



UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

2026



Undergraduate programmes in

Philosophy

With academic
direction from:



Birkbeck
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

london.ac.uk/philosophy

World class. Worldwide.

Join the World Class

1 Quality of learning

Our Philosophy programmes are developed by Birkbeck, University of London. Founded in 1823, Birkbeck is a world-renowned research university.

2 Career opportunities

Studying Philosophy will prepare you for many careers, including public service, teaching, research, media and journalism. It is also excellent preparation for success in fields such as law, administration and business.

3 Study without relocating

Fit your studies around your work and your personal commitments. Study from wherever you live and at a time that suits you.

4 Access a wealth of resources

You will have a vast array of resources at your fingertips, with access to a fully supported Virtual Learning Environment and an Online Library with millions of academic publications for you to explore.

5 Join a diverse global community

After graduation you become part of our global network of influential alumni, including distinguished academics, writers and Nobel prize winners.



Contents

Join the World Class	2
Academic leadership behind your degree	4
How you study	5
Programme structure	6
Modules available to study	7
Entrance requirements	9
How to apply and further information	10

Key dates

Application deadline:
28 October 2026

Registration deadline:
30 November 2026

Programme starts:
November 2026

All dates are correct at the time of publication, but may be subject to change. Please visit the programme web page for the most up-to-date information.

Academic leadership behind your degree



Many philosophical questions were first asked in one form or another thousands of years ago.

Others are prompted by the latest developments in the arts and sciences. But whether ancient or recent, these questions are fundamental to human existence. By participating in great philosophical debates, you will develop your skills of rigorous reasoning; by study, analysis and criticism of great works of philosophy, ancient and modern, you will be encouraged to develop your capacity to make reasoned judgements for yourself.

Since reasoned argument is at its heart, the study of philosophy provides excellent training for professional careers. The skills of reasoning, analysis and precision of thought and expression that it develops transfer to areas such as management and law.

The study materials for the programme have been developed with the needs of students in mind. The subject guides for each course are designed to support independent study, and are written by philosophers who are experts in their fields.

The CertHE Philosophy makes it possible to see what is involved in philosophical investigation, without being committed immediately to the longer period of study required for the BA. Students can also gain credit towards further study. The 'Introduction to philosophy' course, which all students study, is intended to provide initiation into the subject.

The programme team welcomes students to a course of study that is rewarding and fascinating at the same time. Whether enrolled on the BA, DipHE or CertHE, students are encouraged to make the most of their studies.

Philosophy at Birkbeck

Since 1823, Birkbeck has reached out to people traditionally excluded by other universities.

It is unique in its mission to enable mature students to gain higher education qualifications via part-time study. Today, it is ranked among the leading UK university institutions for its excellence in

research in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences.

By studying this programme, you will:

- challenge yourself and improve your powers of reasoning and argument
- improve your ability to analyse complex ideas, your understanding of people, and your capacity for original thought
- discover historical and contemporary issues in the subject and make connections between the ideas and arguments that inform philosophical debates
- study a range of philosophical works from the classical past to present day. Our subjects include existence and reality; knowledge and belief; mind, thought, reason and logic; truth and meaning; and the ethical and aesthetic values of goodness and beauty.

A trusted name in global education

Founded in 1836, the University of London is one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the UK and is internationally regarded as a centre of academic excellence. The University of London educates around 40,000 distance learners annually in 190 countries and has over 500,000 alumni across the globe.

How you study

Independent study

Distance learning offers you the flexibility to balance your studies with your existing commitments. You will have access to a range of online resources with materials designed for independent study, delivered by way of a Virtual Learning Environment and Online Library.

Study materials

The core study materials you need to complete the programme are provided online. These include a programme handbook of practical information (such as study advice and how to enter exams), a subject guide for each course that you choose as well as past exam papers and commentaries, giving you valuable tips for performing well in exams. You will also receive a hard copy textbook, *Reading Philosophy: Selected Texts with a Method for Beginners*.

Online support

When you register, we will give you access to your Student Portal. You can then access your University of London email account and other key resources:

- The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) contains electronic copies of the study materials, multimedia resources, and discussion areas for collaborative study, including e-seminars (at Level 4).

- The Online Library provides access to over 100 million academic electronic items comprising E-books, E-journals, conference proceedings, etc. In addition, students can request items which are not held in the library via its Inter-Library loans service with the British Library.
- Senate House Library provides free reference access for all registered distance and flexible learning students.
- You can also access student induction, wellbeing support and study skills and employability resources through the Student Portal.

Student support

We are committed to delivering an exceptional student experience for all of our students, regardless of which of our programmes you are studying.

You will have access to support through:

- the Student Advice Centre – provides support for application and Student Portal queries
- TalkCampus – a peer support service that offers a safe and confidential way to talk about whatever is on your mind at any time of day or night.
- University of London Careers Service – offers tailored careers and employability support to

students whether they are starting, developing, or changing their career.

