosophy subject group.

5. Social responsibility

The University promotes the values of ethical behaviour, sustainability and personal contribution. Our graduates will understand how their actions can enhance the wellbeing of others and will be equipped to make a valuable contribution to society.

Social responsibility is evidenced in the values we practice and promote in the behaviour of members of the Philosophy Group towards students. We are committed to treating students fairly, equally and with respect, and we demand the same of students. Not only do we practice social responsibility, it forms the subject matter of some of the modules we offer, such as the modules involving ethical, social, political and religious topics, which might cover topics such as our obligations to future generations, environmental ethics, whether we should make charitable donations, the basis of acting for the benefit of others, the distribution of wealth and resources, the nature of wellbeing, and so on. It is common for students to make lifestyle and career choices as a result of consideration of social
responsibility within the Philosophy Programme, such as working for a not-for-profit organisations, campaigning for social and political causes, or becoming vegetarian.

It is clear from this that all of the Graduate Attributes are built into the nature of the subject matter and practice of Philosophy. Studying Philosophy at UH will enable you to gain these valuable attributes as a matter of course. (See also the table at the end of this document in appendix 2. It shows which kind of knowledge and skills can be gained through each module.)

**Employability**

Philosophy develops a combination of intellectual flexibility and rigour suitable for solving problems for which there is no established technique. The skills of analysis, synthesis, communication and persuasion serve philosophy graduates in every sort of graduate-quality employment, all the way up the career ladder. Graduates are equipped for a variety of careers including those traditionally open to Honours Graduates in the Arts and Humanities: teaching, the Civil Service, Local Government, journalism and publishing, as well as for further study at postgraduate level.

The University further supports Philosophy students with employability, by providing:

- Access to extensive information resources through the Learning Resources Centre
- A Careers, Employability and Enterprise Service for all current students and graduates
- A Tutor for Employability for all Humanities students (who also happens to be a philosopher, Dr Chon Tejedor).
- Scheduled weekly Student Support and Advice hours, where Philosophy students can ‘drop-in’ to talk to Philosophy staff.
Assessed Work: Essays

Planning your essay

In most philosophy modules, you must submit a skeletal essay plan, no longer than one side of A4. Do not submit a draft of your essay.

The plan should:

- Break the proposed essay structure into ordered sections (e.g. Section 1: An analysis of Descartes' understanding of mind, as essentially intellectual. Section 2: How this understanding of mind as essentially intellectual relates to his dualism, etc.)
- Emphasise the links between the sections to bring out the way you expect the structure of your argument and research to develop
- Provide a short list of proposed reading, no longer than half a side of A4.

In preparing the plan, focus on the main body of your essay, rather than the introduction and conclusion. You may find it helpful to draw a diagram of the logical structure of your essay.

Submit your plan ahead of the tutorial or seminar, with the ‘Essay Plan Cover Sheet’ form (below) as a cover-sheet. During the tutorial or seminar, your seminar leader will comment on your essay plan, proposed reading and other general concerns. You will agree an action plan, which you should write on the form itself. You should refer to this action plan while developing your essay and should attach the annotated Essay Plan Cover Sheet to the final draft of your essay when you submit it.

Essay Plan Cover Sheet

These plans are not assessed. They are provisional working documents, to help you to formulate your thoughts and provide a basis for guidance and reflection.

How to Write a Philosophy Essay I

The Nature of a Philosophical Essay

During the course of your study, you will be frequently assessed on your ability to write essays. Essay lengths vary depending on the assignment and the module. Some can be as short as 700 words and others as long as 2,750 words. If you elect to do a project in your final year, you will be asked to write a dissertation that can be as long as 10,000 words.

But, what exactly is an essay? The idea of the essay has its origins in texts such as the Essais of the sixteenth-century French philosopher Michel de Montaigne. Its literal meaning indicates that it is a ‘trial’. For example, Montaigne tried out various
new ideas in his essays (for instance, he advanced the idea that the natives of the New World, far from being ‘savages’, were really highly civilised, especially when one compared their life with the barbarism of Europeans). The simplest form of a philosophical essay is a short piece of work, which states a clear thesis and attempts to map out a single coherent argument for its defence. In this sense, an argument is not an angry exchange. Rather it is a form of reasoned analysis. In the immortal words of Michael Palin, this is not merely gainsaying what another has said. Rather, an argument is a connected series of propositions intended to establish a conclusion (see Monty Python’s Flying Circus’s ‘The Argument Sketch’).

Too often, submitted essays consist of a set of loosely related observations or insights. Very often these are perfectly valid in themselves but they need to be linked together to form a coherent whole. It is vital to avoid producing a ‘laundry list’ of individual points that lacks an overarching thesis. To write a good essay, you need to have a clear sense, from the beginning, of what end you are trying to achieve. Your argument should develop from paragraph to paragraph, usually beginning with an introduction that tells the reader where you plan to go and how you intend to get there. It is generally best to write this last, since you won’t know exactly where your essay is going until it is finished. It is important to remember that you are not writing a mystery novel – let the reader know how it is going to turn out before they get to the end. This will allow them to assess the strength of your case as they go along. You should conclude your essay with a final paragraph that draws the threads together. Strong essays have coherent beginnings, middles and endings.

There are many different styles and forms of essay, which can be equally good. Yet, even though there is no single formula for writing a good philosophical essay, there are some general things of which you should be aware. The advice below is designed to help you understand the process of writing a good essay and the warnings indicate things to avoid.

The Process of Essay Writing

StageOne: Preparation

• Selecting a Question

Take the time to read and understand what the essay question asks. It is a good idea to choose a question that interests or excites you as this will help motivate your work.

• Selecting Appropriate Learning Resources

There will be guidance in and throughout your module StudyNet site indicating essential and recommended reading relating to topics covered. You may also wish to use other forms of literature search. These can also help you determine which reading materials are relevant. Be certain that you get enough reading to acquaint yourself with more than one view of the issue.
Do not rely on the world-wide web! Speed-reading a summary is no substitute for deep engagement with the original text, and the difference will show up in your writing.

- **Getting hold of the Materials**

Once you have decided what you want to read you will need to get hold of it. It is best to do this early on as demand increases as deadlines draw near. You can use the various searches on Voyager to find and reserve the necessary items. If it is not in the LRC, you can arrange an inter-library loan.

- **Reading Critically**

Once you have your materials you must read them critically. Think of yourself as a detective. Take note of the important points and record your first reactions to them. Philosophers ought to provide reasons for the views they hold. Be sure to ask not only what X is saying, but also why X is saying it. But remember! Consider the other side of the argument too. While X may have good reasons for thinking what they do, Y may have good reasons for thinking otherwise.

Here you are taking on the role of the judge. But your verdict is not final. Be prepared to change your mind as you read more and conduct further research. This is a normal and healthy part of intellectual development. Your first reactions need not, and often should not, determine your final view. Be sure that, once you articulate what you think, you go further, investigate and then articulate why you think it.

- **Drawing a Conclusion**

After you have read the material and have begun to develop an informed opinion, you should attempt to articulate it in the form of a single sentence or simple thesis. This will be your informed verdict in response to the set question. Concentrating on your thesis will help guide you in deciding how to write your essay and what you will need to do in order to justify your conclusion.

**Stage Two: Planning**

- **Planning Your Essay**

You should plan your essay in advance in a point by point fashion. Ask yourself: How will the argument develop? How will it move coherently from one point to the next to support the conclusion? It may help to imagine yourself taking on the role of a case lawyer. Do not fret if you cannot see every detail of the essay before you write it. A rough plan is a working guide, not a straitjacket. They are rarely final and you will need to tinker with it to get the essay to work. Indeed, sometimes an essay structure simply emerges in the process of getting your informed reactions down on paper. It may be useful to imagine that you are actually responding to another person who has advanced a view with which you disagree. Your job is to try to convince them to re-think their position. If you proceed this way, you can identify the structure
retrospectively. However you approach it, do not neglect the structure. You should be able to articulate it fully to yourself and to your reader.

- **Getting Feedback**

Once you have a rough initial essay structure and a plan for further reading, make sure to attend an Essay Tutorial and get advice from your lecturer. Opportunities for this kind of feedback are provided in all modules.

