Philosophy at Edinburgh

Prof Matthew Chrisman
Head of Subject Area

Dr Bryan Pickel
Undergraduate Teaching Director

Dr Wolfgang Schwarz
Prehonours Coordinator
What is Philosophy?

- Philosophy begins with a certain sort of wonderment:
  - What does it all mean?
  - What really exists?
  - What’s the difference between fact and opinion?
  - How should I live my life?
  - Could I be in the matrix?
  - Is there a God?

- Philosophy becomes a discipline in the attempt to move beyond this wonderment and pursue concrete and rationally defensible answers to these sorts of questions.
What is Philosophy about?

- Philosophy may examine concepts and views from science, art, religion, mathematics, politics, or any other realm.

- So, in a sense, philosophy is about everything.

- In another sense, philosophy is a method for thinking clearly and logically that can be applied to many different topics.
Introduction to Philosophy

- MOOC and Textbook

www.coursera.org/learn/philosophy
What do I do with a degree in Philosophy?

Philosophy is one of the most employable degree subjects in the humanities and social sciences. Employers value the analytic skills philosophy develops.

- Finance & Business (“The City”)
- Journalism & Broadcasting
- Education
- Law
- Civil Service & various forms of public service
- IT & Computing

- Further study of Philosophy (and other subjects)

- Other employment of Edinburgh Philosophy graduates: novelist, musician, publishing, politics, the Army
Philosophy is about acquiring a skill set that helps to deal with the very difficult subject matters it deals with:

- Being able to understand and produce arguments.
- Being able to separate good arguments from bad ones.
- Being able to communicate a position (even if and especially if it is not yours).
- Developing confidence that you can tackle very hard problems.

Career Services

- Consultants: Janet Forsyth (PPLS); Kay Barbour (Philosophy)
Philosophy at Edinburgh

School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
PHILOSOPHY

Prospective students
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Prospective students
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Research and impact
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Impact and outreach
Research highlights

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Academic staff list
Support staff list
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Current undergraduates
Undergraduate handbooks
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All information for current undergraduates

News
Welcome new students
Most influential living philosophers
Forward Thinking Blog: Dr Guy Fletcher

Events
Epistemology seminar
Epistemology seminar
PPIG: Philosophy, Psychology, and Informatics Group

Contact us
Philosophy at Edinburgh

- As the historic home of [David Hume](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hume) and [Adam Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Smith), Edinburgh is a fitting place to study philosophy.
Philosophy at Edinburgh

- Edinburgh currently has one of the UK’s largest and most vibrant Philosophy departments.
- 33 faculty pursuing a programme of teaching and research. 50 PhD students many of whom tutor prehonours courses. 80 masters students on five MSc programmes. And over 600 undergraduates.
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- Teaching Office and Student Support Office
  - Ann-Marie Cowe and James Abel
  - David Moran
Where Are We?

- Philosophy is in **Dugald Stewart Building** on Bristo Square
- The Teaching Office is on the **ground floor**
- Most academic offices are on the **fourth, fifth and sixth floors**
Programme Structure

- Single and Joint Degrees

- Years 1 and 2 (Pre-Honours)
  - Introductory coverage of entire subject
  - Lectures and weekly tutorials
  - Outside courses

- Years 3 and 4 (Honours)
  - More specialised courses, starting in Y3, deepening in Y4
  - More course choice
  - Smaller classes
  - Opportunity to write independent or coursework dissertation
### University Learning:

Offers you the opportunity to study your subject in depth. It involves autonomous and peer learning and values critical evaluation and independent thought and analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key elements for success:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>time-management</td>
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<tr>
<td>organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>academic writing skills</td>
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<td>referencing skills</td>
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<td>essay planning and structuring</td>
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<td>critical analysis</td>
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<td>independent research and reading</td>
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### Support to build your academic skills:

- **Lecturers and Tutors**
- **Study Skills Sessions**
- **Personal Tutor**
- **Peers and Peer Support**
- **Preparing for Study** (new student webpages)
- **Learn Better** (a self enrol course)
- **Institute for Academic Development** workshops and consultations
Assessment and Feedback

Assessment

What you learn from assessment is for the future, not just about marks now!
What's expected at university will be different from what you've done before so:

- it's normal to be uncertain and to make mistakes.
- read assessment guidance carefully.
- ask for help from staff and more experienced students.
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Feedback

We’ll return essays and assignments within 15 working days of submission, or in time to be of use in subsequent assessments, whichever is sooner.
Time spent making sense of feedback you've been given is time very well spent.
If in doubt, talk to your lecturer or personal tutor.
Student Consultation Hours

All faculty have ‘student consultation hours’ – these are times when you should be able to catch them in their office to discuss matters related to your course. Additionally, all faculty are happy for you to stop by at other times or make an appointment by email.
**Reading and Film Group** is every Monday evening.
**Discussion Group** is every Tuesday evening.
**Academic Support Sessions** are every Thursday afternoon.
**Lecture Series** is every Thursday evening.

http://philsoc.eu/
Study Skills Workshops
philskills.weebly.com/

All sessions 6 - 7 PM, with invitation to students to go to Teviot afterwards for pizza [paid for by dept.]

Sem 1
• Patrick Todd (Studying philosophy [Freshers only]) (Thursday, September 28)
• Fiona Doherty (Time management for philosophers) (Tuesday, October 10)
• Bryan Pickel (Essay Writing) (Tuesday, October 17)
• Stephen Ryan (Approaching philosophy exams [Pre-honours]) (Monday, November 6)

Sem 2
• Brian Rabern (Studying Logic) (Thursday, January 11)
• Joe Dewhurst (How to read a philosophical text) (Thursday, January 25)
• Joey Pollock (Essay rewriting) (Thursday, February 8)
• Wolfgang Schwarz (Analysis and Explication) (Thursday, February 22)
Suggestions and Questions

- Matthew Chrisman
  DSB 5.11 — headofphilosophy@ed.ac.uk

- Bryan Pickel
  DSB 4.04b — bryan.pickel@ed.ac.uk

- Wolfgang Schwarz
  DSB 6.02 -- wolfgang.schwarz@ed.ac.uk

- Your Personal Tutor

- Teaching Office

- Who to Contact List:
  http://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/philosophy/people/roles
Thank you!