BA Philosophy

Course Handbook

2018/19
Welcome from the Head of School

Since its inception in 1961, the University of Sussex has consistently ranked among the best British universities for the study of arts and humanities.

In 2009 the University brought together four leading programmes - History, Art History, Philosophy and American Studies - into a new dedicated School of study. The subjects we teach focus on the ability to reason, to analyse, to take critical positions and to expound them. Your studies with us will be an intensive high-level training in how to think - whatever your area of study - fitting you with the skills for a wide range of careers.

The School of History, Art History and Philosophy (HAHP) combines high-quality teaching, cutting edge international research and a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

Professor Liz James  
Head of School of History, Art History and Philosophy
Welcome to the Philosophy BA degree! This is your course handbook. It contains important information about how your degree course and related matters are organised, which you will need to know as you progress through your years of study here. Please read it carefully. We look forward to meeting you, and wish you an enjoyable and fruitful time at Sussex. You are now a member of a higher education academic community. There will be exciting challenges ahead, and we look forward to helping you master them.

We take a student-centred approach to teaching and learning – this means that we value student choice and aspire to give our students quality and personalised feedback, aimed at making the most of their potential. All your lecturers and tutors hold regular feedback and office hours giving you the opportunity to have one-on-one discussions on any aspect of your personal and academic development. Do please avail yourself of the time that they place at your disposal – they are friendly, approachable, and knowledgeable people. They want you to feel at home at Sussex, help you to succeed as a student, and help you grow as a person.

I am always happy to meet with you during my office hours or by appointment, and I very much look forward to the opportunity of getting to know you.

Tony Booth, A028, Head of the Philosophy Department

A.R.Booth@sussex.ac.uk
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Key Contacts in your Department and School

The Philosophy Department sits within the wider unit of the School of History, Art History and Philosophy (HAHP). Administration of your degree and modules is organised by the School. The School, and its component Departments including Philosophy, are all situated in Arts A on campus (for a campus map, please see https://www.sussex.ac.uk/about/documents/uos-campus-map.pdf

HAHP School Office

Arts A7

Philosophy Departmental Co-ordinator (your first point of contact for any administrative issues or difficulties that arise, such as changing modules, change of contact details, etc.)

Arts A7, philosophy@sussex.ac.uk

Head of Philosophy

Tony Booth, Arts A28, A.R.Booth@sussex.ac.uk

Head of School

Liz James, Arts A130, E.James@sussex.ac.uk

School Director of Student Experience

Hester Barron, Arts A151, H.Barron@sussex.ac.uk

School Director of Teaching and Learning

Kathleen Stock, Arts A114, K.M.Stock@sussex.ac.uk

School Administrator

Deborah Jackson-Smith, Arts A115, D.K.Jackson-Smith@sussex.ac.uk

In addition, you can find out the contact details of your lecturers and seminar tutors, by checking Sussex Direct (see p.10).

How we contact you

We will use your university email address to contact you (not a private one). Therefore please check it regularly for important course and module information.
Careers and employability

It’s never too early to start thinking about your future career after you leave Sussex. The Careers and Employability Centre is based in the Library. See the Careers and Employability Centre’s website for more details of workshops, cv advice, internship opportunities, employer drop ins, job fairs, individual appointments, and lots more: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/careers/services/students

BA Philosophy course aims

The aims of the Philosophy course are to:

- Bring you to a critical understanding of the ideas and arguments of some of the major philosophers in the history of the subject, encountered in their own writings, both as living argument and as a challenge to contemporary modes of thinking.
- Familiarise you with some central theories and arguments in the fields of Metaphysics, Epistemology, or Philosophy of Mind, Aesthetics, Moral Philosophy, or Social and Political Philosophy broadly understood.
- Enable you to critically engage in major issues currently at the frontiers of philosophical debate and research.
- Enable you to identify and produce valid arguments, and to show knowledge of classic argumentative forms and methods of reasoning.

Course learning outcomes

The Philosophy course learning outcomes are as follows ("course learning outcomes" are the skills, abilities and characteristics we expect you to acquire over the length of your Philosophy degree course). By the end of your time at Sussex, we expect you to have developed:

- Philosophical skills including: detecting fallacies in arguments; articulacy in identifying underlying issues in debate; precision of thought and expression in analyzing complex problems; sensitivity in interpretation of texts; the ability to use philosophical terminology; ability to abstract and analyze arguments.
- An appreciation of the nature and range of philosophical debate and of philosophy as itself a philosophical problem.
- Detailed knowledge and understanding of the principal theories in at least one and up to three fundamental fields of philosophy.
- Detailed knowledge and understanding of the principal ideas of at least one and up to three major philosophers through the study of original texts, albeit in translation in most cases.
- Familiarity with the range of philosophical problems together with a sense of how variously they have been interpreted and treated throughout the history of philosophy.
- Familiarity with and understanding of classical argumentative forms and methods of reasoning.