**Stage Three: Drafting**

- **Composing the First Draft**

The paragraph is the chief building block of extended writing. Journalism favours short paragraphs that convey information in a descending order. This allows the reader to glean as much as they want to know before moving on. But such writing generally regards itself as simply reporting undisputed facts. This kind of expository writing is not the right model for a philosophical essay.

In academic writing, it is often helpful to identify a topic sentence or central idea that unifies the paragraph. This sentence need not come first. What is important is that all the sentences in a given paragraph combine to support the particular idea, proposition or premise that its topic sentence expresses. This can be done in a number of ways, including:

- citation of relevant examples;
- use of comparison and contrast;
- logical analysis;
- extended illustration.

The relations between the sentences in a given paragraph are made clear by the use of what are known as ‘connectives’, such as ‘in addition’, ‘on the other hand’, or ‘nevertheless’. However, overt rhetorical connectives should not be over-used. A simple statement can make its own contribution to the paragraph.

- **Sticking to the Point**

Once you have identified your thesis be careful not to stray on to other themes. Ask yourself: Did I make the point I set out to make in this section or did I stray? If you strayed your essay may lose its force or it may become confusing to the reader. It is your job to make sure your reader knows where you are going. It is not the reader’s job to figure this out.

**Stage Four: Re-Drafting**

- **Re-Reading, Revising and Re-writing**

It is important that you give yourself time to review and re-write the essay. Once you have a full draft, critically review it and, if possible, have a friend review it too. Ask
them to tell you, in their own words, what they think you are trying to say. Can they clearly outline what you have in mind? If not, you need to re-draft the piece.

Consider whether your draft makes sense as a whole and if the overall message is clear. Try to reconstruct the argument that actually appears in your draft. You can do this by summarising the main point of each paragraph. In effect, this will reveal the actual structure of your work. With this in hand, consider whether this structure works. Does it make your case and support your conclusion? If not you may need to change some bits around or leave some out, so that the argument runs smoothly. Professional academics have to engage in this process continually to achieve a smooth end product – but they, like you, must be mindful of deadlines. Take time to play around with the draft, checking that each paragraph is coherent and that they all connect to one another effectively. A good way of checking the fluency and cogency of your writing is to read it aloud to yourself. This will help you pick up any awkward expressions, flatness of style, or unnecessary repetitions.

Check that your wording is appropriate and that each sentence is clear. Avoid using technical terms if you don't fully understand them.

- Producing the Final Draft

Once you have arrived at a final version of the essay, spell-check it and proofread it carefully, then submit it according to the appropriate programme regulations.

Stage Five: Getting Feedback

- Learning from Feedback

When your essay has been marked and returned, be sure to attend to the comments. Look at them carefully and think about how to improve your next piece of work. They will advise you about what to look out for when writing your next essay.

Common Errors in Essay Writing

- Always back up your claims. Even if what you say happens to be true, it is important that you show why it is true. It is crucial that you do not simply tell the reader what to think or what you think, but demonstrate why they should agree with you. Your task is not to report but to argue. Develop your ideas and defend them. Your reaction to particular claims or views maybe of psychological interest, but what is important in philosophical writing is your reasons, not your reactions.
- Do not argue from authority or name-drop. It is not good enough to note that X agrees with you if what X says can be disputed. Avoid attempting to bring in too many voices and producing lists of names and points. Develop one or two points clearly and carefully. Only bring in the views of other thinkers when you wish to clarify a position or in order to compare or contrast your views with theirs. It is important that you do the work, not them.
- Do not exaggerate. Watch the scope of your quantifiers! Do not say 'all' or 'none' when you really mean 'some'. Remember you should be able to defend what you claim and that you do not need 'sell' your view, only defend it carefully.
- Never fabricate. If you do not know something, find out or leave it out. Do not give a merely expository account. Good essays do not simply remind the reader of what X
or Y thinks. Nor do they merely report what Z thinks of X and Y. It is crucial that you develop and articulate your own view and that you defend it by selecting what is relevant for your case from various sources. Always leave enough space for your own critical argument and defence.

- Do not stray from the point. If you feel you must add a comment that is strictly off the point put it in a footnote, but it is best to avoid footnotes whenever possible.

How to Write a Philosophy Essay II

These notes are not intended to suggest that there is only one correct way to tackle any given philosophy essay, even less that a single method can be extended without modification to different philosophy essays. But there are some general guidelines that may be of help to you in writing essays.

You may feel that you already know how to write essays. You have almost certainly done lots of written work in your A-level or access courses. Nevertheless, you should be aware that a university-level philosophy essay is a different kind of document from the essays required at other levels and in other subjects. The literary model to which you should aspire is the philosophy research paper. Such research papers are never dashed out in an hour (this would be the exam-answer model), nor are they content merely to review the existing literature. Make time to look over a couple of philosophy journals so that you know what you are aiming at.

Getting Started

Do not sit down with a blank piece of paper and try to write your essay in one go. Instead, read over the material in question and your notes on it. Make further notes. Identify points of interest. Then look for connections between these points. Try to develop groups of points into fragments of argument. Some points may seem unrelated to the rest of your material – perhaps they have no place in your essay. It is unlikely that everything in your notes will be relevant to your eventual argument. Look for logical connections among the emerging nuggets of argument. In this way, you may hit upon a general thesis. Ask yourself how you might deploy the arguments you have developed. Write out a plan. If you know what you are going to say, you will find the first sentence much easier to write.

The First Paragraph

Here you have two aims: to indicate your thesis, and to capture the reader’s attention. You may achieve these ends with an apt quotation or a striking fact, but a simple statement of purpose can work just as well. Avoid vacuous introductions of the form ‘For hundreds of years philosophers have argued about the problem of …’. A common technique is the funnel approach. Start with a brief description of the general area of enquiry and then progressively focus in on the particular question in hand. If the funnel is entirely contained in the first paragraph, then the initial statement of your thesis should come at the end of that paragraph, where it will receive greatest emphasis.
Remember that when a reader first picks up your essay, he or she does not know at all what direction it is going to take. Even when the reader is half-way through it, they may not be able to discern the guiding thread which is obvious to you as the author. It is therefore often a good idea to state very briefly at the outset what your overall strategy is.

The Middle

The reader should be aware of a coherent and developing thread of reasoning as he or she advances through your essay. You should not, therefore, jump arbitrarily from one point to another, nor return to the same topic once you have dealt with it unless there is some special reason to do so. You may find it useful to make linking remarks which let the reader know where you are up to (e.g. ‘Having argued so far that theory A can cope with problem B, I now turn to consider whether it can account for fact C’). In writing a first draft, it is a good rule to end every second paragraph with a sentence or two explaining what role the preceding lines play in your overall argument. If you find these clarifying sentences hard to write then it may be that the structure of your essay is not as clear as you thought. You can always cut some of them out in your final draft if they seem unnecessary.

Ideally, the argumentative structure of your essay should follow the logical structure of the subject matter. You are more likely to approach that ideal if you have developed your argument thoroughly before you set out to write your final draft. If you start well ahead of the deadline, you will be able to write a draft and put it out of your sight for a few days. You can then read it with a critical eye, and (almost certainly) improve it.

The mark awarded to a philosophy essay depends almost entirely on the quality of the argument. You cannot improve an argument by stating it at greater length.

Do not try to write what you think the marker wants to read. Your marker will almost certainly notice. Besides, most people write better essays if they argue for their own thoughts and opinions.

The End

In a short essay, it may not be necessary to give a formal conclusion, provided you have kept your central thesis in view throughout. If you used the funnel technique in the introduction, you may want to reverse it in your final paragraph. Or you may choose to remind your reader why your thesis matters (but beware of making grandiose claims). A brief review of your strategy may be useful if your argument is complex. Above all, end on a strong note (perhaps with a stylistic flourish or a pithy quotation).

Answering the Question

Make sure that you answer the question that is asked, not one that you wish had been asked but has not been. None of the questions set will ask you simply to summarise material you have read, so don’t write essays that do this. What you have to do is to select from the material that you gather, and adapt it to the question
asked. It may be difficult to do this because the authors whom you have read may offer no guidance on how they think their work relates to other issues, or to other people's work; or they may offer confused or mistaken accounts of the relation. But it is then your task to sort out their confusions and mistakes. Never assume that any of the authors whom you read or hear (whether of set texts, or lectures, or seminar remarks, or essay comments) must have got the right answer. Philosophy is partly an exercise in critical evaluation, and it is up to you to assess critically the claims of everyone you come across. If you think they are wrong, then say so, as clearly as you can, and say why you think they are wrong.

