Philosophy

Degree options in the Faculty of Science or Faculty of Arts

MA (Single Honours degree)
Philosophy

MA (Joint Honours degrees)
Philosophy and one of:
- Ancient History
- Arabic
- Art History
- Biblical Studies
- Classical Studies
- Classics
- Comparative Literature
- Economics
- English
- Film Studies
- French
- Geography
- German
- Greek
- International Relations
- Mathematics
- Computer Science
- Statistics
- Philosophy
- Italian
- Latin
- Management
- Mathematics
- Medieval History
- Modern History
- Persian
- Psychology
- Russian
- Scottish History
- Social Anthropology
- Spanish
- Statistics
- Theological Studies
- W

BSc (Joint Honours degrees)
Philosophy and one of:
- Biology
- Computer Science
- Mathematics
- Physics

Likely grades considered for an offer

We consider all aspects of every application, including context, equivalent qualifications and the Personal Statement and offers may be higher or lower than the grades stated here.

SQA Highers: AABB (see specific subject footnotes above)
GCE A-Levels: AAB (see specific subject footnotes above)
International Baccalaureate Points: 35 (see specific subject footnotes above)

For full Faculty entrance requirements, see page 53.

For degrees combining more than one subject, the subject with the higher likely grades determines the grades you need. You will also need to meet any further subject-specific requirements as outlined on their pages.

For further country-specific qualifications and pre-degree foundation programmes see:
www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/international

Do I need previous knowledge of this subject? – No.

Why study Philosophy here?

A Philosophy degree from St Andrews is held in high regard throughout the academic world, and moreover our students really enjoy studying here – in the most recent National Student Survey (2016) the Department received a 100% score for student satisfaction, placing us first out of 57 philosophy departments in the UK.

We were rated top in Scotland and fifth in the UK in the most recent UK research assessment (REF 2014).

Philosophy can be pursued as a Single Honours degree, but it also combines naturally with many other subjects, such as Classics, International Relations, Psychology, Theology or Mathematics. It can also be combined with various science subjects – we offer BSc joint degrees in the Faculty of Science, in addition to the MA in the Faculty of Arts.

Philosophy staff at St Andrews work in a broad spectrum of disciplines, from logic and metaphysics to moral and legal philosophy and beyond. As a result, we offer a wider variety of courses than you might find elsewhere, within a flexible modular system.

Significant numbers of our Philosophy graduates have secured places on postgraduate programmes at Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews or at leading universities in the United States.

Our location makes for an inspiring learning environment, and each year we aim to hold a ‘reading party’ where Honours students and staff spend a weekend in the Scottish Highlands, taking walks and talking philosophy.

The student-run Philosophy Society is one of the largest student societies in the University. It organises many talks, debates and social events throughout the academic year attracting internationally renowned speakers, and it publishes its own philosophy journal, Aporia, to which students are invited to contribute.

Facilities and resources

The Philosophy Department is housed in Edgecliffe, a nineteenth-century building with beautiful views out over St Andrews Bay. The view from the library makes it a lovely place to work.

What will I study?

Philosophy is an exploration of some of the oldest and most vexing questions asked by human beings. What differentiates truth from falsehood, and reality from appearance? How is the mind related to the body? Are we really free in our decisions and actions, or is freedom an illusion? Are the things we regard as valuable good in themselves, or good only by custom and convention? Can a work of art be immoral? What justifies some in exercising power over others? Do we need a rational justification for religious belief, and if so, does one exist? For over 2,500 years human beings have been trying to develop systematic answers to these questions.
“Studying Philosophy at St Andrews will make you think about things you may never have thought of before and question things you will never have questioned before. These skills will help you to thrive both academically and socially. At St Andrews you are fully supported in a way that allows you to focus your own learning, all under the supervision of leading academics. It is a truly inspiring Department to be a part of.”

