



University
of Glasgow

Philosophy

Undergraduate study



Since the University's foundation in 1451, such figures as Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith and Thomas Reid have put Glasgow's name indelibly on the philosophical map.



Choose Glasgow

Introduction

The University of Glasgow is rated as one of the top 100 universities in the world (*Times Higher Education QS World University Rankings*).

All of our students study for degrees that are recognised and respected by employers throughout the world, but we can guarantee you will receive a lot more besides. Some of the key benefits of student life at Glasgow are

Satisfied students

Our students report high levels of satisfaction with their studies. According to the independent National Student Survey, an impressive 90% of the University's final-year students rated themselves as satisfied with their course in 2009, well above the national average of 81%.

Flexible course choices

We offer more than 900 degree programme combinations and our flexible system allows you to study a broad range of subjects during your time at university and, in many cases, makes it possible to delay choosing specialist subjects until the end of second year.

Teaching based on research

Glasgow is a research-led university, which means that you will be taught by academics at the forefront of knowledge in their subject areas.

A student experience worth having

You will take away more than a degree from Glasgow. Over the last 550 years our students have built up a fantastic array of initiatives to keep you engaged, entertained and energised. The result is a student experience to be proud of. We have

- four award-winning student media teams
- over 100 clubs and societies
- two undergraduate student unions
- sporting facilities for all levels of fitness
- a study abroad and exchange programme that offers opportunities to study across the world as part of your undergraduate degree.

‘Glasgow is an exciting place, rich in culture, groaning with history, but most of all I found it to be welcoming.’

Laura Sayers graduated in 2001 and is a BBC Radio 1 producer

Our campus

The University's compact main campus combines grand historical buildings with up-to-the-minute facilities. It's centred on a neo-gothic building with a spire offering breathtaking views across the city.

Come and visit us

Open Day

www.glasgow.ac.uk/openday

In June and September we hold an Open Day to allow you, your family and teachers to visit us on campus and see a little of the city.

Open Day allows you to speak to academic staff, find out more about courses, tour the facilities, visit student accommodation and see for yourself what life would be like as a student at Glasgow. If you have a long way to travel you can also stay in one of our student residences.

Alternative visiting arrangements

Open Day is the best way for you to get a comprehensive picture of what being a student here would be like. However, if for any reason you can't make it on that date, then we will be able to make alternative arrangements.

To find out more visit:
www.glasgow.ac.uk/afternoonvisits.

Applicants' Visit Day

At Glasgow we go the extra mile. If you receive an offer of a place at Glasgow, we will invite you to visit us before making your final decision. Applicants' Visit Day usually takes place in March. Details will be sent to you together with your offer of a place.

Where can I find out more?

For more information visit www.glasgow.ac.uk/philosophy. We are happy to help you with further questions. Please contact us by email: info@philosophy.arts.gla.ac.uk.



‘The lecturers make a real effort to make studying the subject both enjoyable and interesting.’

Louise Hendry, Philosophy (pictured)

www.glasgow.ac.uk/philosophy

Many philosophical questions may occur to you naturally, for example:

- are morals simply matters of personal opinion?
- could our lives be just one long dream?
- do we have free will?
- is it rational to believe in God?
- is the mind just a machine?

Underlying these are more general issues about knowledge (epistemology), the nature of reality (metaphysics), the ultimate basis of rational conduct (moral philosophy) and the soundness of arguments (logic).

Studying philosophy will introduce you to these issues and help you to think about them for yourself, drawing on the work of modern philosophers as well as the thinkers of the past.



Philosophy

Degree: MA, MA (SocSci)

Typical offer

Highers	AABB (first sitting) AAAB (two sittings)
A-levels	AAB (first sitting) AAA (two sittings)
IB	34 points

For entry requirements visit www.glasgow.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/entryrequirements

Philosophy is the systematic attempt to arrive at clear answers to profound questions (such as, can human actions be both caused and free?) by studying and assessing the arguments and answers that have been offered in 2,500 years of philosophical speculation.

What can I expect in first year?

In each of the first two years there are two courses. These are:

- Philosophy 1K: knowledge and the world
- Philosophy 1M: right and wrong
- Philosophy 2M: morality, politics and authenticity
- Philosophy 2K: knowledge, meaning and inference

If you intend to specialise in philosophy you will normally take all four of these.

Philosophy 1K: knowledge and the world will introduce you to philosophical theories of the mind and its relation to reality. You will also learn about techniques of analysing and criticising arguments.

You will study the ‘Meditations on First Philosophy’ by René Descartes. First published in 1641, this lively book is still one of the best introductions to philosophical thinking. It raises fundamental questions, particularly about the foundations of knowledge and the relation of mind to body.

The second part of the course is based on the book ‘Think’ by Simon Blackburn, a leading modern philosopher. You will be introduced to more recent perspectives on some of the issues raised by Descartes, and also to some new issues such as the implications of modern science for our understanding of the mind and self.

