Welcome to the Department of Philosophy—we’re very pleased that you are joining us, and we look forward to meeting you at the end of September. We hope you enjoy your time at York and that you find your course stimulating and rewarding.

This handbook explains what you need to know about beginning to study Philosophy at York. Read it carefully, keep it safe, and bring it with you; you’ll need to refer to it several times during your first year (the information is available online on the Department’s web-pages, together with other useful information, but it will be handy to have a hard copy).

Some of you will be coming to Philosophy for the first time. For nearly all of you, studying at university will be very different from the work you have done at school or college. I can’t emphasise too strongly just how different it is. We expect you to take responsibility for your own ideas and your own progress, to become an independent scholar and thinker, not just to absorb what we tell you and report it back to us. But that is why university study is so rewarding: you have the opportunity to really think and work out your ideas, and it is our job to support you in doing that. It is not easy to think carefully about difficult topics, but by the end of the three years you spend here you will have a set of skills which will not only allow you to engage with interesting philosophical debates, but are also applicable to all sorts of other work and areas of life.

To succeed you will have to be disciplined and self-motivated, manage your time effectively, think critically and carefully, and use what you learn to develop answers to new problems and work out your own position on philosophical issues. This is an exciting process, and the work you do in your first year will help you make the transition from school to university successfully.

The rest of this booklet covers:

- Things to know and do before you arrive at York
- Your first week at University (Key dates and times for Week 1)
- Studying philosophy at York
- Your course requirements
- Your first year modules

We’ll see you soon!

Dr Chris Jay
Director of the First Year Programme
Things to know and do before you arrive

How can you prepare for your first term? This section makes some suggestions to help you get into the swing.

**Information**
You will receive an e-mail from the University headed ‘Joining Instructions’. This will explain what you need to do to enrol, so please make sure you open and read it.

The University Welcome page (www.york.ac.uk/students/welcome/) has lots of information about becoming a student at York. It will guide you through the various things you need to do before you arrive, and provides a link to your timetable of welcome and orientation events.

It also tells you how to upgrade your IT account. Once you’ve done this, you can access pages on the University’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) at https://vle.york.ac.uk. Here you’ll find a number of modules to support your studies. Some of these will not be available until teaching begins, but there are three that you can look at before then:

- Our Departmental welcome page, *Preparing to Study Philosophy* (available now)
- The online sections of the module *Beginning Philosophy* (from September)
- The University’s *Academic Integrity Tutorial* (from mid-September)

There is more about the *Beginning Philosophy* module in the *Your modules* section later in this booklet. You do not *have* to begin it until the start of term, but you might want to get ahead by working on some of the introductory sections. The *Academic Integrity Tutorial* is compulsory for all students. Again, you do not have to start it before term begins, but you may want to do so once it becomes available; it will not take you long to complete.

You can find out more about the University from the website, www.york.ac.uk, and more about the Philosophy Department from our webpages at www.york.ac.uk/philosophy (or follow the ‘departments’ link from the university home page). Take a look at these before you arrive at York; the departmental pages *About Us*, and *For Current Students* will be most useful to you.

The Department has its own Facebook page, *Department of Philosophy University of York UK*. There is also a student-run Philosophy Society, details of which can be found at https://www.facebook.com/yorkphilosophysoc

See the University of York Students’ Union webpage (http://www.yusu.org) for Facebook pages and Twitter feeds giving information about Freshers Week events.