Assessment

- All Level 4 and Level 5 courses are assessed by a two-hour written exam.
- Level 6 courses are assessed by a three-hour written exam (except the Dissertation).
- The dissertation is assessed by a thesis of 7,500 words.

Exams are held in May each year and take place in a controlled environment. You will be given details in advance about how your courses are assessed, the specific environment or location that is permitted and the time allowed for your assessment. For the latest information on examinations, please visit: london.ac.uk/exams



Programme structure



Kingsley Okerri
Canada

'The content of the courses was broad enough to cover almost every area of my intended career. My advice to students starting at the University of London is to brace yourself to do the work – the reward is immeasurable. My sincere gratitude goes to all my instructors, I can't thank you enough for all that time and effort invested in study materials.'

The programme is developed by Birkbeck, which is internationally renowned for its research excellence in Philosophy.

It covers a range of subjects, including: the nature of existence and reality and our knowledge of them; logic and reasoning; the nature of mind, ethics and moral value; the thought of major thinkers including Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant; and the philosophy of art and beauty.

Programmes

Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Philosophy

The BA Philosophy consists of 12 modules, including four compulsory Level 4 modules, followed by seven optional modules (at least four from Level 5 and three from Level 6), plus the Dissertation.

Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) in Philosophy

The DipHE consists of eight modules – four compulsory Level 4 modules and four elective modules chosen from a list of modules at Level 5.

Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) in Philosophy

The CertHE consists of four compulsory Level 4 modules. The CertHE may be of interest to those who would prefer a shorter programme, perhaps in preparation for progressing to the DipHE or BA. It may also meet the needs of those who do not satisfy the University's entrance requirements for admission to the BA and DipHE.

Short course

Introduction to philosophy (PY1020) is offered as a credit-bearing stand-alone Individual course. If you successfully complete the assessment for the Introduction to philosophy course with a mark of 50 per cent or above, you may be considered for transfer to the CertHE and credited with the pass.



Modules available to study

Level 4

Introduction to philosophy

Study fundamental philosophical problems and texts and consider at an elementary level and in a carefully guided way some of the central problems that arise within the subject, such as freewill and determinism, the nature of the self, and more.

Ethics: historical perspectives

Explore the history of moral philosophy and the views of Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant and Mill. Learn about their legacy and how they continue to shape contemporary discussion and form part of the fabric of our culture.

Epistemology

Epistemology is known as the theory of knowledge. The questions it explores are: What is knowledge? How do we get it? Are the means we employ to get it defensible? Delve into these questions and the debates they spark.

Logic

Logic is the study of the central notions that figure in our most general attempts to understand reasoning. The content of this course, sometimes called 'philosophical logic' or 'philosophy of logic', is essential to deepen your understanding of all other branches of philosophy.

Level 5

Greek philosophy: Plato and the Pre-Socratics

This course focuses on the work of the predecessors of Plato and the main dialogues of Plato. It has been said that philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato – an exaggeration that highlights the fundamental importance of Plato's contribution.

Modern philosophy: Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume

Study the main metaphysical, logical and epistemological views of the philosophers Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. The label 'modern' is generally thought to cover the late 17th and early 18th centuries when there was a decisive break with ancient philosophy.

Ethics: contemporary perspectives

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

Ethics or moral philosophy is the inquiry into the nature of moral value. It is concerned with questions about goodness, right and wrong, the virtues and the nature of the worthwhile life.

Metaphysics

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

This course covers various central questions of existence and reality and more specific ones, namely: What is time? Are particulars more basic than events? Do human beings have free will? What is causality? Are there universals?

Methodology: induction, reason and science

Prerequisite: 'Epistemology' must be taken at the same time or already have been passed.

Investigate the nature of the reasoning and methods used in investigation of the natural and social world. Consider questions about inductive reasoning, probability, explanation, evidence, 'laws of nature' and the reality of 'theoretical entities' such as elementary particles and fields.

Level 6

Modern philosophy: Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant

Prerequisite: 'Modern philosophy: Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume' must be taken at the same time or already have been passed.

This course considers the main metaphysical, logical and epistemological views of Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant. As with the other

courses in modern philosophy, this one is concerned primarily with the epistemological and metaphysical views of these thinkers.

Greek philosophy: Aristotle

Prerequisite: 'Greek philosophy: the Pre-Socratics and Plato' must be taken at the same time or already have been passed.

The study of the broadly metaphysical, logical and epistemological doctrines of Aristotle. The emphasis in this course will be on Aristotle's logical, epistemological and metaphysical views; his ethical writings form part of the subject on historical perspectives on ethics.

Continental philosophy: Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche

Prerequisite: 'Modern philosophy: Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant' must be taken at the same time or already have been passed.