A third component of the course will help you to acquire skills in critical thinking or informal logic. Such skills are essential, not just in philosophy, but for assessing arguments in politics, advertising, other academic disciplines, and elsewhere.

Philosophy 1M: right and wrong is an introduction to moral and political philosophy.

Virtually everyone engages in moral thinking. One might argue, for instance, that:

- racism or terrorism is wrong
- compassion makes you a good person
- people have a right to education or shelter.

But what does it mean to say that something is wrong or good? Are right and wrong just a matter of feeling? Are people capable of acting morally or, deep down, is everyone selfish?

You will learn how philosophy can help us think about such questions. The course has four components:

- An introduction to ethical theories
- Problems in applied ethics
- Introduction to political philosophy.
- A classic text of moral or political philosophy.

The aim is not to tell you what views you should hold on these matters but to help you to think about them for yourself in a rigorous and critical way.

What can I expect in second year?

Philosophy 2M: morality, politics and religion will further your studies in moral and political philosophy. The course has three components:

- You will study major texts in moral or political philosophy drawn from one or more of the following philosophers: Aristotle, Plato, Hume, Kant, Bentham, Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, Hegel, Marx, Mill.
- Philosophy of religion: you will investigate questions such as: What reasons can be given for believing that God exists? What is religion? Is the existence of a benevolent god consistent with the existence of evil?
- Meta-ethics: you will explore issues such as: Does the fact that people hold different moral views show that there is no such thing as moral truth? Are moral judgements more like statements of fact or expressions of feeling?

Philosophy 2K: knowledge, meaning and inference focuses primarily on questions about knowledge:

- What is it to know something?
- Are there limits to knowledge, due to the limits of our own physical or psychological make-up?
- Can we know things as they are in themselves, or are we limited to knowing how things appear to us?
- Does all knowledge depend on the senses, or can some things be known *a priori*, that is, by pure thought?



You will make a close study of Bertrand Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy*. This incisive and readable book focuses particularly on issues about the nature of knowledge. You will look in addition at A J Ayer's influential *Language, Truth and Logic*, also highly readable.

You will begin the study of logic, which is essential to a systematic understanding of the structure of knowledge, and of the way in which questions of language and meaning enter into philosophy.

Finally, you will use logical concepts and methods to analyse some noted paradoxes and puzzles, for example the ancient 'Liar' paradox exemplified by the sentence 'This sentence is not true'.

Teaching for courses in first and second year usually involve lectures on three or four days a week and regular tutorials in small groups.

What happens next?

Honours

If you successfully complete the courses in first and second year, you may progress to Honours (years three and four).

You may take Honours either as a Single Honours student specialising entirely in Philosophy or as a Joint Honours student, taking Philosophy in combination with another subject. Whichever you choose, the Honours programme involves two years of study (Junior and Senior Honours).

In each year you will have a choice of courses. Single Honours students take six courses per year and Joint Honours students take three courses per year alongside courses from their other chosen subject.

Each of the Junior Honours courses focuses on an important area of philosophy. You will have fortnightly tutorials in groups of about four students. Courses at this level include:

- The history of philosophy
- Epistemology (ie the theory of knowledge)
- Metaphysics
- The philosophy of mind
- The philosophy of language
- Logic
- Political philosophy
- Moral philosophy
- The history of moral and political philosophy.

In Senior Honours you have the opportunity to write a dissertation. This enables you to develop your thinking about a philosophical subject of your choice. The dissertation counts as one course and is a requirement for Single Honours students and for Joint Honours students not doing a dissertation in their other subject.

In addition, you will choose from a list of Senior Honours courses, which are generally more specialised than those in Junior Honours and which may change from year to year. The topics of Senior Honours courses are generally ones in which we have research strengths and will give you the opportunity to familiarise yourself with 'state of the art' thinking.

At present courses are drawn from the following list:

- Aristotle
- Confucian ethics
- Hume
- Hegel
- Justification and probability
- Philosophy of art
- Philosophy of perception
- Externalism and reference
- Realism and anti-realism
- Environmental ethics
- Marx
- Liberalism
- Modality and essence
- Philosophy of religion
- Philosophy of action
- Philosophy of science
- Philosophy of mathematics
- Wittgenstein.

General Humanities Degree

If you decide not to take an Honours degree, you can take philosophically-based third year courses taught in the Humanities Advanced Technology & Information Institute:

- Consciousness and cognition
- Space, cyberspace and the self.

Joint Honours combinations

You can choose to combine your Philosophy programme with the following subjects:

- Arts & Media Informatics
- Business & Management
- Celtic Civilisation
- Celtic Studies
- Central & East European Studies
- Classics
- Comparative Literature
- Computing Science
- Economic & Social History
- Economics
- English Language
- English Literature
- Film & Television Studies
- Gaelic
- Geography
- German
- Greek
- History
- History of Art
- Italian
- Latin
- Mathematics
- Music
- Politics
- Psychology
- Russian
- Scottish History
- Slavonic Studies
- Sociology
- Theatre Studies
- Theology & Religious Studies.