**Communication**
We will normally communicate with you via your university e-mail account, so it is really important that you check this regularly once your course starts—at least once each weekday during term. Don’t forget to check it regularly outside of term time too, as otherwise you might miss important information. Sometimes you will need to collect material from the department, and pigeonholes can be found to the right of the reception desk in the Philosophy Department Building (Sally Baldwin Building A).
People
You can find out more about the Department’s staff from our webpage. There are some people you will meet soon after you arrive:

Your supervisor: You will be allocated a supervisor, a member of academic staff who will be a constantly available point of contact with the Department during your time at York. You’ll meet with them at the start of each term to review your progress and talk through any problems. The relationship with your supervisor is very important: they are your first point of contact if you have any problems, need advice or want to discuss course options. The best way to contact your supervisor quickly is by e-mail (e-mail addresses are given on the About Us pages of the Department’s website), but you can also telephone or visit them during their Feedback and Advice Time (aka Office Hour). This is a time each academic sets aside every week to see students (to give advice or guidance, answer questions, discuss problems or just talk philosophy). We’ll be pleased to see you at Feedback and Advice sessions—you don’t need to make an appointment. Each academic will set a regular Feedback and Advice time at the beginning of each term—you’ll find details on our office doors, on a list in the Department reception area and on our website.

Your module leaders and tutors: Each module is led by a member of academic staff who gives the lectures and is responsible for module administration. In the first year they are assisted by seminar tutors who are carefully selected and trained research students. Module leaders and tutors will be happy to see you during their Feedback and Advice Times. Note that the best ways to contact academics are by email or by dropping in to a Feedback and Advice session.

Director of the First Year Programme: The first year of your course is particularly important in helping you get settled into university life and work, so there is a member of staff who oversees the first year as a whole. This is Dr Chris Jay, who can be contacted at christopher.jay@york.ac.uk or 01904 324301. Chris’s office is Sally Baldwin A/111.

The departmental office and administrative staff: The Philosophy Department is based in Sally Baldwin Buildings, Block A, and most staff have offices here. Unless it is open for teaching or other events, the building is only accessible from 9.00 am–5.00 pm.

The Departmental Office is on the ground floor, next to the front door. Here you will find our administrative staff, Carol Dixon, Karen Norris and (from October) Claire Levett. Julie Kay, the Department Manager, has an office on the first floor of the block. The Departmental Office is open for enquiries Monday to Friday, 10.00 am to 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm to 4.00 pm. Please keep to these times. Here are the contact details:

Department of Philosophy
University of York
Heslington
York Y010 5DD
Tel: 01904 323251
E-mail: philosophy@york.ac.uk

The Philosophy Society: York is lucky to have a very active student-run Philosophy Society, and joining the Society is an excellent way of meeting other students and pursuing your philosophical interests outside the seminar room. They’re a friendly bunch and organise social events, film shows, talks and discussions. Join their Facebook group (see above) and meet them at our welcome events and/or the Freshers’ Fair.
Preparing to study
Make sure you look at the Preparing to Study site at https://vle.york.ac.uk, which has several activities for you to try before you arrive.

The best way of studying philosophy is by doing it, not by learning about it, and this means reading (and thinking hard about) works of philosophy. There are some very good ‘Introductions…’ or ‘Guides…’ but they are never a substitute for the real thing. As Bertrand Russell put it: ‘The student who wishes to acquire an elementary knowledge of philosophy will find it both easier and more profitable to read some of the works of the great philosophers than to attempt to derive an all-round view from handbooks’. Here are a few classics and contemporary pieces you might look at. (Once you can access the University Library website you will be able to view online editions of at least some of these—see http://vorssearch.york.ac.uk or try http://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/ and click on ‘Philosophy’.)

Rene Descartes, Discourse on Method or Meditations on First Philosophy
This is a classic text of ‘early modern’ philosophy, and it deals with knowledge and metaphysics as well as some arguments for the existence of God.

Philippa Foot, Natural Goodness
A short book full of interesting ideas about ethics and rationality by a leading recent moral philosopher.

David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding or An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals
These works by Hume are slightly more accessible, but still very good, presentations of the ideas in his Treatise of Human Nature, and both the Treatise and these Enquiries are classics. The Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding deals with knowledge (including great discussions of ‘inductive’ or probabilistic reasoning, and an interesting discussion of the evidence for miracles), whilst the Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals deals with ethics.

This is a paper in a philosophy journal (Noûs) which you probably won’t be able to access until your University email/library account is working, but once it is (which should be well before you arrive in York), you can read this famous paper dealing with an interesting problem in metaphysics.