Course structure

In YEAR ONE, you will be introduced to key arguments and ideas from the major philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries, and from 20th-century philosophers who have thought about how philosophy relates to science. You will learn how to think logically and critically, and assess philosophical arguments. And you will have the opportunity to study areas such as existentialism, political philosophy, and truth and morality. In addition to the core modules Paradox and Argument, Science and Reason, Early Modern Philosophy and Logic and Meaning, you will be able to choose from the following options:

- Existentialism
- Truth and Morality: The Meaning of Life
- Reading Philosophy
- Society, State and Humanity

Alternatively, you may choose to take one or two elective modules from other subject areas.
In YEAR TWO, you will explore the history of philosophy in greater detail and develop your skills in argument and critical analysis. You will study the German Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant, and are introduced to the central issues in his theoretical and practical philosophy. You will also be able to choose from a range of options, including aesthetics, feminist philosophy, ancient philosophy, phenomenology and philosophy of religion. In addition to the core module Kant, you are likely to be offered the following options:

- Ancient Philosophy
- Feminist Philosophy
- Philosophy of Mind
- Aesthetics
- Epistemology
- Phenomenology
- Philosophy of Religion
- Philosophy of Science
- Philosophy of Language

Alternatively, you may again choose to take one or two elective modules from other subject areas.

In YEAR THREE, you will write two dissertations, where you will look at works by philosophers in analytic, continental and social and political philosophy, or in the philosophy of literature. You will also be able to choose from a range of topics including philosophy of language, ethics, Islamic philosophy and modern European philosophy. Options are likely to include:

- Ethics
- Islamic Philosophy
- Metaphysics
- Modern European Philosophy
- Philosophy of Language
- Figures in Analytic Philosophy
- Figures in Post-Kantian Philosophy
- Figures in Social and Political Philosophy
- Language, Truth and Literature

**Consolidation weeks**

In most modules you will have one week designated as a ‘consolidation week’ (this is sometimes also called a ‘reading week’ in other Departments). This is NOT a holiday and is to be used to catch up on reading for your module or to prepare for assessment. During that week, there will be a general lecture or class on study skills
for your year group, which you should attend, as it will contain vital information for your future assessments. Normally you should not go home during this week. Since reading weeks differ from Department to Department, you should continue to attend classes in your other modules, if they are held.

Choosing your options

You will choose your options for the next academic year around the middle of the second term of the previous academic year. You will be sent an email by your departmental co-ordinator at the relevant time. In addition, your Head of Department or their nominee will hold an ‘Options Fair’ around that time: a publicised general meeting for your year group, to discuss the various modules available to you, and to help you make an informed choice. If you want further information, please drop in to see the tutor of the module you are interested in during their office hours (see below).

‘Sussex Choice’ pathways and electives

In addition to your main degree subject, those of you on Single Honours degrees may wish to take modules or sets of modules from other subject areas. You can take a ‘pathway’ or ‘electives’.

A ‘pathway’ is an approved, academically-coherent combination of modules, which students study across either the first two years (60 credits) of their degree or across all three years (90 credits). The rationale for Pathways is to enable students to study a second subject outside of their main discipline in a structured manner.

‘Electives’ are single modules which allow single honours students to study a subject outside of their main discipline within and beyond their home School. These modules may be at Level 3, 4 or 5 of the Academic Framework and will always have a credit rating of 15 credit points per module. Electives are different from Option modules; the latter are selected by students on both single and joint honours awards from a group of modules linked to a specific degree course. Options are normally delivered within a single School.

For more information on pathways and electives within the Sussex Choice programme, see http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/sussexchoice

Student feedback and drop-in hours

Every member of teaching faculty holds “student feedback and drop-in hours” (sometimes also known as “office hours”) each week during term time, which will be advertised on their office doors and on Sussex Direct. These hours are for, among other things: following up material discussed in lectures or seminars; raising questions you still have; trying out new ideas; discussing any feedback you have received on written work or presentations. They are a form of contact hours available to you throughout your degree, should you wish to make use of them. You are strongly encouraged to ‘drop-in’ during these hours or else make an appointment via email. (If a tutor is away without notice during a published office hour, please let the Philosophy Co-ordinator know- see p.5).
Teaching and learning on the Philosophy Degree

Modules on the Philosophy Degree are typically taught via a lecture which is 1 or 2 hours long, and smaller group seminars later in the week (1 hour long).