We received strong results in the 2009 National Student Survey with 95% of our philosophy students recording overall satisfaction.



www.glasgow.ac.uk/philosophy

‘Once you get to Honours the classes get much smaller and the reading parties are great, you get to know almost everyone in the year.’

Elizabeth Ritz, Philosophy Honours student

Can I study abroad?

We encourage our students to study abroad (usually during the Junior Honours year). We have Socrates/Erasmus exchange schemes with the Universities of Barcelona, Augsburg and Helsinki. Countries in which Philosophy students have studied under other exchange programmes include: USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Denmark and Finland.

Students who have studied abroad describe it as a life-changing experience – ‘the best year of my life’.

Studying in Europe

You can study at more than 250 universities all over Europe under the Erasmus programme. Erasmus is an EC exchange programme that enables students in 31 European countries to study for part of their degree in another European country. Exchanges can last from 3-10 months and study credit is transferred to your home university.

Beyond Europe

The International Exchange Programme allows you to spend a year at institutions in Australia, Canada, Central & South America, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore and the USA. All the institutions teach in English except Chuo University in Japan and those in Central & South America.

The University holds a Study Abroad Fair every November. Information is also available on our website: www.glasgow.ac.uk/studying/exchange

What are my career prospects?

In studying philosophy you will develop many transferable skills and attributes which will be valuable in almost any career. These include evaluating arguments and interpreting texts, the ability to be analytical, precision of thought and expression, and the capacity to question assumptions.

In recent years, graduates have found work in:

- The financial and management consultancy sectors
- Civil service and local government
- Information technology (IT).

There are increasing opportunities for those who have qualified to teach another subject (most commonly Theology & Religious Studies) to teach Philosophy in schools and colleges. Some of our graduates go on to study for postgraduate degrees in Philosophy and some of these become professional philosophers teaching in universities.

‘Scotland at its artsy, riotous, high-octane, good-time best.’

Lonely Planet



City of Glasgow

What is it like living and studying in Glasgow?

Named as one of the world’s top ten cities by independent travel guide *Lonely Planet*, Glasgow attracts the largest student population in Scotland. The city’s reputation for friendliness means that wherever you come from, you’ll soon treat it as your second home.

Music and nightlife

In an average week Glasgow hosts 123 bands, 72 classical composers, 49 choirs, 38 orchestras and 21 jazz bands. Renowned for discovering acts from Franz Ferdinand to Primal Scream, the city has fantastic venues for live music including King Tut’s Wah Wah Hut – voted UK’s best live venue by listeners of Radio 1 three years in a row.

More than 700 bars, pubs and nightclubs mean no two nights in Glasgow are the same. Whether you’re after a record-breaking 100-foot long bar where everyone can be a barfly (the Horseshoe), or a pub with a log fire, stuffed stags’ heads and kilted staff that’s as appealing as it is unpronounceable (Uisge Beatha), Glasgow has a venue to suit. Dance until you drop at the Subclub, or travel back to 1920s America at the Vegas clubnight on the Renfrew Ferry, it’s up to you.

Festivals

At least one festival every month of the year shows Glasgow loves to celebrate. Some of our favourites include Glasgow International Comedy Festival, Celtic Connections folk music festival, Glasgay, Piping Live!, Glasgow Film Festival and Aye Write!, the city’s book festival.

Culture

The city of Glasgow owns one of the richest collections in Europe, displayed in 13 museums and art galleries – and admission is free. You are spoilt for choice, with the city’s famous Burrell collection vying for attention beside Scotland’s most visited attraction, the Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, located next door to the University.

Sport

The city will host the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Across the world people know Glasgow as home of Celtic and Rangers football clubs, but with no fewer than 27 public fitness centres including swimming pools, running tracks, 11-a-side pitches and tennis courts, you’re guaranteed to find something to get involved with, whatever your level of fitness.

Campus culture

Are you craving cosy campus living or do you prefer big city excitement. Whichever is your style, you’ll be impressed by the University’s excellent location in the compact West End. Just two miles from the city centre, with great bus and underground links, the West End has a reputation as the bohemian, trendy and cosmopolitan quarter of Glasgow.



What our students say

‘Glasgow is such a diverse and vibrant city with lots to offer and a great social scene with a fantastic range of bars, clubs and music venues.’

Alexander Hutchison

‘I chose Glasgow because compared to the other cities I visited it just seemed like a much more lively place. I think the high student population makes it a very young city.’

Elizabeth Ritz

‘The campus at Glasgow is unbelievably beautiful. It’s hard to believe sometimes when walking down busy Byres Road and turning into University Avenue, that this Hogwarts is situated right in the heart of the West End.’

Beverley Simpson

‘Glasgow is very vibrant. The West End is like the village within the city.’

Sarah Gibson