

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	BA Politics Philosophy and History (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE, Cert HE
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences (home); School of Historical Studies
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	Not applicable
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	Politics and International Relations, Philosophy, History
UCAS code	LV25
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBAPOPH_C (full-time, 3 years) UBAPOPHI_C (part-time, 4 years)
HECoS Code	100491 – Politics 100337 – Philosophy 100302 – History
Start date of programme	Autumn 1988
Date of programme approval	Summer 1988
Date of last programme amendment approval	June 2023
Valid for academic entry year	2024-25
Programme Director	Chandak Sengoopta
Date of last revision to document	11/09/2024

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualification as we base decision on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge, and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

UCAS tariff: the UCAS tariff is set at 96-128 points.

The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a tariff calculator for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff. Students who fail to achieve this level may still be considered for entry if they demonstrate the required level of intellectual commitment and potential.

Course aims

The BA Politics, Philosophy & History (PPH) brings together three subjects in a unique combination. The programme is interdisciplinary, drawing on three of Birkbeck's Departments, and is unified by three core modules taught by members of all three contributing Departments and taken by all students. These core modules bring the three disciplines together and focus on problems they share in common.

The main aims are:

1. to enable mature students in full-time employment to undertake undergraduate study in Politics, Philosophy and History, in fulfilment of the mission of the College;
2. to enable students to develop and deepen their understanding of the conceptual and theoretical bases of the three disciplines, their methods of inquiry, and their domains of knowledge, with particular emphasis on using the methods of philosophical inquiry as tools for examining the other two disciplines;
3. to offer students the opportunity to develop and deepen their skills of critical evaluation and analysis; and
4. to enable students to develop and extend their key skills as a foundation for personal development, employment, or further academic study.

Course structure

Description

The programme consists of 360 credits. Students take 30 credits from each department at level 4, and one compulsory module of 30 credits taught by Politics at level 4, and one compulsory cross-disciplinary module of 30 credits co-taught by Philosophy and History at level 5, which is taught every other year. Students take further options to the value of 210 credits. Options are usually taken equally from the three disciplines, i.e., 60 credits each in Politics, History and Philosophy respectively, with a final 30 credits free to be taken from any of the departments.

The Compulsory Modules

Transformations in Modern Politics (30 credits at level 4) examines how democracy has evolved over time, and the social, political, cultural and intellectual changes which gave rise to modern political systems in Europe.

Problems of Explanation and Interpretation (30 credits at level 5) examines conceptions of human nature and social science, and the approaches of the three disciplines to the logic of

social explanation, problems of meaning, interpretation, historiography and historical interpretation.

In addition, students take 90 credits in the following level 4 modules:

Approaching the Past (30 credits)

Governing by Numbers (30 credits)

In 2024/5 Philosophy as the Art of Living (30 credits)

(In 2025/6 and thereafter: Knowledge and Reality (30 credits))

Option modules

The discipline-specific modules from the three departments offer both a wide range of choice and the possibility of concentrating on one of the three subjects. As a focused interdisciplinary degree, PPH is quite unlike joint-honours degrees. Politics, Philosophy and History are disciplines which share broadly similar teaching styles and expectations, so students find little difficulty in moving between subjects. A list of indicative options in each area is included below.

Teaching terms

All three departments have three-term teaching, so individual modules may be taught in any of the three terms, varying year by year. The compulsory module Approaching the Past is always taught in Term 1.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Status	Likely teaching term
Part-time – 4 years					
Year 1					
4	HICL200S4	Approaching the Past	30	Compulsory	T1
4	SSPL235S4	Philosophy as the Art of Living	30	Compulsory	T2
4	SSPO265S4	Transformations in Modern Politics	30	Compulsory	T2
Year 2					
4	SSPO137S4	Governing by Numbers	30	Compulsory	T1 or 2
5	SSPO271S5	Either Problems of Explanation and Interpretation Or Option	30	Compulsory Or Option	T1 T1, 2 or 3
5		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Year 3					
5	SSPO271S5	Either Problems of Explanation and Interpretation Or Option	30	Compulsory Or Option	T1, 2 or 3
5		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
6		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Year 4					
6	POS0024S6	Either Dissertation Or Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
6		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
6		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3