This course covers the main doctrines of Hegel and two post-Hegelian 19th-century German philosophers: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. It is advisable to also have knowledge of Kant's philosophy when studying this course.

Aesthetics

An investigation of problems such as: the nature and value of art, aesthetic judgement, representation, expression and interpretation. Included will be a historical approach to these issues involving writers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Nietzsche and Collingwood.

Philosophy of language

An exploration of the notion of meaning as well as an investigation into the more detailed problems arising from study of natural language. Included are topics such as metaphor, reference and the nature of rules and language.

Philosophy of mind

This course is concerned with metaphysical and epistemological issues that arise from reflecting on the mind. It explores the problems raised by intentionality, consciousness and action. Study of logic, metaphysics, epistemology and methodology also contribute to this course.

Political philosophy

The study of the history of political philosophy as well as an investigation of contemporary issues such as political authority, democracy, liberalism and capitalism. Included in the historical part of the course are works by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx and Mill.

Philosophy of religion

The focus of study is mainly on Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Among the questions raised are: the existence of God; the coherence of theism; the compatibility of divine omniscience and human freedom; the problem of evil; and immortality.

Dissertation

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

A 7,500-word dissertation on a topic agreed with a member of the staff at Birkbeck, University of London. A dissertation can be on any topic in philosophy that falls within the area of competence of a member of the Department.



Entrance requirements

BA and DipHE Philosophy

You will usually:

- be aged 17 or above by 30 November in the year of registration

and

- meet our general entrance requirements

and

- meet our English language requirement.

CertHE Philosophy

You will usually:

- be aged 18 or above by 1 September in the year of registration

and

- have passed at least three separate subjects at GCSE/GCE O level, with grades A* to C/9 to 4, or the equivalent

and

- meet our English language requirement.

To access the Individual course (Introduction to Philosophy), you must usually be aged 18 or above in the year of registration and meet our English language requirement. Passing Introduction to Philosophy with 50 per cent or above will meet the entry requirements to study the CertHE.



Where an applicant does not meet the prescribed English language proficiency requirements but believes that they can demonstrate the requisite proficiency for admission the University may, at its discretion, consider the application.

For further information on entry requirements please visit: london.ac.uk/philosophy

Alternative entry routes

Even if you do not meet the standard requirements, we will consider each application on its own merits. We will consider whether any alternative/incomplete qualifications or work experience you have are suitable for entry to the programme. If we are unable to issue you an offer for either the BA, DipHE or CertHE routes then if available we will advise on further alternatives such as our International Foundation Programme or on additional qualifications you need to take in order to meet our minimum entrance criteria. Studying the individual course, Introduction to

Philosophy, offers a pathway to study the CertHE. You may also continue to progress to the DipHE and BA if you successfully complete the CertHE.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

If you have studied material as part of a previous qualification that is comparable in content and standard, you might be exempted from the equivalent course of our degree. This is known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and is available for the BA degree only for up to four Level 4 courses.

Please note: if you wish to be considered for discretionary recognition of prior learning for the 2026 intake, then you must formally apply and submit your request as early as possible. For further details on Recognition of prior learning, visit: london.ac.uk/philosophy

How to apply and further information

Applying online

For further information on this programme, entrance requirements and details on how to apply, please visit: london.ac.uk/philosophy

Students with disabilities and/or access requirements

The University of London welcomes applications from disabled students and/or those who have access requirements. If you are disabled and/or have access requirements, we will make every reasonable effort to meet your needs. This may include making access arrangements for examinations, such as special aids.

If you would like to tell us about your disability and/or request access

arrangements, please complete the relevant section of the application form, or contact the Inclusive Practice Manager at: special.arrangements@london.ac.uk

Fees payable to the University

The total fee payable to the University of London will be published on our website once confirmed for the academic year. On average, fees incur a five per cent year-on-year increase. For the latest information on programme fees, please visit: london.ac.uk/fees

Please note: student fees shown on our website are net of any local VAT, Goods and Services Tax (GST)

or any other sales tax payable by the student in their country of residence. Where the University is required to add VAT, GST or any other sales tax at the local statutory rate, this will be added to the fees shown during the payment process. For students resident in the UK, our fees are exempt from VAT.

Financial assistance

UK undergraduate students may be able to apply for a part-time tuition fee loan. For full details on eligibility criteria, please visit: gov.uk/student-finance

Alternatively, some employers in both the public and private sector may be willing to consider offering financial assistance to their employees.

Armed Forces

Students who are members or ex-members of the UK Armed Forces should note that the University of London has been approved by the Ministry of Defence in support of the Enhanced Learning Credits (ELC) Scheme (ELC Provider Reference Number 1284). The Scheme provides financial support to eligible Service personnel who wish to enhance their educational or vocational achievements.

The ELC Administration Service website can be found at: www.enhancedlearningcredits.com





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