Plato's Advocate: If you think you have a good point to make against Plato (for example), write it down. Then look at it and ask yourself what Plato (or whoever) would have said if your point had been put to him. Does his answer deal with your point? Imagine how the debate would go, thinking alternately for yourself, and then on Plato's behalf.

Philosophical theories do not appear from nowhere. Usually, a philosopher starts with an intuition. For example, John Stuart Mill felt intuitively that nothing matters ethically except happiness. The next step is to express the intuition as a naive theory. Mill expressed his intuition by the principle of utility. At this stage, the philosopher usually encounters technical difficulties. To continue the example, Mill found that he needed a more precise definition of ‘happiness’. By adding distinctions, definitions and other devices to his naive theory, Mill developed his mature theory: utilitarianism.

Intuition→Naive Theory→Mature Theory

Most philosophical writers present the mature theory without explaining its development. However, there are usually clues to its history in the arguments offered in its defence. These clues are useful because they may allow you to uncover the original intuition behind the theory. If you can do that, you can ask two questions:

- Is the intuition true?
- How well does the mature theory express the intuition?

Precision

Half the battle in philosophy is getting clear exactly what a given thesis says, or exactly what force a given objection has, or exactly what the implications of a given argument are. A typical philosopher devotes much of his energy to detecting confusions, ambiguities and imprecisions in the thoughts of other philosophers. This is not mere nit-picking or petty cavilling. A position which may be open to crushing objections when formulated in one way, may be in the clear when formulated slightly differently (although it may be far from obvious beforehand what the necessary reformulation is). So always in your writing, be as precise and as clear as you can.

A good discipline is to think of two ways of putting any difficult or important point. Then, even if you do not use both versions in your essay, you at least have a choice. Always try to paraphrase sentences containing jargon or technical terms. Rephrase your central thesis when you restate it.
Writing style

"The first rule of style is to have something to say. The second rule of style is to control yourself when, by chance, you have two things to say; say the first one, then the other, not both at the same time."

--George Polya How to Solve It

Inexperienced writers sometimes feel obliged to adopt what they imagine to be a ‘scholarly’ style. This is unnecessary and often obscures the writer's thesis. Academic essays require a formal style, but it need not be pompous or ornate. Credit your readers with some basic knowledge. Do not write, ‘René Descartes, the famous French philosopher...’ Anyone reading your essay will know that much about Descartes. In any case, his fame is almost certainly irrelevant to your argument.

Make sure every sentence contributes something important to the essay. Avoid excessively long sentences. Vary the length of your sentences and paragraphs to avoid monotony.

If you are giving an account of a particular person's views, keep your exposition and your criticism of those views separate as far as this is possible. Make sure that you do not attribute to an author views which appear in his text only because he is attributing them to other people before going on to criticise them himself. You should it make obvious to the reader which sentences of the essay express the views you attribute to someone else, which express what you take to be the implications of these views, which express what you take to be the faults in the views, and which express your own position on the matter.

Use rhetorical questions sparingly, since they require the reader to guess what point you are making. Always avoid chains of rhetorical questions.

Many students are tempted by hedging phrases such as ‘somewhat’ and ‘can be seen as’. For example, ‘Hume's theory is somewhat implausible.’ ‘Somewhat’ does nothing here except to introduce a tentative tone which undermines the writer's authority. ‘Can be seen as’ almost always indicates a failure of nerve. For example, ‘Kuhn's theory can be seen as a form of relativism.’ Is it a form of relativism or not? A writer who is undecided has not yet finished the necessary preparation.

Use the rhetoric of objectivity. Avoid phrases such as ‘I think that...’ and ‘In my opinion,...’ These expressions clutter the page and remind your reader that your conclusions are only someone's opinion. 'I feel that...' is particularly undesirable. Present your views not as unreasoned feelings but as rational, considered thoughts.

Claim your argument as your own. Do not be afraid to write ‘I argue that...’ rather than 'It is argued that...'. In general, avoid passive constructions. Make the true agent the subject of the verb.

Correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and paragraphing are not optional luxuries. Mistakes in these areas can cause crucial ambiguity or even complete
incomprehensibility. In any case they distract the reader from the content of your essay. All word-processors come with spell-checkers, so there is no excuse for poor spelling (but remember that the spell-checker cannot save you if you confuse ‘there’ with ‘their’ or ‘they’re’). Here are a few examples from student essays of relatively minor though still distracting faults:

1. ‘He did not believe in God because of his upbringing.’

   This is ambiguous between:
   
   His upbringing explained why he did not believe in God; and
   
   His upbringing did not explain why he did believe in God.

2. ‘Descartes supposed arguments for the existence of God fail.’

   This says:
   
   Descartes supposed that arguments for the existence of God fail.

   But what was meant was:
   
   Descartes’ supposed arguments for the existence of God fail.

3. ‘Hegel said Marx objectified the predicate.’

   This says:
   
   Hegel said that Marx objectified the predicate.

   But what was meant was:
   
   Hegel, said Marx, objectified the predicate.

**Correct Use of the Possessive Apostrophe**

Be careful when using the apostrophe to indicate possession. The basic rules are simple:

- when the noun is singular, the apostrophe goes before the s
- when the noun is plural, the apostrophe goes after the s
The one exception to this rule is the case of *it*. *It's* does not mean of *it*, but is rather a contraction of *it is*.

**Tenses**

Conventionally, when we write about a text, we do so in the present tense. So we write: ‘*In the Tractatus*, Wittgenstein explores the idea that the function of language is to represent’ even though Wittgenstein is no longer with us and his exploration is now done. Sometimes you will, of course, want to use the past, as, for example, when you want to indicate a change in someone’s thinking: ‘Russsell began his career as an idealist, but his views slowly changed.’ The crucial thing, however, is that you avoid mixing tenses unnecessarily.

**Gender and Generalisation**

Sometimes you will want to make generalised statements about ‘the author’, ‘the reader’, and so forth. Traditionally, the pronouns ‘he’, ‘him’, and ‘his’ were used for such generalisations. In recent decades, many people have come to recognise that the use of such terminology is discriminatory and that we should attempt to write in a more balanced manner. This often causes problems, as people struggle to find an easy way of avoiding gender-specific terminology. In speaking, many people now rely on gender-neutral plurals (‘they’, ‘their’, ‘them’), often combining such plurals with gender-neutral singulars, so that you will hear people say ‘The reader must make up their own mind’. While this is acceptable in casual conversation, we need, in academic writing, to attend more closely to the formalities of language. This being the case, you should avoid such failures of agreement in your own writing. This doesn't mean that you should constantly write things like: ‘The reader must make up his or her own mind; it is finally his or her own decision.’ You could, for instance write: ‘Readers must make up their own minds; it is finally an individual decision.’ The key thing is to adopt a flexible and varied approach, rather than being formulaic and rigid.

**Contractions, Slang and Clichés**

When we talk, and when we write informally, we tend to use quite a lot of contractions, such as ‘I’ll’, ‘won’t’, ‘hadn’t’, ‘she’d’ and so forth. When you are writing an essay, you are using a very particular form of language: a formal, academic version of English, different from the language we speak casually every day. Academic English requires that you not use contractions in your writing, as it also requires that you should, as far as possible, avoid using slang terms and clichés (e.g., ‘This issue has become a political football’).

**Difficult Singulars and Plurals**

The singular and plural forms of the following words are often confused by students:

- crisis is singular; crises is plural
- phenomenon is singular; phenomena is plural
- criterion is singular; criteria is plural
• prolegomenon is singular; prolegomena is plural
• medium is singular; media is plural
• datum is singular; data is plural
• stratum is singular; strata is plural
• index is singular; indices is plural
• appendix is singular; appendices is plural
• crux is singular; cruces is plural
• schema is singular; schemata is plural
• corpus is singular; corpora is plural

Classic Rules of Grammar

If at all possible, avoid ending a sentence with a preposition. So, instead of writing: 'This is the agreement we have entered into,' it is better to write: 'This is the agreement into which we have entered.' Winston Churchill long ago noted that this rule can sometimes lead to absurdities, as when he observed that it was a constraint on his writing up with which he would not put. So: observe the rule as long as it doesn't lead to your writing something awkward and inelegant.