Full-time – 3 years					
Year 1					
4	HICL200S4	Approaching the Past	30	Compulsory	T1
4	SSPL235S4	Philosophy as the Art of Living	30	Compulsory	T2
4	SSPO137S4	Governing by Numbers	30	Compulsory	T1 or 2
4	SSPO265S4	Transformations in Modern Politics	30	Compulsory	2
Year 2					
5 Or 6	SSPO271S5	Either Problems of Explanation and Interpretation Or Option	30	Compulsory Or Option	T1 T1, 2 or 3
5		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
5		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
5		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Year 3					
5 Or 6	SSPO271S5	Either Problems of Explanation and Interpretation Or Option	30	Compulsory Or Option	T1 T1, 2 or 3
6	POSO024S6	Either Dissertation Or Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
6		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
6		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3

Notes:

Because the compulsory Problems of Explanation and Interpretation module runs every second year, students take it in either Y2 or Y3, with their schedule of option modules adjusting accordingly.

The dissertation is optional. When taken, it is always taken in a student's final year.

Indicative option modules:

Politics

The Study of Politics
 Comparative Government
 Introduction to Global Politics
 Contemporary British Politics
 Introduction to International Political Economy
 Gender, Race and Class in the Global Political Economy
 Comparative European Politics
 Food, Politics and the City
 Social and Political Theory
 War and Modern Society
 Parliamentary Studies
 The European Union Polity
 Chinese Politics

Philosophy

Ancient and Medieval Philosophy
 Critical Thinking
 Ethical Traditions
 Free Will and Moral Responsibility
 Language and Metaphysics
 Philosophy of AI

Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science
Philosophy of Science
Political Philosophy
Theories of Value
Topics in Early Modern Philosophy

History

The Early Modern World, 1500-1800: Reformations and Revolutions
The Medieval World: From Constantine to the Khans
The Modern World
Histories of Magic and Witchcraft in the Pre-Modern World
African Modernities
The Birth of a Superpower: China from 1900 to the Present Day
Imagining the Cold War
Death and Dying: The End of Life in Britain's Long Nineteenth Century (Level 6)

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching are organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists and readings, and information about how and when you will be assessed.

Various teaching and learning methods are used on the degree. Most teaching takes place in lectures and seminars, employing a variety of methods such as small group work, student presentations, debates, guest speakers and so on. Extensive use is made of audio-visual facilities and web-based learning tools such as Moodle.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through essays, which will develop in length and expected complexity as you progress. Some modules may have short writing assignments, short-answer exams (completed at home) or sets of problems to solve. Written feedback on essays is provided within four weeks of submission, and students have the opportunity to clarify any feedback by contacting their lecturers and seminar leaders.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

Students completing the BA Politics, Philosophy & History will have:

1. Demonstrated an ability to apply critically the main theories, models and concepts used in the three disciplines to the analysis of issues arising within and across those disciplines.
2. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of:

- a) the social, political, cultural and intellectual changes that gave rise to the modern system of states;
 - b) the origins of modern conceptions of the human and of social science, and of the distinctive approaches of the disciplines of Politics, Philosophy and History to the logic of social explanation, problems of meaning, and issues of historiography and historical interpretation.
3. Expanded and deepened their knowledge of each of the three disciplines via the completion of at least two full course units in each discipline.
 4. Successfully completed an independent research project, where they have chosen the dissertation option as their final course unit.
 5. Extended and developed their analytical, evaluative and critical capacities.
 6. Developed transferable skills, including the ability to take responsibility for their own learning, learning how to learn, making oral and written presentations, planning and producing written assignments, working independently, and, where they have so chosen, using information technology.

Careers and further study

You will find PPH graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- research positions in universities and other public and private research bodies;
- jobs in central and local government, trades unions, political parties, NGOs and international organisations;
- journalism;
- political/civic activism; and
- teaching in secondary education.

Birkbeck's PPH graduates will finish with a set of valuable attributes, such as:

- The ability to work as part of a team
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English
- Research skills
- Skills in evaluating and assessing types of information
- The ability to present yourself and an argument

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on the [careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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