For these 20 credit option modules, you will meet individually with the module convenor early in the term to discuss potential research topics in the general module area. You will be expected to produce an essay proposal and reading list in a chosen research area by week 7 (and will receive written or verbal feedback on this), and to prepare and discuss an essay plan with the convenor by week 10. These two formal one-to-one meetings (at the start of term to discuss topic ideas, and at the end of term to discuss the essay plan) are an absolute minimum requirement; it is expected that you will make regular use of the module convenor’s office hours to develop and discuss your proposed topic and ideas over the course of the term. In addition, you will be expected to attend lectures and participate in seminars for the corresponding 3rd year undergraduate module, which will provide a general background in the wider research area. Assessment of the module is based on a 4,000 word essay, to be submitted by Monday of week 1 of the following term.

Please note that modules and teaching staff may still need to change, due to unanticipated staffing issues.

1. Autumn term

PHI00073M German Idealism: Moral, Legal, and Political Philosophy (James Clarke)

This module provides an introduction to German Idealist moral, legal, and political philosophy. We will critically examine the central claims and theses of that philosophy and consider its relevance for, and influence upon, debates within contemporary moral, legal, and political philosophy.

Topics covered may include:

- The relationship between law and morality.
- Fichte’s conception of the social contract.
- The nature and significance of interpersonal recognition.
- The nature and justification of human rights.
- “Organicist” and “mechanicist” conceptions of the political community.
- Social atomism and social holism.
- The relationship between autonomy and legal and political institutions

Recommended Reading

Fichte, J. G. Foundations of Natural Right (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.)
Fichte, J. G. The System of Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.)
PHI00050M Metaphysics of Mind (Helen Yetter-Chappell)

The module will focus on the dominant views on the relationship between the mind and the external world, including: physicalism, interactionist and epiphenomenalist dualism, panpsychism, and idealism. We will also look at the philosophical problems surrounding the unity of consciousness.

Recommended Reading

A Dialogue on Consciousness, Alter & Howell
Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous, Berkeley
The Conscious Mind, David Chalmers
“The Combination Problem for Panpsychism”, David Chalmers
Consciousness and Fundamental Reality, Goff
“Epiphenomenal Qualia”, Jackson
“Defining Physicalism”, Ney
“What’s So Bad about Overdetermination”, Sider
“Realistic Monism: Why Physicalism Entails Panpsychism”, Strawson
“Idealism Without God”, Yetter-Chappell
“What is the Unity of Consciousness?”, Bayne & Chalmers,
“Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness”, Nagel

PHI00027M Philosophy of Christianity (David Efird)

This module examines the implications and beliefs of a range of Christian doctrines which have philosophical importance. These include the doctrines of Scripture (that the Bible is authoritative and inspired by God), the Trinity (there is one God who exists in three persons), Providence (that God has a plan for humanity and for the world), Original Sin (that humans are guilty of sin from birth and created such that they will inevitably sin), the Incarnation (that Jesus is both human and divine), the Atonement (that the death of Jesus reconciles humanity to God), the Resurrection of the Body (that we will be raised bodily from the dead), the Life Everlasting (that there is an eternal, conscious afterlife consisting of life in either Heaven or Hell), and the Eucharist (that the consecrated bread is the Body of Christ and the consecrated wine the Blood of Christ, respectively).

Recommended Reading

Oliver Crisp (ed), A Reader in Contemporary Philosophical Theology (New York: Continuum, 2009).

2. Spring Term

PHI00051M Contemporary Issues in Bioethics (Stephen Holland)

In this module we will explore philosophically the moral implications of advances in sciences related to medicine. In particular, we will look to understand some recent relevant advances in sciences relating to medicine, the moral implications of such advances and examine how philosophical moral theory might help deal with the resultant bioethical issue.

Recommended Reading

PHI00048M Pragmatism (Nick Jones)

This module centres upon a review of the loosely-defined tradition of American Pragmatism, considering the key ideas of the ‘classical pragmatists’ (Peirce, James, Dewey), how these were drawn on by later writers (e.g. Quine, Putnam, Misak, Rorty), and their continued influence in contemporary philosophy. We will look at the key components of the pragmatist programme, in particular: empiricism, inquiry, fallibilism, naturalistic epistemology, the focus on practical effects and related ideas about truth and meaning.

Recommended Reading


PHI00043M Philosophy of Emotions (Dorothea Debus)

This module will consider some of the contemporary debates and positions in the Philosophy of the Emotions. It will examine the three main definitional theories of the emotions which are defended in the contemporary philosophical literature on the emotions – namely feeling theories, judgement theories and perceptual theories – and will consider philosophical accounts of the place of the emotions in the context of a subject’s wider mental life. Topics that might be considered here include the relation between emotions and reason; emotions and attention; emotions, knowledge and understanding; and emotion and motivation.

Recommended Reading


PHI00046M Philosophy of Film (Greg Currie)

This module will examine some of the main problems that arise when we consider the distinctive character of cinema as a story telling medium. The module will involve close attention to several films representing different aspects of the medium; taking a research-led approach to reading and critically assessing interpretations of those films.

Students will also develop an in-depth and systematic critical understanding of contemporary philosophical debates concerning the following issues:

- The film medium: moving pictures
- Film and photographic realism
- The viewer
- Film and the representation of subjectivity
- Film style:
- Unreliable narration in film:
- Film genre
- Documentary

Recommended Reading

George Wilson, Seeing fictions in film
Greg Currie, Image and Mind
Berys Gaut, The Philosophy of Cinematic Art