If at all possible, avoid ‘split infinitives’ — which is to say, avoid placing an adverb in the middle of the infinitive form of the verb (that is, for example, ‘to write’, ‘to speak’). The most famous example of a split infinitive is Star Trek's 'to boldly go where no man has gone before', which should, of course, be ‘boldly to go where no man has gone before’ (or, better still: ‘boldly to go where no-one has gone before’). Again, you should only follow this rule as long as it doesn't lead to your writing something awkward and inelegant.

Make a lifestyle of it

The best way to develop your writing skill is practice. The next most important thing is to read as much high-quality writing as you can. Start with George Orwell. In addition to his novels and short stories, he was a brilliant essayist with a clean, direct style. One of his essays, 'Politics and the English Language', is about writing, so you should read that if nothing else.

Further Reading

There are many books on essay-writing. The following list is intended to be representative rather than exhaustive. It is also worth reading more general discussions of language use, such as Fowler's Modern English Usage (second edition, E. Gowers ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965) or Nicholas Bagnall's A defence of Clichés (London: Constable, 1985).


Formatting your essay

The written work you submit in philosophy should always be word-processed, not least because you should develop your word-processing skills. Most firms seek employees with computer skills. This is particularly true of the kinds of job that you are likely to seek as a university graduate. Computer facilities are available in the LRC and the staff there will be very happy to offer you advice on getting started.

Font & Font size

You should print your essay using a standard font (e.g., Times New Roman, calibri). Please do not use fonts such as Brush Script, or other ‘fancy’ fonts, as they can be very hard to read over several pages. Do not use bold or other effects (except of course for headings and sub-headings). If you wish to emphasise a point, use italic. Use 11 or 12 point fonts as 10-point type or smaller can be very difficult to read and using anything larger than 12 point is tiresome.

Spacing and Margins

Your essay should be one-and-a-half or double-spaced and should have enough space in the margins for comments from your tutor.

Page Numbers

You should number each page of your essay. This makes it easier to refer to the body of the essay when giving final comments.

Paragraphs

To indicate a paragraph break, either indent the first line of each paragraph by 1.25 cm or 1/4 inch (i.e. by using ‘tabs’), or leave a line between paragraphs.

Quotations

When you quote, use single quotation marks (i.e., ‘quote’). For quotes within quotes, use double quotation marks (i.e., ‘quote “quote” quote’). Quotations less than fifty words in length should be incorporated directly into your own text. Quotations longer than fifty words or so should be set off from the text, as a block, by adding a space and by indenting the entire quote by 1.25 cm on the left-hand side. Quotations, which
are set off in this way, should not have quotation marks around them. Thus, a long quotation in your essay would look something like this:

It should follow one space after the text that comes before it, but be indented as a block by a quarter of an inch on the left-hand side only. Note the lack of quotation marks.

When you edit a quotation, use an ellipsis (…) to indicate where you have omitted material. Use square brackets ([ ]) to indicate where you have added or omitted material or altered a word (for example, changed a pronoun from first to third person).

Remember that quotations are not decorations. Be sure they are doing real work and be sure to give the reference.

Titles

Titles of books should be italicised (and when you hand-write exams, such titles should be underlined). Titles of journal articles or articles in collections should be placed in quotation marks. However, the titles of journals should also be italicised.

Spell checking and Proof-reading

It is absolutely vital that you spell-check, grammar-check and proofread your document. When your spell-checker indicates that you have got a word wrong, make sure that you learn its correct spelling. Proofreading is important as there are many mistakes that the spell-checker will not pick up (‘there’ instead of ‘their’ or ‘form’ instead of ‘from’, for instance). Your work, and how it is presented, is an extension of yourself. You should take pride in the quality of what you submit. Besides, you will not be much use to any future employer if you cannot write correct English.

Referencing

You must document the source of every quotation and of all information and ideas that you derive from others. Failure to do so will expose you to accusations of plagiarism.

At the end of your essay you must include list of all of the books and articles that you have consulted in its preparation. Although there is no single correct way to present this information in philosophy, you should always minimally indicate the author’s name, the title of the work (use quotation marks for articles and italics for books and journals), publisher, year of publication. You can use the following as model:

- In the case of a book: author’s (or authors’) name(s); full title of work (including any subtitle); name of publisher; year of publication
- In the case of an article in an anthology: author's name (or authors'); full title of work; followed by the details of the larger work in which it appears, set out as above
- In the case of a journal article: author's name (or authors'); full title of work; name of journal; volume; date of publication; page numbers of article.

Here are some examples of good referencing:


Internal references should include the author(s)' surname(s), the date of publication, followed by the specific page number(s) from which you are quoting or to which you are referring. For example, (Baldwin, 1991, p. 38). If the same author has written two pieces during the same year you can distinguish them by adding a letter to the end of the dates (e.g. 1999a, 1999b).

List references in alphabetical order by author's name. University computers are equipped with Endnote, which will make all this easy for you once you get going with it.

**Submitting Essays**

Each module’s StudyNet site will specify how to submit coursework. Please don’t include your name on coursework essays, since work will be marked anonymously.

Assessed coursework will be returned to you by the date stated on the module StudyNet page (which will be within four calendar weeks of the submission).

**Submitting work after the published deadline**

Unless there are accepted Serious Adverse Circumstances:

Coursework (including deferred coursework, but with the exception of referred coursework) submitted up to one (1) week after the published deadline will receive a maximum numeric grade of 40% for undergraduate modules and 50% for taught postgraduate modules.
Referred coursework submitted after the published deadline will be awarded a grade of zero (0). Your work will contain the following statement: *This work was submitted after the Module Deadline. If submitted on time it would have attained: <Mark>.*

Coursework (including deferred coursework) submitted later than one (1) week after the published deadline without an agreed extension will be awarded a grade of zero (0).
# Essay Grading Criteria

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How to Succeed in Examinations

In *Theaetetus* 197c, Socrates once likened having knowledge to being as a man, ‘...who has caught some wild birds....and keeps them in an aviary he has made them for a home.’ The important thing about knowledge, however, is not just having it, like having birds in your aviary, but being able to deploy it. To draw on Socrates' analogy, the important thing is to be able to summon the right bird at the right time; to bring relevant information to bear at the appropriate moment. This is a vital ability and exams are an important way of assessing it.

Exam questions in philosophy are directed, but generally allow some scope for choice. They require you to demonstrate your command of the subject matter in an applied fashion. For example, you might be asked: ‘Do you think Hume's argument against miracles is sound? Give reasons for you view.’ This asks you to provide a tightly focused analysis of Hume's views, which requires you to draw on your knowledge and understanding them. It does not simply ask whether you agree with his views or not. It asks you to say why. Given that exam questions are targeted in this way, to be successful in answering them requires a good deal of preparation.

Stage One: Preparation

Revising as You Go Along

The best way to revise for an exam is to keep up with the course as you go along. If you read, discuss and write about the material enough it will become familiar. This is the best way of making it readily accessible on the day of the exam. Also, this will help you to identify what you do not understand, before it is too late. Do not leave it until the night before the exam to rectify such gaps. You will not be able to prepare sufficiently even if you read all night about a topic for the first time (no matter how much coffee you consume!). Be careful to keep up with all major aspects of your course, as topics that you hope or expect to appear on the exam paper may not be there.

Look at Past Exam Papers

Review past exam papers to get a sense of the kinds of question you might face. Do not assume that the future will mirror the past. Exam questions change every year. However, you might use past papers to put yourself through mock exam conditions by timing yourself on your answers.

Take a Stand

You will have to argue for your conclusions in an examination just as in a coursework essay. **You will not have time in the exam to work out a position and elaborate arguments for and against it.** Before the exam, make sure that you take up a position on each of the major issues of the module and have arguments ready to
defend these positions. As usual, you must consider counter-arguments and show why they do not succeed.