John Stuart Mill, On Liberty
On Liberty is short and has been very influential not just in philosophy but also in politics, law and society more widely. Mill defends a liberal political philosophy and discusses the proper limits of freedom.

Thomas Nagel, Mortal Questions
This is a collection of essays by a leading C20th philosopher, and it includes discussions of various issues in philosophy including consciousness, equality and the meaning of life. It includes his classic essay ‘What is it like to be a bat?’, which isn’t just about being a bat!

A really interesting recent paper on rational decision making about things which change your life so much that you cannot predict what things will be like afterwards (such as having children).

Plato
Try one or more of the short dialogues — e.g. the Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno and Phaedo are all available in various editions individually, or collected together in Five Dialogues (published by Hackett) — or The Republic (which is much longer). Plato writes ‘dialogues’ which are like scripts for a play, and he presents his arguments through the words of Socrates who talks to various people about all sorts of things, trying to understand those
things better. So, for example, the *Meno* deals with how we can ever learn anything, the *Phaedo* is about the soul, and *Crito* is about obligation to obey those in political power and the *Republic* ranges over epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and political philosophy. The *Apology* is supposed to be a record of Socrates’s defense at his trial, where he was sentenced to death for ‘corrupting the youth of the city’ with his questioning of received wisdom, and ‘denying the city’s Gods’.

**Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy***
Part introduction, part original philosophy, this is perhaps the most accessible of the works by a key figure in early C20th philosophy.

**Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics***
This is a nice introduction to some key debates in moral philosophy, with some really interesting ideas. Singer is a well-known and sometimes controversial contemporary moral philosopher.

You don’t have to read all (or any) of these items—they are suggestions, not requirements—but if you do give some of them a go, take your time and think hard about:

- What is being discussed
- What the writer is trying to persuade you to believe
- Their reasons for thinking that their answer is correct
- Whether these are good reasons
- What other answers to these questions there might be. Are they any better? Why?

Here are a few suggestions for reference works/introductions — just don’t rely on them as a substitute for reading primary texts!

**Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy***
A very useful reference work

**Nigel Warburton, *Thinking from A–Z***
A rather briefer dictionary of some philosophical terms and ideas

**Nigel Warburton, *Philosophy: The Basics***
A brief introduction to the various fields of philosophy

The various *Very Short Introductions* (OUP) are generally reliable, often excellent, but always best read alongside original texts

There are further reading suggestions in the module descriptions below.
Your first week at university

The first week of term (‘Week One’) is Monday 26th September to Sunday 2nd October (overseas students will arrive a little earlier). When you’ve upgraded your IT account and enrolled online, you will be able to see your timetable for Welcome and Orientation Events (see the University’s Welcome page, at www.york.ac.uk/students/welcome). Here we pick out a couple of these items, including the departmental events that you should attend (do check the timetable again at the start of term in case any details change).

Tuesday 27th September

9.00–11.00am Philosophy Department Registration in Sally Baldwin Block A: All students taking Philosophy as part of their degree must register with the Philosophy Department. Here you will confirm who your supervisor is, learn how to access your timetable online (if you haven’t managed it already), pick up other information relevant to your course and ask any other questions you may have, and the University photographer will take your photograph. Please note that registration should only take about 5 minutes, so you just need to drop in at some point between 9am and 11am; you don't have to be there at 9am!

Thursday 29th September

11.00am–12.30pm Introductory talk for all Philosophy students in room C/A/101 (Chemistry C Block): With Chris Jay, Director of the First Year Programme (and guests!). All students must attend this important meeting. Chris will be joined by the Head of Department to welcome you to the University and the Department and give advice and information about your course and about studying philosophy. Representatives of the Students’ Union, Library Service and Philosophy Society will explain what they can offer.

12.30–1pm Cohort Photo All new philosophy undergraduates will gather for a group photograph (we will set off together from the Welcome meeting to the photo venue).

