

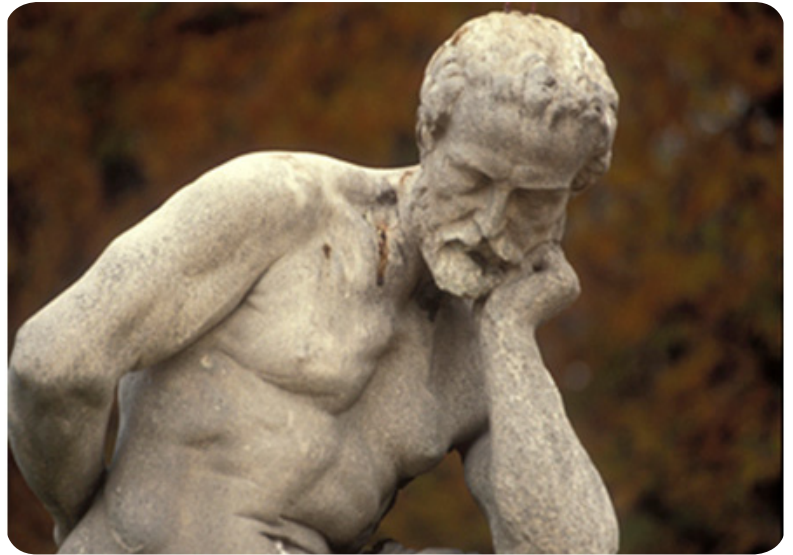
Philosophy

A Level

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Exam Board: AQA



What is the course about?

You will be introduced to the methods and aims of Philosophy through the study of traditional philosophical problems. Please note that you must enjoy reading and writing as well as being prepared to contribute to class discussions. Philosophy is intellectually challenging and very stimulating. It is guaranteed to get you thinking about things in an entirely new way.

For the AS level you will study:

You will be introduced to philosophical reasoning and argument and how to assess whether an argument is successful or not. You will explore how reason and experience contribute to our knowledge of the world, why you should be governed, and what the nature of a person is. You will also study a selection of the following issues: whether we can know there is a world existing independently of us, and why we value art.

For the A2 level you will study:

You will deepen your expertise and understanding of Philosophy by studying Political Philosophy to a deeper level and Moral Philosophy which involves asking what makes an action right or wrong, what constitutes a good or bad person and whether there can be such a thing as moral truth or whether morals are relative to particular cultures and groups. You will have opportunity to study a set text by a major historical figure in Philosophy such as Plato, Mill or Hume.

How is the course assessed?

At the AS level there are two written papers of 1 hour and 30 minutes each, each comprising 50% of the total AS marks and 25% of the final examinations. At the A2 level there are two written papers, the first being of two hours duration and worth 60% of the final A2 marks and 30% of the total A level marks. The second paper lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes and is worth 40% of the total A2 marks and 20% of the total A level marks.

What skills will I need and develop in this course?

You will learn the skill of spotting and explaining flaws in philosophical theories and arguments, and you will also be enabled to construct and develop your own arguments in support of, or against, a variety of philosophical positions. You need good written skills and will develop these further in the context of producing essays on philosophical questions.

Subject combination advice:

Philosophy combines extremely well with most other disciplines because these have philosophical issues embedded within them. It goes very well with Humanities subjects such as History, English Literature and Language, Classical Civilisation, and Politics, but also very well with the Sciences and Social Sciences, such as Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Psychology.

What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

Philosophy has always been seen as providing a rigorous intellectual training and is regarded as an invaluable preparation for careers in the law, the higher reaches of the Civil Service and the Diplomatic Service, jobs requiring policy formation, and work in education. Universities particularly value Philosophy for the analytical skills and the cognitive perspective on other disciplines it provides.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general entry criteria that the College requires, you will also need to achieve at least a Grade C in GCSE English Language.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

Opportunities are offered for the discussion of ideas both in class and outside of College through visits to events like the annual "Battle of Ideas". A successful trip to New York took place in July 2010 to visit the United Nations, Ground Zero and Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Students will also be taken to philosophical conferences to enhance their studies at AS and A2 levels, and guest speakers from university philosophy departments will be invited in. There are also opportunities for extra help in tutorial and lunchtime sessions, and catch-up sessions will be provided for writing tasks that need completion.

What is the difference between Philosophy and Psychology?

Psychology has often been described as the science of human and animal behaviour, and as a science it uses empirical methods of investigation, essentially observation and experiment. Philosophy is very different and is carried out through the use of reasoning and conceptual analysis, hence its resemblance to mathematics in this respect. Philosophy is also a much broader discipline than Psychology, encompassing philosophy of science, the theory of knowledge, the philosophy of religion, the philosophy of art, ethics, logic, and political philosophy, to mention only a few of the areas in which it is involved.



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