**Stage Two: Taking the Exam**

**Read the Questions First**

Always take time to read and understand the questions. Be sure you are confident that you know what they are asking before deciding which ones to answer. Do not rush to judgement about this. You will lose substantial marks or fail completely if you answer the wrong question - even if you answer it well. For example, if you have revised material on Descartes it may be tempting to write down everything that you know about this if a question on this topic appears on the exam paper. But even if what you say is correct, in doing so you may have neglected to answer what was specifically asked about it! It will not do to write at length about the interaction problem, even if what you say is right, if the question asked about Descartes' views on substance.

**Avoid Putting Down Too Much**

Even if you feel confident about a given topic, do not simply throw information onto the page just because your favourite question comes up. Even if you are addressing the actual question, unless you use this information selectively, with control, you are unlikely to get a good mark. You will need to make your answer clear and to the point. Be carefully of overcrowding. Examiners are looking to see that you are in command of the material. Take your time and write a measured response to the question. Do not try to set down every possible point.

**Avoid Putting Down Too Little**

The opposite error is to rush through the exam and to write so little that it isn't possible for examiners to assess the level of your understanding, except negatively. Don't leave out material just because you expect that the examiner will know it already. Do not assume that they will fill in the gaps for you. It is you who sits the exam, not them. With discipline and care you will come to see how much exposition is necessary to answer the question.

**Budget Your Time**

Make certain you leave enough time for each question. Excessive work on a single question, however good, will not help you if your second question is very poor. When allotting your time bear in mind that, in philosophy, all exam questions have equal weight.
## Examination Grading Criteria

| First Class Honours | 80-100 | Outstanding | Thorough understanding of key concepts/theory/topic. Relevant and effective use of material. Evidence of a wide reading with critical understanding. Excellent synthesis of material. Independence of thought and argument. Well structured, fluent argument. Clear and accomplished writing. |
|---------------------|--------|-------------|
|                     | 70-80  | Excellent   | A very good, if imperfect, grasp of the material and its implications. Identifies the focus of the question. Knowledge and clear understanding of contrasting viewpoints. Generally clear and correct writing. A case well argued and convincingly presented. |
| Upper Second Class Honours (2.1) | 60-69  | Very Good | A good grasp of the material. A general ability to present relevant argument but might contain some irrelevant material. Some coherent argument but there may be weaknesses in overall structure and clarity. |
| Lower Second Class Honours (2.2) | 50-59  | Good | A basic grasp of the material. It may be marred by either poor discriminative ability, an element of conceptual naïveté, or both. There may be a tendency to unsubstantiated statements/assertions, or shallow interpretation. May contain significant errors of fact or interpretation. Some understanding of class material, but perhaps little or no further reading. Little evidence of independent thought. It may be poorly structured or presented in places. |
| Third Class Honours (3rd) | 40-49  | Satisfactory | Does not satisfy the minimum requirements for the exercise in question. Little understanding, even of class material. No structure. Does not address the topic. |
|                     | 40     | Referred Pass |
| Fail               | 30-39  | Marginal Fail |
|                    | 20-29  | Clear Fail   |
|                    | 0-19   | Little or Nothing of Merit |
Giving Presentations

The Purpose of Presentations

Several philosophy modules are assessed in part by presentations in which small groups of students choose topics relevant to an overall theme and then investigate, plan and deliver oral presentations and coordinate subsequent discussion sessions. Participating in these presentations develops research, oral expression and group working skills.

The Nature of Presentations

Presentations should be clear and have a well-developed point. As a group you must formulate your own view; do not stick to pure exposition. As with written assignments, avoid plodding through a range of views on a question just for the sake of completeness. While you should deal with the important arguments relevant to the problem you discuss, the overall presentation should have a logical structure with a definite conclusion. You should not try to include everything that you have studied in connection with the topic. Be selective. Highlight the main and most relevant points. Remember that, like the tip of an iceberg, the actual presentation is only the visible part. Beneath it there must be a great deal more that we cannot see. The presentation should take about 20-25 minutes and it should set the stage for a discussion that should last for 25-30 minutes. During this discussion period, the group in charge of the presentation will be responsible for leading and directing the debate (this includes thinking up questions to provoke thoughts). However, the lecturer may ask some questions as well.

A video will be made of all presentations that are to be externally examined. You must introduce yourself individually at the beginning of the presentation clearly and audibly so that the external examiner can identify you.

Each team should produce a 1,000 word plan or summary that outlines the structure of its presentation. This will not be formally assessed.

Planning your Presentations

Stage One: Deciding a Topic and Forming a Group

You will need to decide with whom you want to work and fix a topic for the presentation. Groups will consist of about four or five students and group membership is normally decided by you and your fellow students. However, as a result of suggestions from past students, lecturers try to prevent overlap of topics covered. Therefore, you should choose a topic and a group as soon as possible. In most modules this should be done by week six at the latest. When your group’s composition and topic are arranged, you should exchange telephone numbers and email addresses. It is a good idea for each group to appoint a secretary who can act as a central point of contact.
Stage Two: Research Plan and Discussion Meetings

You should meet as a group early on to make an initial plan of work. You will need to organise your general research strategy. Decisions about how to approach the topic should be taken by the group as a whole. Do not try to dictate to the rest of your group; be prepared to listen.

Figure out which materials (e.g. books, articles) you are going to need and who will be responsible for researching and preparing specific aspects of the topic. If you co-ordinate your research in this way, you can avoid duplication of effort. At the same time, you will want to read some of the same material. For example, if one person in the group finds something interesting, they can copy it and/or circulate it to the others.

Make sure that all members contributes their fair share to this background intellectual work, as you will all be expected to know the material on the day. The workload should be equally distributed and you should make sure that you pull your weight. All students are expected to contribute to the research and planning of group presentations. This is important, as peer appraisal forms will be used by members of your group to indicate how much they thought each participant contributed to the preparation. Data from these forms may have an influence on your final, individual mark.

You will also need to discuss things together to test your understanding, assess possible approaches/replies and to agree conclusions.

Agree a time, place and a rough schedule of work for at least the next two meetings. Remember: you must attend all agreed meetings and you must maintain contact with all the other members of your group. If you are ill, it is your responsibility to get a message to the rest of the group. Have a fallback arrangement, so that you do not lose contact. You may find it useful to form a StudyNet group.

Stage Three: Plan the Delivery of the Presentation

One you have decided what you are going to say you will need to think about how you are going to say it. You have a free hand in deciding how to run your presentations. For example, some presentations have taken the form of short playlets, debating sessions, and more traditional demonstrations of research findings. You should aim briefly to present your ideas before running a seminar for open discussion. Here some important tips:

- Do not simply read out parts of a paper. Explaining your ideas is better than merely reading something out (though you may, of course, use notes).
- Aim for internal coherence and unity of approach. This is vital, especially in short presentations.
- Remember: all students are expected to play a speaking part in the main presentation and to participate in discussion. Teamwork and organisation during the actual presentation are also assessed.
Decide what materials you will need and who is going to prepare them. These might include slides, handouts, cardboard models or video clips.

Arrange a group meeting with your tutor during office hours to discuss the general progress of your project, and to get further advice on reading material and the suitability of your plans for presentation.

**Stage Four: Rehearsals**

Once you have decided on the form of your presentation and prepared the materials, make certain you leave time to rehearse and practice so as to check timing, pacing and organisation. Make certain that you ’signpost’ frequently, so that your audience knows what you are trying to do and what is coming next. You might like to give your audience a map of what you will say and refer to it as you go along.

**Stage Five: Afterwards**

Did the question-period reveal gaps in your knowledge? Were you surprised by the focus of the questions? Was there a communication breakdown between the presenters and some of the questioners? Did everything you said turn out to be relevant or was some of it beside the point? Did you find yourself answering a question by filling in background detail which, in retrospect, ought to have been part of the talk?

Reviewing a question-period can give you a plan for improving your knowledge and your ability to explain what you know.

**How Presentations are Assessed**

An initial mark, worth 30% of the final course assessment, is given to the presentation itself based on the whole group's performance. This mark is then adjusted on the basis of the contributions of individuals. All members of the group must present material.

In assessing presentations, the primary emphasis will be on academic content and quality of argument/analysis. Thus the focus will be on:

- use of literature;
- quality of arguments;
- integration of theory and case study;
- careful reading;
- use of primary literature in relation to secondary sources;
- imagination in interpretation;
- conclusions drawn.