5.30pm Reception for Single Subject Philosophy students in the Philosophy Department, Sally Baldwin Buildings Block A: We’d like to welcome you to the Department at an informal reception where you can chat to fellow students and staff over drinks and nibbles. See you there!

Friday 30th September

5.30pm Reception for Joint Honours Philosophy students, in the Philosophy Department, Sally Baldwin Buildings Block A: If you’re taking a combined degree (‘Philosophy and…’ or ‘… and Philosophy’) we’d like to welcome you to the Department at this informal reception where you can chat to fellow students and staff over drinks and nibbles. See you there!

Saturday 1st October

YUSU Freshers’ Fair 10.00am — 4.00pm, across the campus: Find out about the student clubs and societies, and join a few — don’t forget the Philosophy Society! See the Welcome and Orientation Events Timetable for details.
Other important things to do during Week One:

**Meet your supervisor:** You will be allocated an academic supervisor when you register, and you should attend an introductory meeting with him or her in Week 1. We’ll be in touch with you to tell you when this will be.

**Complete the online Academic Integrity tutorial:** This is a University requirement. You must have a completion certificate for this module (available mid-September at [http://vle.york.ac.uk](http://vle.york.ac.uk)) before you can submit any written work. Why not do it as soon as possible? It will only take an hour or so.

**Find out about the Library:** Even if you think you know all about libraries please visit their ‘new users’ page at [http://libguides.york.ac.uk/induction](http://libguides.york.ac.uk/induction), and make sure you also visit the real thing!

**Check your timetable and your module requirements:** Check your online timetable (via the University’s *Welcome* site) and read *Your first year modules* below.

**College events:** The Provost or Principal of each college will hold welcome events for new students.

**Medical registration:** Ensure that you register with a GP. See the University *Welcome* page for details of health centre registration.

**Collect your University card:** This acts as your ID, room access, library and printing card — so it matters. Collect yours from college reception if you’re living on campus, or from the Unicard desk in the Information Centre otherwise.

**YUSU (the Students’ Union):** See [http://www.yusu.org](http://www.yusu.org) for information on Students’ Union activities, and join their official freshers’ Facebook group

**International students:** See the University *Welcome* page for ‘blue box’ information specifically for international students ([www.york.ac.uk/students/welcome](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/welcome))
Studying philosophy at York

Philosophy is not a subject where you will be asked to memorise and repeat a lot of material. The main aim of your course is to equip you to think seriously and independently about major philosophical questions, to understand what is involved in these questions, and to form and defend your own answers to them.

These questions are always difficult, and you usually have to think hard about them for a while to understand them. Don’t expect to pick things up on a first reading. Since philosophy involves questions which are sometimes more complex than they appear at first, and ideas which require careful reflection, you will find that a lot of your course involves private study — reading and thinking on your own. But it is also important that you learn to discuss philosophical ideas orally and in writing. You’ll probably find that explaining to others what you think and trying to support it with arguments lets you see where an idea needs work, or helps you to an insight which changes your view. You’ll do this formally in seminars and written work and, we hope, in informal discussions with your colleagues.

Your course is made up of distinct units or modules. The first year consists of certain set modules, most of which run for one term (details below). In your second year you choose from various modules representing different areas of philosophy. This will give you a foundation which you can build on in your third year where you will have a choice of term-long modules in more specialised topics.

Seminars and tutorials
An essential part of our teaching, seminars/tutorials are regular structured meetings with other students and a tutor to discuss some specific module material. Preparation is essential to make the most of these opportunities. Seminars give you the chance to develop your skills in discussing ideas with others — presenting ideas clearly, forming and evaluating arguments, listening carefully to others and working together to develop and deepen your understanding. Often, students feel that they cannot contribute to a seminar unless they are absolutely certain that what they think is correct. This is a mistake: we can only have a productive discussion if people are willing to contribute, and someone who is prepared to put forward an idea helps everyone to clarify their own thoughts. Seminars are not about always being right, or winning an argument, but about understanding better.