In addition to attending lectures and seminars, you are expected to do independent reading and note-taking and any other tasks the lecturer has set you for the week.

Much of your course material is found on Canvas [https://canvas.sussex.ac.uk/](https://canvas.sussex.ac.uk/), the University’s online learning platform, which you will need to check every week. You should be automatically subscribed to the Canvas sites for your modules but if not, please contact the Philosophy Co-ordinator in the School Office (see p.5).

Any additional reading material not on Canvas can be found via the University Library [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/) In addition to their physical copies of books, they have an extensive electronic library which is accessible remotely. Please contact your tutor if some recommended book or other reading is not there so they can order it for you.

All of your class times and locations, and the contact details of your tutors, are to be found in your timetable on Sussex Direct [https://direct.sussex.ac.uk/login.php](https://direct.sussex.ac.uk/login.php). Sussex Direct is the University’s online tool for administrating your degree. Please contact the Philosophy Co-ordinator in the School Office (see p. 5) if anything is missing or in error.

Helpful learning resources for your Philosophy degree

Philosophy library and internet resources [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hahp/internal/philosophy/studentresources/internet](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hahp/internal/philosophy/studentresources/internet)

For resources on essay writing skills (see also links on the left side bar): [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hahp/internal/philosophy/studentresources/general](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hahp/internal/philosophy/studentresources/general)

Philosophy undergraduate dissertation FAQs [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hahp/internal/philosophy/studentresources/dissertationqanda](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hahp/internal/philosophy/studentresources/dissertationqanda)

Sussex Skills Hub

E-submissions and e-feedback help pages

Student mentors

Mentors are HAHP PhD students who are available to help you with a range of study skills, such as time management and effective planning, help with presentations, planning and structuring written assessments, revision skills and exam preparation, contributing effectively to seminars, and making the best use of feedback. Mentors run lunchtime drop-in sessions every day of the week; see posters around the school for details.
Brushing up your general academic skills

The Careers and Employability Centre runs a range of workshops on specific skills such as: academic writing, planning and structuring essays; referencing; managing stress; revision; and more. See here for a range of online and in-person resources:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/careers/studyskills

English Language skills

The Sussex Centre for Language Studies offers resources designed to help students improve their academic English and their understanding of British academic culture.

They offer free workshops, ‘time to write’ sessions and one-to-one tutorials throughout the academic year for students for whom English is not their first language. These are available to international/overseas students studying for a degree at the University of Sussex.

Contact the team on elas@sussex.ac.uk or see here for more details
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/english/elas

Assessment

Whilst at Sussex you will sit a range of mid-term and end-of-term assessments, and get marks for them. In First Year, these marks will contribute to an overall mark which determines whether you can progress to Second Year. In Second and Final Year, your marks will be combined to compose your eventual degree classification. Degree classifications are as follows: First (70-100), 2.1 or ‘Upper Second’ (60-69), 2.2 or ‘Lower Second’ (50-59), Third (40-49), Fail (39 or below). Your Second Year marks will be weighted at 32%, your Year Abroad at 20% and your Final Year marks will be weighted at 48% of your overall degree mark.

Assessments may take the form of essays, gobbets, presentations, exams, dissertations, take away papers or in-class tests, for instance.

The Examination and Assessment Regulations govern the way in which all taught students – undergraduate and postgraduate – are examined and assessed at the University of Sussex. Follow this link to the full examination and assessment handbook.

‘Assessment criteria’ broadly describe the characteristics typically associated with various marks and classifications. For Philosophy Assessment Criteria, follow the links below:

Assessment criteria for Philosophy

Feedback on your work

Written feedback will normally be provided to all students on all assessments within three weeks of the assessment deadline. If it is necessary to return comments after this time, every effort will be made to notify students in advance, but please
remember that sometimes there are unexpected delays for reasons beyond our control (e.g. staff illnesses).

We aim to make our feedback clear and helpful, giving you constructive information about how to improve which you can take forward to other assessments in the rest or your degree. If anything is unclear about a piece of feedback, or you don’t feel it has been as helpful as it might be, we strongly encourage you to discuss it further with your lecturer or tutor during an office hour (see p.9). If you have a complaint about a piece of feedback, please contact the School Director of Teaching and Learning (see p.5), about it and they will try to resolve the matter.

In addition to written feedback, you will get informal feedback during seminars, as you discuss, explore and clarify new ideas with your tutor and fellow students.

**Electronic submission**

Students taking modules will usually be asked to submit assessments electronically where assessments are text-based, for example, an essay. Your Sussex Direct webpages and module handbook will give all assessment details, including whether the assessment is to be submitted via e-submission through Sussex Direct or in hard copy via the School Office. Feedback for all e-submission assessments will also be provided electronically.