In relation to these aspects you will be expected to:
• set out clearly the problem or position to be discussed;
• select what you consider to be the most important aspects of it and to explain why;
• consider different ways of approaching it;
• answer questions from the other students or your lecturer about your chosen topic;
• explain and clarify points in the subsequent discussion.

The following factors will also play a role in assessment:

Delivery

• organisation of time;
• audibility;
• structure and signposting;
• use of overheads or handouts.

Discussion

• encouragement and involvement in discussion
• awareness of wider issues raised (including the ability to recognise and stick to the main issue);
• coherence of response to questions;
• use of the imagination in interpreting and understanding questions posed to the group.

Presentation Information & Requirements – MUST READ

Remember: 1. Your presentation topic must be substantially different from your essay topic. 2. If you want to use a laptop for your presentation, you must bring your own as there are no laptops or computers in the studio. If it's a Mac, make sure to bring an adaptor.

Useful Tips on preparing your presentation

1. Please read the document on How Presentations are Assessed in Module Information (StudyNet).
2. Exchange e-mail addresses and telephone numbers with members of your group.
3. Work out how to allocate the research and when and where you will be meeting. Agree a time, place and a rough schedule of work for at least the next two meetings.
4. Make sure that everyone does their fair share of work. Peer appraisal forms will be used to assess this. Each of you will assess the others in your group and themselves. Where there is a significant consensus that a student has not pulled his/her weight, the mark will be adjusted accordingly.
5. Decide how you are going to deliver your presentation. Remember that all students in the group are expected to play a speaking part in the main presentation and in the discussion.

6. The discussion session is just as important as the presentation so make sure that you have prepared for this, for example, by suggesting some questions. (Don't just say "Any questions?", as it is not likely to elicit a response. Think of the discussion session as a mini-seminar rather than the end of a lecture.) We recommend preparing a list of questions you might ask your audience in case they don't have any for you.

7. If you feel you need to, arrange a group meeting with your tutor during office hours to discuss the general progress of your presentation, and to get further advice on reading material and the suitability of your plans for the presentation.

8. Leave time to rehearse and to check timing, pacing and organisation. There are rooms in the LRC where this can be done. Make certain that you 'signpost' frequently, so that your audience knows what you are trying to do and what is coming next.

9. This is a GROUP presentation so all members of the group should be prepared to answer questions on any topic.

Presentation requirements

1. Each group will have a maximum of 50 minutes in order to both present and involve the rest of the seminar group in a discussion. The actual delivery of the material should take between 25 and 30 minutes and the rest of the time used for discussion. Punctuality is of the essence, as other groups will also be presenting. You'll be stopped if the presentation exceeds the time allotted, to allow sufficient time for discussion. You are responsible for stimulating the discussion; the tutor cannot help.

2. On the day of the presentation, at the beginning of the presentation, each group MUST HAND IN the following documents, stapled together (you cannot begin your presentation before handing these in, so make sure they are ready well in advance): (a) a summary of not more than 1000 words, of the arguments and conclusions presented, together with any handout used. One summary PER GROUP is required. No presentation cover sheet is required, so please ensure that the names of all the group members are clearly identified. Please also indicate who the Group Leader is. (b) a completed peer assessment form (download from the Teaching Resources section on StudyNet) FROM EACH MEMBER OF THE GROUP. These can be handed in individually to the tutor before the presentation.

3. On the day of the presentation, the group leader MUST UPLOAD another copy of the 1000 word summary onto the StudyNet module site. Any handout used in the presentation should be pasted into this summary to form a single document and the
whole thing should be uploaded in the same way as assignment essays are uploaded. Please title this summary document indicating the module name, the group leader and the fact that it is a presentation (not an essay), e.g. Philosophy of Art Presentation Smith.doc. Feedback on the presentation will be written onto this document and returned to the group leader, through StudyNet. The group leader is responsible for disseminating the feedback to the rest of the group.

4. Presentations are recorded by video so that a copy can be made available to the external marker. Presentations usually take place in the video studio of the LRC (Ground Floor, De Havilland), but this will be confirmed by your tutor. If you wish to use a PowerPoint presentation, you must bring your own laptop as there are no laptops or computers in the studio (if using a Mac, make sure to bring an adaptor). You should also make sure to save your presentation on a memory stick, in case wifi happens to be unavailable. (Watch the size of your font! 20 is probably a minimum.). There is, however, no obligation to use a PowerPoint presentation. You may wish to provide a handout for the audience. Generally, prepare materials well in advance.

5. Presentation groups should arrive 5 minutes early in order to set up. Members of the audience must also be on time. The studio door will be closed and no admittance is possible once the presentation has started. Attendance will of course be taken.

6. And remember the presentation version of the Golden Rule: ‘Participate unto others' presentations, as you would have them participate unto yours'. Support your fellow students and learn at the same time: you may learn something useful that could help with your essay. Use the presentation as an opportunity for exhibiting knowledge and understanding of the course as a whole.

REMINDER
Before the start of your Presentation you must give your tutor:

1. 1,000 word summary
2. Completed Peer Assessment Forms (don't forget to include your self assessment)
3. Copies of any handouts/OHPs

PLEASE staple these together in order to prevent loss.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON PRESENTATION ASSESSMENT: Read carefully

Presentations are given a single mark by the Module tutor (all group members get the same mark). However, the mark is then subjected to peer assessment. If your peers think you did not put in as much work as they did, they will mark you accordingly (marks are from 1 to 4 on various points: have a look at the Peer Appraisal Form in the Module Information section on StudyNet). Peer appraisal marks may result in your own mark being lower than that of the other team members, and neither your tutor nor your module leader have any control over, or
input into, the peer appraisal marks. You can rest assured that we have calibrated the algorithm and the weightings between presentations and essays so that your peers’ input will not have a significant impact on your mark, but it will have an impact.

To get a good mark on presentations, you must answer the question, do more than just reiterate the lecture slides, engage critically, consider objections AND responses to those objections. Also, as is emphasized in the Module Guide, it is necessary to engage with secondary literature. It is important to remember that as far as presentations go, much of what is being evaluated is your ability to work in a team – to think and perform in terms of overall team performance rather than individual performance. A good team and a good team presentation must involve everybody, equally, and show that everybody in the group understands all the issues being discussed by each individual member. You must each ensure that each contribution, including your own, be harmonious with the others. In order for that to happen, the group must meet several times and plan all contributions together, and know what each is going to say so as not to be taken by surprise, and to ensure coordination. Obviously, it is not necessary that you all agree, but differences must be discussed and worked out in advance, not on the spot. Remember, this is a team performance. What you are singly responsible for on the day is speaking clearly and listening carefully to questions from the audience in the discussion.
# Presentation Grading Criteria

## First Class Honours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80-100</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Thorough understanding of key concepts/theory/topic. Relevant and effective use of material. Evidence of a wide reading and critical understanding. Independence of thought. Well structured, fluent argument. Excellent synthesis of material, including integration of the different contributions made by individual group members. Evidence of thorough planning, organisation and co-ordination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-80</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>A very good, if imperfect, grasp of the material and its implications. Identifies the focus of the question. Knowledge and clear understanding of contrasting viewpoints. A case well argued and convincingly presented. Good synthesis of material, including integration of the different contributions made by individual group members. Evidence of good planning, organisation and co-ordination.</td>
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</tbody>
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## Upper Second Class Honours (2.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>A good grasp of the material. A general ability to present relevant argument but might contain some irrelevant material. Some coherent argument but there may be weaknesses in overall structure and clarity. Fair synthesis of material, including integration of the different contributions made by individual group members. Would have benefited from better planning and organisation.</td>
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## Lower Second Class Honours (2.2)

<table>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<th>Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>A basic grasp of the material. It may be marred by either poor discriminative ability, an element of conceptual naïveté, or both. There may be a tendency to unsubstantiated statements/assertions, or shallow interpretation. May contain significant errors of fact or theory. Some understanding of class material, but perhaps little or no further reading. Little evidence of independent thought. Poorly structured and presented in places. There may be poor synthesis of material, including integration of the different contributions made by individual group members. There may be little evidence of planning, organisation and co-ordination.</td>
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</table>