Lectures
Most modules supplement seminars and tutorials with formal lectures. Lectures are not like classroom teaching; they aim to give you an introduction to the subject under discussion, and stimulate you to think harder about it by raising questions and possible lines of criticism for you to reflect on. But they will not tell you all that you need to know; instead, they introduce key ideas and arguments, and you should think of them as guiding and supporting your own reading and thinking about a subject.

All classes (lectures and seminars) are compulsory, and you must give an acceptable explanation (illness or other compassionate circumstances) for any unavoidable seminar absences. This is a basic courtesy to your seminar tutor and fellow seminar members.
Private Study
You will find that you have about three to seven hours per week of formally scheduled teaching in philosophy, depending on your particular degree programme. This may not seem like very much but each teaching (or ‘contact’) hour should be backed up by significant periods of private study (reading, note-taking, essay preparation and thinking). University teaching and learning is very different from school or college learning: contact hours are intensive — they should be used to develop and refine ideas you’ve already started to form in advance. To make the most of seminars and lectures you’ll need plenty of time to prepare and to reflect after discussion.

Use your private study time carefully and systematically: read and think hard about the topics studied and also record your ideas in writing, building up structured notes. This will help your understanding (you may think you understand a topic, but try writing about it … !) and of course it is good preparation for writing essays and examination answers.

Feedback and Advice Times (Office Hours)
All of your lecturers and seminar tutors will have Feedback and Advice hours. You should use these to supplement your private study. If there is something you are struggling with, you can go along to one of these sessions to work with your lecturer or seminar tutor one-to-one. You should not only use these opportunities when the time comes to write an essay; you should also use them throughout the module – these are some of the most useful contact times you will have, because you get to set the agenda and talk about what you find most interesting or difficult in the module. These are also great opportunities to try out ideas and talk philosophy – they’re not just a resource for when you are stuck!

IT use
There are computer rooms across the campus. We will usually communicate with you via e-mail to your university account, so check that account regularly. Some courses are delivered in part online and all are supported by online materials at http://vle.york.ac.uk.

All your written work must be word-processed and you’ll be submitting work online, so you need at least these basic IT skills. You can find details of the IT training available at www.york.ac.uk/it-services/training/students/.

Your written work
Writing philosophy well does not come easily; it is a skill that everyone has to learn, and even experienced philosophers find it hard at times. The online skills training in the Beginning Philosophy module will give you a great deal of help in writing philosophy, and you will find further advice on the For current students pages of the Department’s website.

The important things are to write clearly and to argue for a particular answer to the question you have been set, explaining carefully why you think this is correct. Unless you have specifically been asked to do so, do not just report what another writer has said, or describe all the possible answers to the question. Don’t be woolly, or try to sound profound at the cost of clarity. You should argue for a firm conclusion. In the first year you will receive written feedback on all your essays, and in some cases tutors will offer you a tutorial to discuss their comments. Always take these opportunities to learn. But please don’t think of written work as something that you do only for assessment: practising writing clearly and accurately is an essential part of your private study.
You might find it useful, for example, to write up your notes at the end of each week into a short essay on the topic covered.

At a more basic level, make sure that you understand the words you use, that your writing is grammatical, and that your spelling is correct. This may seem obvious, but it is important to get these basic points right, and your tutors will mark your work down if it is full of errors. If you know or suspect that you have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, contact the Disability Support Office (www.york.ac.uk/students/support/disability) so that we can ensure that you receive appropriate advice and support.

Submitting written work
We have rules about submitting written work, which you must follow. These are to help us mark and give feedback on the work, to ensure fairness and to prevent cheating. Be sure to come back to this section once you have work to submit:

- Your essays should always be word-processed (there are computer rooms across campus if you do not have your own computer). Back up your work, and keep an electronic copy of the final version in a cloud storage system, on an external hard drive or on a memory stick – this is essential (not least because failure of IT equipment is not an acceptable reason for submitting work late).

