



Philosophy

at the
University of Edinburgh



Guide for New Students 2019 – 2020

The Program

Welcome to Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh!

Our program builds progressively through 2 Pre-Honours and 2 Honours years. Over the course of these 4 years, you will become more independent in your ability to research and write philosophy. You will discover new questions to ask about the world and your place within it. Your program will culminate in independent research on projects of your own choosing.

In your first year, you'll take three mandatory modules

- *Morality and Value* – central topics in moral and ethical philosophy
- *Greats* – close examination of ancient and early modern philosophers
- *Logic* – tools to reason and argue effectively

In addition, you may consider taking the optional course

- *Philosophy of Science 1* – what's so special about science anyway?

The Scottish degree structure aims to give students a broad background, and in addition to your philosophy course, you'll pursue the pre-honours requirements for a separate degree of your choosing.

Joint honours students should note that their degree may have slight differences in requirements—contact your Personal Tutor or check your DPT for details.

Participating in Modules

What should you expect from your first year philosophy modules?

Each module will have core and background readings each week.

- Complete the core readings **before** class and tutorial each week.
- For best results, re-read the core reading and some of the background readings after your lectures.
- *Read actively.* Try to write down each author's positions and arguments in your own words. Ask yourself, *how might someone disagree with this position or argument?*

Attend your lectures.

- At Pre-Honours, there are three meetings of 50 minutes each per week.
- *Listen actively.* Try to anticipate the arguments. Ask yourself if you understand what is being said, and if you agree. *Don't be afraid to ask questions!*

Attend your weekly tutorial.

- These are small group meetings.
- For best results, be prepared to *actively participate and engage in discussion.*

Attend your lecturer's office hour when you can. Think up questions about your course content in advance.

Who's Who

- *Personal Tutor* – can advise you on any academic decisions. Your first port of call for questions about what you can or should do in philosophy.
- *Course Organizer* – coordinates all academic aspects of your module and is available to answer questions about both course content and practicalities.
- *Lecturers* – deliver in-class lectures on your module. Typically they include both the course organizer and additional faculty.
- *Course Tutor* – runs your weekly tutorial meeting and is available after you receive your marks to discuss them with you.
- *Student Support Office* – provides advice and administrative support for special circumstances and extracurricular contingencies, such as illness, changing degree program, or taking a leave of absence.
- *Teaching Office* – is first port of call for all practical administrative matters, such as signing up for courses, or changing your tutorial group.

Academic Resources

Philosophy hosts a wide array of resources, both within the school, and independently offered, to assist you on your philosophical journey.

- *Philosophy Skills Workshops* – These are special sessions for pre-honours students led by your lecturer to help you develop your ability to read, write, and practice philosophy. *More details to follow soon by email and in your scheduled course lectures.*

- *Writing Centre* – The PPLS Writing Centre offers workshops for first years to help you improve your writing.
<https://writingcentre.ppls.ed.ac.uk/>



- *PhilPALS* – A student-led project to help first year philosophy students transition into university life, make friends, improve their grades, and get used to reading, writing, and studying philosophy.
<https://en-gb.facebook.com/EdPhilPALS/>



Beyond the Classroom

Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh doesn't stop at the classroom door, and if you're keen to pursue your philosophical interests beyond your coursework, a number of opportunities are available to continue to pursue philosophy beyond the standard degree structure.

- *Philosophy Run Events* – The Subject Area will host a number of events each year so that students can get to know each other. For first years, we will host lunches for each degree programme, and in semester 2 there will be a reception for all pre-honours students. *Watch your email for further details!*

- *The Mary Shepherd Conference* – An annual conference on feminist philosophy and philosophy of race, organised by undergraduate students and open to all. The conference is named after Lady Mary Shepherd, a philosopher based in Edinburgh around the same time as Hume, whose work has been mostly forgotten. *Watch your email for further details!*

- *Philosophy Society* – Edinburgh boasts the oldest and largest undergraduate philosophy society in the world. In addition to an impressive lineup of invited speakers, they host a number of more informal philosophy events.

<https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/societies/society/philosophysociety/>



- *Staff Seminar (and more!)* – The research faculty at Edinburgh organize a number of regular seminars and conferences, including an invited speaker seminar on general philosophy topics, as well as more specialized speaker series in topics such as philosophy of cognitive science, philosophy of science, and epistemology. Undergraduates are welcome to attend these events.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/philosophy/events>



Further Resources

The University of Edinburgh hosts a wide array of resources, both within the school, and independently offered, to assist you on your philosophical journey.

- *Student Initiative Fund* – PPLS offers students the opportunity to organize their own events, from hosting an academic speaker to supporting a cultural or social celebration; so long as it will benefit the PPLS undergraduate community, you can apply for financial support.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/philosophy/current/undergraduate/funding-student-initiatives>



- *Careers Services* – Whether you are a 4th year student desperately trying to decide what to do after Uni, or a 1st year looking to plan early for a career within philosophy, *Edinburgh University Careers Service* offers guidance, both general and tailored to your specific needs, both workshops and events, and one-on-one sessions.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/about-us/what-we-do/iag-services/school-specific-information/school-of-philosophy-psychology-and-language-science/philosophy>



- *EUSA* – The *Edinburgh University Student Association* supports a number of resources for students, both academic and social.

<https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/>



- *Advice Place* – For anything at all that comes up during your time at Edinburgh, the *Advice Place* has help: from financial or housing difficulties to study strategies, from health issues to benefits and employment, all advice is free and confidential.

https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/



- *University Chaplaincy* – Welcoming to all religious persuasions, but not just for the religious, the chaplaincy offers support to any student in a safe and hospitable environment, with an emphasis on mindfulness and wellbeing.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy>