## Third Class Honours (3rd)

<table>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>A basic grasp of the material. It may be marred by either poor discriminative ability, an element of conceptual naïveté, or both. There may be a tendency to unsubstantiated statements/assertions, or shallow interpretation. May contain significant errors of fact or theory. Some understanding of class material, but perhaps little or no further reading. Little evidence of independent thought. Poorly structured and presented in places. There may be poor synthesis of material, including integration of the different contributions made by individual group members. There may be little evidence of planning, organisation and co-ordination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Referred Pass</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>Marginal Fail</td>
<td>Does not satisfy the minimum requirements for the exercise in question. Typically, there will be little understanding, even of class material. There may be no structure. It may not address the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>Clear Fail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>Little or Nothing of Merit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Philosophy Subjects Guide

Philosophy Projects

A project in philosophy is an independently written and researched piece of work on a philosophical topic. It should be 8-10,000 words in length. The choice of topic and approach is up to you, but it must be agreed with the module leader – see the three stages outlined below. If you are accepted to take on a project you will be allocated a supervisor who has knowledge of the general area of your topic. Your supervisor will provide advice and guidance on the development of the project and critical feedback on material you submit. We cannot guarantee that your supervisor will be a specialist on your particular topic. But he or she will be able to help guide your research and assess your work periodically throughout the year. There are no formal classes associated with the project and you will not be issued with a reading list (although your supervisor may provide some suggestions about what to read). Projects count for two modules. The time you allot to your research should reflect this. The project is assessed entirely on the written material submitted for the final deadline, normally in early or mid-May.

Stage One

Electing to take on a Project
The project is a difficult (but potentially worthwhile) undertaking that requires you to conduct independent research and motivate yourself in the absence of external deadlines. Do not apply for project work lightly. It is not an easy option. You must have a strong interest in the topic you wish to explore. It is our experience that students who do not have a definite topic in mind and who do not start writing ‘early on’ are extremely unlikely to submit a satisfactory project – and may even fail.

Stage Two

Getting Your Project Provisionally Approved
In order to be considered for a project you must complete and submit a Project Application Form before the end of May in the academic year before you intend to begin the project. On this form you will be asked to provide an abstract of 500 words outlining your provisional topic, saying clearly what your focus will be and what strategy you will adopt in approaching it. You are strongly advised to carry out some preliminary research and reading in preparing your abstract (the module leader or surrogate can assist you with advice on readings).

Normally, proposals will not even be considered for a project unless the form is submitted before the end of Semester B in the academic year prior to uptake of the intended project. Also, the quality of these abstracts will play an important part in project approval decisions and their content will determine whether appropriate supervision can be arranged.
Stage Three

Preparation over the summer and Final Formal Approval
Over the summer, candidates for the project are advised to continue to read and prepare for the work ahead. However, final decisions will not normally be taken until September as to whether or not a given project has been fully approved. This will be in part based on an evaluation of your performance at level two (as set out in constraints below).

If your project is formally approved you will be assigned a supervisor at the beginning of the academic year in which the project is undertaken.

If you fail to meet the requirements for taking on a project you may have to take two taught modules instead.

Constraints: requires an average mark in 2.1 classification or above in all Philosophy modules, and at least 60 credits of level 5 Philosophy modules, and completion of an approved research proposal.

Project Proposals
If you are interested in submitting a project please complete the relevant form and return it to the module leader before the end of Semester B.

Please ensure that you use the subject header ‘Project Proposal’.

Please feel free to ask about readings or topics; these enquiries will be dealt with by the module leader or referred to a relevant member of staff.

Grading Criteria
The grading criteria are identical to the Essay Grading Criteria (above).

Plagiarism, Collusion and Reliance on Authorities

Most of what you write will be derivative from the ideas of other people (from the set texts, the lectures, the seminars, the discussions with other students, etc.) This is inevitable and is not a cause for dismay. The problems with which you will be concerned have been examined by other thinkers, often over long periods of time. It is only sensible in approaching these problems that you should look at these earlier discussions. You might then be able to avoid some of the blind alleys down which earlier thinkers strayed; to see from the outset the unattractive implications of certain superficially attractive views; and in general to benefit from other people's mistakes.

There is, however, an important distinction to be drawn between this general reliance on the ideas of others, on the one hand, and plagiarism and collusion, on the other.

All Subjects within the School of Humanities utilise the same definitions of plagiarism and collusion.
What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is representing, whether intentionally or otherwise, another person’s work as being your own, or the use of another person’s work without acknowledgement.

The University Regulations define plagiarism as: the misappropriation or use of others’ ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise), without acknowledgement or permission. This may include, but is not limited to:

a. the importing of phrases from or all or part of another person’s work without using quotation marks and identifying the source;

b. without acknowledgement of the source, making extensive use of another person’s work, either by summarising or paraphrasing the work merely by changing a few words or by altering the order in which the material is presented;

c. the use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source or the presentation of work which substantially comprises the ideas of another person and which represents these as being the ideas of the candidate. (Appendix I, UPR AS12, 2.1.2)

Plagiarism is no more acceptable in the context of an open book examination or an in-class test than it is in relation to an assignment completed in your own time.

What do we mean by another person’s work?

Another person’s work includes any written work (including lecture handouts), original ideas, research, strategies, arts, graphics, computer programmes, music or other creative expression.

When will plagiarism amount to an assessment offence?

- An assessment offence will have been committed where the extent of the plagiarism is such that, in the view of the academic staff responsible for the assessment, a significant element of the work presented is not the student’s own work. What amounts to a ‘significant element’ is a question of both fact and degree that depends upon the circumstances of the particular assessment, upon which ultimately the Module Board of Examiners will make a judgment. The way to be sure that you are not committing an assessment offence is not to plagiarise at all.

- As plagiarism represents a reduction in the quality and value of the work produced by the student, any degree of plagiarism (even if not so
significant as to amount to an assessment offence) will inevitably involve a substantial reduction in the marks awarded for the assessment. On this ground alone it should be avoided at all costs.

What should you do if you want to use another person’s work?

- If another person’s words are used, you should put the words in quotation marks and quote their source.
- If another person’s ideas are used then you should quote the source. The term ‘source’ includes published work such as a book, journal or newspaper. It includes information obtained from websites, photos, plays and any of usual visual arts such as paintings and drawings.

Correct use and acknowledgement of all sources will prevent the assessment offence of plagiarism from occurring. You should, however, be aware that even where materials are acknowledged, or put in quotation marks where appropriate, extensive copying is unacceptable and will result in a poor grade. Only by using your own words can you demonstrate your understanding.

Use of Turnitin™ – School of Humanities statement

1. All modules in the School will provide students with the opportunity to use ‘Turnitin™ for Students’ formatively (where relevant). Formative submission will be limited to two attempts per assignment in line with the University policy which seeks to support the development of students’ academic writing skills and to promote good academic practice.

2. The compulsory cross-disciplinary module Engaging with the Humanities will require all students at level 4 to submit one of their assignments to Turnitin™ in the context of developing academic integrity at an early stage.

3. All final dissertations/individual projects for undergraduate and postgraduate Programmes should be run through Turnitin™.

4. On undergraduate and postgraduate taught Programmes, Subject Groups will use Turnitin™ from the options below according to the context of their discipline, the level of study and specific module requirements:

   - summative essays worth at least 50% of the module mark;
   - specific pieces of coursework which require submission of a Turnitin™ report as designated by the Programme or module leader;
   - individual pieces of work in which plagiarism is suspected, taking account of the level of study, the level of writing maturity expected of the student and the nature of the assignment task.
What is collusion?

Collusion is working together to produce assessed work in circumstances where this is forbidden.

The University Regulations define collusion as: evidence of the representation by an individual of work which he or she has undertaken jointly with another person as having been undertaken independently of that person.
(Appendix I, UPR AS12, 2.1.3)

Assessments to be undertaken individually

- It is of course an important part of the learning process for students to discuss with one another the academic issues arising out of their studies, including assessed work. Care, however, needs to be taken when working on assessed coursework. Clearly, under examination conditions, any form of conferring between students will amount to cheating. Outside examination conditions when work is being undertaken in your own time, it is normally acceptable to discuss, in general terms, the issues raised by a particular piece of coursework. However, structuring, sharing notes or actually writing up an answer using the same words as another student, will amount to collusion.