Anna (Glasgow, Scotland)

At St Andrews, we try to familiarise you with views put forward by the principal figures of the philosophical tradition, and provide you with the means of rationally and independently assessing your arguments. Learning philosophy is therefore as much about acquiring skills of criticism and analysis, clear thinking and principled debate, as it is about learning a specific subject matter.

Training in the sort of precise and effective reading, and the clear thinking and writing required for all philosophical study makes a good preparation for many careers. The critical thinking developed by the study of philosophy is highly valued by many employers.

Staff at St Andrews are at the forefront of research in their varied fields. This expertise and enthusiasm is conveyed at all levels of teaching. There is a flourishing graduate programme, and a busy schedule of conferences, symposia and special lectures with speakers from all over the world. St Andrews is also home to one of the most respected international philosophy journals, the Philosophical Quarterly.

We offer a wide range of module choices in every year of study.

**Philosophy element of your Honours degree**

**First year (1 x 20-credit core module + 60 credits of optional modules)**

First year teaching allows you to study some of the great thinkers in philosophy, and introduces you to fundamental philosophical questions discussed by philosophers from the beginnings of Greek antiquity right up until the present day. These questions can be abstract and theoretical, for example how to define knowledge or how to relate the mind and the body, or practical, for example what kinds of obligations we have to others, and how we ought to live. There are specific subjects you have to cover if you want to continue with philosophy, but there are several options to choose from, even at the introductory level.

**Second year (80 credits of optional modules)**

In second year, there is further opportunity to study the history of philosophy and to learn about intermediate logic, the philosophy of language, epistemology, moral philosophy and aesthetics. You will be able to explore more deeply some of the questions you will have worked on in first year, and lay the foundation required for an Honours degree in Philosophy.

**Honours – third and fourth years (core module(s) at 3000 level; plus 4000-level optional modules)**

At Honours, you will take at least one 3000-level module in your Junior Honours year, with a focus on reading core texts in a wide range of philosophical topics; alongside this, and in your Senior Honours year, you will choose from a wide variety of advanced options, including topics in epistemology (the study of knowledge), metaphysics, formal logic, the philosophies of logic, mind, and language, applied ethics, ethical and political theory, metaethics, aesthetics, and the philosophies of film, creativity, law, and religion, as well as texts in the history of philosophy, such as Scottish philosophy, Kant, or twentieth-century philosophy.

**Typical class sizes and teaching information**

**First year:** lectures 120 - 220, tutorials 7 - 9
**Second year:** lectures 40 - 120, tutorials 7 - 9
**Honours:** lectures 10 - 50, seminars 10

First and second year teaching involves both formal lectures and informal tutorials, in which you discuss your ideas, questions and problems with your tutor and with fellow students. There are also examples classes to support the teaching of formal logic. In Honours, teaching is often conducted in seminars, where you may often be asked to present and discuss your own work.

**Typical methods of assessment**

All 1000- and 2000-level Philosophy modules are assessed by equal measures of coursework and written examinations. This pattern is continued in some Honours modules, while others are assessed solely by coursework, with a variety of elements.

**Scholarships**

The University awards needs-based Entrant Scholarships to students in Philosophy. Further information at: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/scholarships

**Study abroad**

You may apply to the University’s St Andrews Abroad programme. See page 22.

In the academic year 2017-2018, Philosophy Honours students may participate in Study Abroad for either one or two semesters at Aarhus University in Denmark as part of our Erasmus+ exchange, where some classes are taught in English.

For options available during your intended period of study, as well as information about eligibility, the application and selection process, and costs involved, please see: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/studyabroad

**Careers**

Recent graduates have found openings in local government, television production (Sky Sports), the National Health Service, the Co-operative Bank, insurance, the Crown Prosecution Service, as a public information intern for the United Nations Commission for Refugees, as a theatre director, in publishing, in insurance, and teaching English around the world.

It is not uncommon for St Andrews Philosophy graduates to enter the legal profession after a conversion course or a second degree in law. A substantial proportion of Philosophy graduates choose to pursue an academic career.

Please see page 46 for details of the University Careers Centre.