Please refer to the frequently asked questions available on the following webpage for further information:

[www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment/esubmission](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment/esubmission)

**Turnitin**

You are encouraged to use the internet-based text-matching service, Turnitin, prior to submitting your assessments. This may help you identify problems with your referencing.

Turnitin is also used during the marking process as a means of checking the originality of submitted work. From 2014/15 all assessments submitted electronically via e-submission will be uploaded to the Turnitin database and an Originality Report will be made available to the marker. Please refer to the frequently asked questions available on the following webpage for further information:

[www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment/esubmission](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment/esubmission)

**Late Submission**

Should you miss an assessment submission deadline (for whatever reason) you may still submit the assessment after the published deadline. However, this will incur a penalty, as follows:

- Work submitted up to 24 hours late shall incur a penalty deduction of 5 percentage points (not 5% of the actual mark)
- Work submitted after 24 hours and up to 7 days late shall incur a penalty deduction of 10 percentage points (not 10% of the actual mark)
No work shall be accepted after the 7 day penalty period has elapsed

Exceptional Circumstances - please see the Student Life website

The Student Life Centre

The Student Life Centre offers information and advice to all Sussex Students. Our aim is to help you to gain the best university experience you can, whatever your circumstances, by ensuring if you run into problems you get appropriate guidance and support.

The Student Life Centre is based in the heart of the campus: on the ground floor at the side of Bramber House. There are lots of ways to access our service. We are open from 9.00 am – 5.00 pm every week day, you can drop in to see us, call 01273 876767, email studentlifecentre@sussex.ac.uk or make an appointment – just go onto your Sussex Direct site, click on your ‘Study’ tab and then on Student Life Centre. You can select the advisor you wish to see at a time that suits you.

Amongst the many issues we can help you with are:

- Personal concerns affecting study progress or well-being.
- Funding and finance including scholarships, bursaries and hardship funds.
- Sources of help to improve academic performance – identifying obstacles to learning.
- Understanding university systems and regulations in relation to assessment, services, complaints, conduct, and discipline.
- Progression, intermission and withdrawal processes - discussion and support.
- Referrals to other professional services on campus.
- Exceptional circumstances claims help.
- If you don’t know who to talk to or who to ask – start at the Student Life Centre.

Because we are also a proactive service you may be contacted directly by the SLC while you are a student here as we may wish to offer you particular support. This may be, for example, in response to concern from your School about your attendance, participation or engagement with your course.

Good academic practice

The University takes academic misconduct very seriously, as does the Philosophy Department. Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, collusion, and personation (getting someone else to write work for you). It is your responsibility to find out what constitutes plagiarism, collusion, and personation, and to avoid them. If in doubt, please ask your tutors. Here are some useful links:

Sussex Student Union information on academic misconduct: https://www.sussexstudent.com/support/academic-misconduct/

Sussex Skills Hub material on Plagiarism: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/skillshub/?id=386
Sussex Skills Hub Referencing and Plagiarism quiz:  
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/skillshub/?id=377

Philosophy Department Referencing guide

University regulations on Academic Misconduct  
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/academicmisconduct

English language resources and support:  
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/english/academic

Your feedback to us

We like to hear from you how we are doing and how we might improve things. There are several ways you can get in touch:

- Informal feedback halfway through the module, normally taken in class by your module tutor (if this doesn’t happen, please ask your tutor, or failing that, alert the Director of Teaching and Learning – see p.5).
- Electronic course evaluation questionnaires after the module is over (you will be sent an email with a link).
- A chat with your lecturer or tutor passing on any concerns you have.
- A chat with your Student Rep. For information about the Student Rep system, and to find your Rep, please see here  
https://www.sussexstudent.com/student-reps/for-students/
- If you have a major concern that you can’t resolve with your tutor, please contact either the Director of Student Experience or the Director of Teaching and Learning (see p.5).

Placements and Study Abroad

For opportunities to do an optional professional placement in your third year, please see  
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/careers/placement-internships for details.

For information about Study Abroad opportunities whilst at Sussex, please see  
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/study-abroad/destinations

What do to if you decide to change course

We recognise that sometimes students can feel after some reflection that a course is not for them, and wish to change to some other more suitable course. If this describes your situation, please see the Curriculum and Assessment Officer Molly Butterworth (Arts A7, M.P.J.Butterworth@sussex.ac.uk ) who will guide you through the process of applying to make a change. If you want advice on changing course, please see the Director of Student Experience, Hester Barron (Arts A151, H.Barron@sussex.ac.uk).
The University Student Handbook

For other more general material, please also see the University student handbook

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/students/essentials/studenthandbook/