- It is obviously very unwise to make assessed work that you have produced on your own available to other students for any reason. It may be difficult, if not impossible for you to establish that your own work was the original source and that it has been copied.

Assessments where group work is involved

- You may of course be asked to work together to produce work that is ultimately assessed. In this event you need to check carefully with your instructions to ascertain whether you are being required to produce individual or group reports at the end of your group work. In either case, the University Regulations require you to state clearly at the end of each piece of coursework submitted for assessment, the name(s) of any other student with whom you have worked.

- Details of the procedures and penalties for plagiarism, collusion, cheating and other academic misconduct can be found in your Programme Handbook and at the following site: http://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-governance/uprs.

- By signing that you agree to abide by the University Regulations at registration, you have acknowledged your understanding of the regulations relating to plagiarism and collusion set out above. You also confirm this understanding if you are required to sign a cover sheet on the submission of your assessed work.
Moderation

The School operates an assessment strategy in accordance with the University’s Policies and Regulations regarding assessments.

In relation to **Internal Moderation** of examinations and coursework, an Internal Moderator will select and review a minimum of a sample size equal to the square root of the total number of items, but not less than five (5), selecting work from across the range of grades awarded, as set out below. If there are less than five (5) items of assessment, then all items will be reviewed. Where there is more than one (1) marker, the moderated sample should include a minimum of five (5) items of assessment marked by each of the markers and shall for each marker reflect the range of grades awarded, as follows:

1. at Level 7, work from across the range of grades awarded.
2. at Levels 4, 5, and 6, sufficient first class work to illustrate the range from lowest first class mark given to highest;
3. at Levels 4, 5, and 6, all work with the grades of 39 and 40;
4. at Levels 4, 5, and 6 at least one exemplar from each of the classification bands, 2.1, 2.2, and 3, (i.e. grades 69-60, 59-50, 49-40), nearest to the midpoint of the range for the class;
5. all work which evidences plagiarism and/or collusion.

In addition, for all modules at levels 6 and 7, any assignment which is unique to the student (e.g. project/ dissertation/ thesis), counts for more than 50% of the assessment on the module, and is marked by more than one first marker, will be **fully blind double marked** (i.e. in ignorance of the first marker’s assessment). Blind double marking replaces internal moderation.

**The outcome of this process will be one of:**

i marking fairly and consistently, requiring no change to the marks;

ii marking consistent but too harsh or too generous, requiring all marks to be moderated up or down following consultation with the marker;

iii significant inconsistencies in marking, requiring a re-mark of all work following consultation with marker.

Where work has been internally moderated this will be clearly indicated on the assessed work.

All presentations that contribute to a module grade will be either observed by at least two members of academic staff or video-recorded for purposes of internal moderation.

At Levels 5, 6, and 7, for purposes of **External Moderation**, a sample selected according to the criteria above will be submitted to the Module External Examiner. The Module External Examiner has the same remit as the Internal Moderator in the
recommendation of changes to assessment outcomes.

The University’s reports containing the names and institution of all the University’s External Examiners can be found here: student support > academic life

September 2015

1 Disclaimer: the current version of UPR AS 14 and the Programme Specification are the ultimate authority on programme regulations.
Appendix 1: Latin Phrases and Difficult Plurals

Latin Phrases

In general, you should not use foreign words or phrases unless there really is no natural English equivalent. However, philosophers, especially old ones, tend to use Latin tags and phrases in their writing. Here are few to watch out for:

- *ad absurdum* - to absurdity
- *ad hoc* - for this purpose
- *ad hominem* - against the man or person
- *ad infinitum* - without limit or end
- *a fortiori* - with stronger reason, all the more
- *a posteriori* - 'from what comes after', reasoning based on experience
- *a priori* - 'from what is already known'
- *causa sine qua non* - a necessary condition
- *ceteris paribus* - all else being equal
- *cf.* - compare
- *de dicto* - of words
- *de re* - of things
- *ex nihilo* - from nothing
- *e.g.* - for example
- *et al.* - and others (abbreviation to avoid writing a long list)
- *ibid.* - in the same place
- *inter alia* - amongst other things
- *i.e.* - that is
- *locus classicus* - the most authoritative source
- *mutatis mutandis* - when what must be changed had been changed
- *non sequitur* - it does not follow
op. cit. - in the work cited
pace - be at peace (in spite of our disagreement)
prima facie - at first sight
quod erat demonstrandum (QED) - we have proved the proposition
sui generis - of its own kind/genus or unique in its characteristics
summum bonum - the highest good
tabula rasa - a blank slate
tu quoque - you too, a retort to an accusation

**Difficult Singulats and Plurals**

'crisis' is singular; 'crises' is plural
'appendix' is singular; 'appendices' is plural
'corpus' is singular; 'corpora' is plural
'criterion' is singular; 'criteria' is plural
'crux' is singular; 'cruces' is plural
'datum' is singular; 'data' is plural
'index' is singular; 'indices' is plural
'medium' is singular; 'media' is plural
'phenomenon' is singular; 'phenomena' is plural
'prolegomenon' is singular; 'prolegomena' is plural
'schema' is singular; 'schemata' is plural
'stratum' is singular; 'strata' is plural
Philosophy Programme

Table 2: Development of Programme Learning Outcomes in the Constituent Modules

This map identifies where the programme learning outcomes are assessed in the constituent modules. It provides (i) an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the programme aims (ii) a checklist for quality control purposes and (iii) a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the programme progresses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
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Programme Learning Outcomes (as identified in section 1 and the following page)

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**Key to Programme Learning Outcomes**

**Knowledge and Understanding e.g.**

A1. The ideas and arguments of some of the major philosophers in the history of philosophy, encountered in their own writings.

A2. A broad range of topics and their connections within a single area of philosophy.

A3. The details of the work of a particular philosopher in the history of philosophy, encountered in their own writings, and an awareness of important areas of interpretative controversy concerning them.

A4. Some central theories and arguments in the fields of logic, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind or psychology, or philosophy of language.

A5. Some central theories in the fields of aesthetics, ethical, political or social philosophy, or philosophy of religion.

A6. Different methodological approaches in philosophy.

A7. The relationship between philosophy and other disciplines in the arts, sciences and humanities and/or its applications outside the academy.

**Practical Skills**

C1. The ability to produce coherent arguments under exam conditions.

C2. The ability to produce researched, coherently written responses to questions within a certain time-frame and the constraints of a word limit.

C3. The ability to present the results of research in front of an audience, and to respond appropriately to questions in a live setting.

C4. Ability to use appropriate software packages in the delivery of information (whether written, oral or visual), and general competence with electronic resources for research and communicative purposes, as well as using libraries effectively.
**Intellectual Skills e.g.**

B1. The ability to recognize and assess the strengths and weaknesses of arguments on both sides of a philosophical question and to be able to draw warranted conclusions.

B2. The ability to abstract, analyse and construct arguments.

B3. The ability to read carefully and interpret texts drawn from a variety of ages and/or traditions with a sensitivity to context.

B4. The ability to formulate critical and/or creative responses to specific philosophical topics.

B5. The ability to use and understand philosophical terminology correctly.

B6. The ability to use formal techniques in the expression of philosophical ideas and arguments.

B7. The ability to cross traditional subject boundaries, examining the limitations and virtues of other disciplines and practices, and to recognise philosophical doctrines in unfamiliar places.

B8. The ability to apply philosophical skills and techniques to issues arising outside the academy, including practical reasoning.

**Transferable Skills**

D1. The ability to take responsibility for the student’s own learning, using initiative, effective time management and self-discipline.

D2. The ability to reflect critically on the student’s own views and actions, as well as those of others.

D3. The ability to deal with intellectual problems with confidence.

D4. The ability to formulate and express ideas clearly and with precision and communicate them effectively either in writing, orally or visually.

D5. The ability to appreciate and have appropriate regard for alternative perspectives and positions and to give criticism without giving offence and to take criticism without taking umbrage.

D6. The ability to work collaboratively and effectively in a group.

D7. The ability to remember information and bring it to mind when the moment of its relevance arises.

D8. The ability to understand and/or engage critically and/or imaginatively with complex material (written, oral or visual).