



University of
St Andrews

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Philosophy at St Andrews

Guide for New Students 2016/2017

Welcome to St Andrews!

Before classes begin, you will have the opportunity to discuss your module choices with a personal adviser, and to get more information at the academic fayre. In the meantime, here is some information to get you started.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What Modules are Available in Philosophy?

A: Two first-year Philosophy modules are available in each semester:

PY1010 Mind & World (semester 1, 11am)

PY1011 Moral & Political Controversies (semester 1, 5pm)

PY1012 Reasoning (semester 2, 5pm)

PY1013 The Enlightenment (semester 2, 11am)

Q: What do These Modules Involve?

A: There are more details overleaf, but each module carries 20 credits (you need 60 credits each semester), involves 3 lectures and a tutorial each week, and is assessed 50% coursework, 50% exam.

Q: I Want to Take Single (or Joint) Honours Philosophy: What Modules Should I Choose?

A: If you want to take Philosophy as part of your final degree, either single honours or with another subject (including Philosophy with a science subject), you must take PY1012 Reasoning, and it would be a good idea to take at least one other first-year Philosophy module. If you're not sure what you want to do, taking PY1012 will keep your options open.

Q: I don't Plan to Take Honours Philosophy: What Modules Should I Choose?

A: You can take any or all of these modules, in any permutation. Take a look at the descriptions overleaf, to see which catches your interest.

Q: How Many Philosophy Modules Can I Take?

A: You can take just one, or up to four if you like, but bear in mind that taking more than two may reduce your options for changing direction later.

Q: I Studied Philosophy at School: Can I Take these Modules?

A: Yes you can. If you already have Higher, A-Level, or AS-Level Philosophy, or if you studied Philosophy as an element in another subject, like Religious Studies, you will probably recognize parts of our syllabus. But you will study them in more depth and with more rigour at university, and should gain new insights into these ancient problems.

Q: I Found Some Information about Other Philosophy Modules: Do these Really Exist?

A: PY1901 and PY2902 are special modules for the part-time Evening Degree, while PY1801, PY1802, PY2801 and PY2802 are special distance-learning modules. None of these are open to Undergraduates taking an Honours degree. (By the way, if you're interested in questions about what really exists, then philosophy is definitely for you).

Q: Do I Need to be Good at Maths to Do Philosophy?

A: No. Taking a degree in Philosophy at St Andrews gives you an opportunity to study logic to an advanced level, but this is not compulsory. We do require you to study very elementary logic as part of PY1012, but if you show up to classes and take the work seriously, you should be fine, even if you previously struggled with maths.

Module Information

PY1010 MIND and WORLD (20 credits - semester 1)

Course Coordinator: Dr Simon Prosser (sjp7)

Class Hour: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 11-12, plus one tutorial per week.

Location: Irvine Lecture Theatre, North St.

This module provides an introduction to philosophical issues in metaphysics and philosophy of mind. These include questions such as: What is the relation between the mind and the material world? Is the mind a part of the scientific, law-governed material world? If so, can I really act freely? If the mind is part of the material world, how could a material thing be conscious? What, fundamentally, are material things and their properties? What is it for one event to cause another? What is time, and what is change? How can physical objects persist through change? Can a person persist through time and change and still be the same person?

PY1011 MORAL and POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES (20 credits - semester 1)

Course Coordinator: Dr Lisa Jones (lj14)

Class Hour: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 5-6, plus one tutorial per week

Location: Buchanan Lecture Theatre, Union St.

Philosophy has often been said to begin with the question 'how ought we to live?' This module introduces students to fundamental questions and problems in moral philosophy (how should we live? What ought we to do? What is it to be a good human being?) and in political philosophy (how ought we to live together?). In moral philosophy we will look at both applied ethics (exploring particular moral issues, such as our obligations to those in severe need, and our treatment of non-human animals) and normative ethics (exploring theoretical approaches to tackling such issues, for example utilitarian, Kantian and virtue ethics). In political philosophy, we will explore central concepts such as liberty, equality, and democracy, and consider the extent to which we should give up some of our freedom in exchange for the protection of the state.

PY1012 REASONING (20 credits - semester 2)

Course Coordinator: Ephraim Glick (eg35)

Class Hour: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 5-6, plus one tutorial per week

Location: To be confirmed

This module introduces the essential concepts and techniques of critical reasoning, formal propositional logic, and basic predicate logic. Among the central questions are these: what distinguishes an argument from a mere rhetorical ploy? What makes an

argument a good one? How can we formally prove that a conclusion follows from some premises? In addressing these questions, we will also cover topics such as argumentative fallacies, ambiguity, argument forms and analyses, induction versus deduction, counterexamples, truth-tables, truth-trees (tableaux), natural deduction, and quantification.

PY1013 THE ENLIGHTENMENT (20 credits – semester 2)

Course Coordinator: Dr James Harris (jah15)

Class Hour: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 11-12, plus one tutorial per week

Location: To be confirmed

This module provides an introduction to central figures, works and ideas of the period of the European Enlightenment (roughly 1700-1800), beginning with an account of its historical background and ending with a review of its legacy. It will approach issues both thematically and through the writings of major thinkers, considering for example various contrasts: experience and reason, belief and scepticism, individual and society, nature and convention, equality and inequality and representation and revolution; and looking at the ideas of such figures as Locke, Hume, Kant, Smith, and Rousseau.

Introduction to 1st Year Philosophy

Friday 9 September 11am – 12pm

Buchanan Lecture Theatre, Union St.

This session is for all new philosophy students taking, or considering taking, PY1010 Mind and World and/or PY1011 Moral and Political Controversies. Come along and get a taste of things to come!

'WELCOME' WINE RECEPTION

from 4.30pm Wednesday 7 September

Edgecliffe foyer, Edgecliffe building, The Scores (next to MUSA)

Come along and meet some of the philosophy lecturers and tutors, and members of PHILSOC (the Philosophy Society). All new philosophy students welcome!