- On non-assessed (‘formative’) work include your name and that of the seminar tutor for whom you have written the essay. Assessed (‘summative’) work is marked anonymously, so give your examination number (from your ID card) but not your name or the tutor’s name.

- Keep within the upper word limit set for the work. For instance, if you are asked to write ‘two 1,500–2,000 word essays’ the upper word limit for each essay is 2,000 words. If you over-run the word limit, you will be penalized, as follows:

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<th>Penalty applied</th>
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<tr>
<td>0-10% of upper word limit</td>
<td>5 marks deducted</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-30% of upper word limit</td>
<td>15 marks deducted</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-40% of upper word limit</td>
<td>20 marks deducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50% of upper word limit</td>
<td>25 marks deducted</td>
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(Longer over-runs will be penalized on the same pattern, with 5 further marks deducted as each 10% band is passed until the mark for the essay is zero.)

- Include a word count: Every submitted essay must declare the number of words it contains (its ‘word count’) at the top of the first page. Essays which do not carry a word count will not be accepted until one is added. Unless you’re told otherwise, the word count is the total number of words an essay contains excluding only the bibliography. All other text must be included in the word count. This includes any quotations, footnotes, notes and appendices.

If you declare a word count that exceeds the word limit you will be penalized, as above. If we think that the word count is inaccurate, we will check your essay; in addition we may select some essays for random checking.
If we need to check an essay we will ask you for an electronic version in Microsoft Word. Where an essay is over length and declares a word count that understates its true length, you will have to submit electronic copies of all assessed essays submitted for that and subsequent deadlines. If our word count differs from the declared word count by fewer than 100 words we normally give the benefit of the doubt, and treat this as a genuine error of calculation. This does not mean that you may overrun the word limit by 100 words: a limit is a limit.

- **All quotations from or use of other writers’ work must be properly referenced.** We prefer you to use the ‘Harvard’ or ‘MLA’ referencing systems, which is explained in the *Beginning Philosophy* module, and also at the University’s *Academic Integrity* site: [www.york.ac.uk/integrity/referencing.html](http://www.york.ac.uk/integrity/referencing.html).

- Include a list of references at the end of your essay. This must include all those works that you have referred to in your essay, presented in alphabetical order of author’s surname. Drawing up a reference list is explained in *Beginning Philosophy*.

- **Avoid plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of the words and/or ideas of others, whether from books, online material, other students’ work or any other source. Plagiarism is a serious offence, since it undermines learning and assessment by allowing the plagiarist to present him/herself as having skills and knowledge s/he probably lacks. It’s cheating, it’s easy to detect, and if you plagiarise the consequences for your degree can be very serious indeed.

Fortunately plagiarism is also easy to avoid, by taking care over referencing and reference lists. The online *Academic Integrity Tutorial* (at [http://vle.york.ac.uk](http://vle.york.ac.uk)) explains more.

- **Meet deadlines.** You will be told the deadlines applying to any written work, and you must meet them (make sure you know the time as well as the date of the deadline). If you have problems which might prevent you submitting on time, contact the tutor concerned and your supervisor before the deadline. In certain medical or compassionate circumstances we can agree a deadline extension; but you must let us know. We will not grant extensions for trivial reasons, e.g. computer breakdown, late nights, sporting fixtures, forgetfulness or holidays.

Tutors are not obliged to give feedback on formative work which is submitted late. Summative work which is submitted late without valid mitigating circumstances will have 10 marks (or 10% of the highest possible mark, where the work is not marked out of 100) deducted for each day or part of a day that it is late, up to a total of five days including weekends and bank holidays. For example, if your work is awarded a mark of 57/100 but is up to one day late, the final mark is 47. Work more than five days late is marked at zero.

**Beyond your course**

Make the most of your time at university. You are unlikely ever again to have the same opportunities to develop your skills, try out new activities or build your confidence by taking on new responsibilities. This is all part of learning and developing, and it will count when you finally head out into the world looking for work (sorry to raise this delicate topic, but the time will come). Be realistic and don’t over-commit yourself, but do look for positive and worthwhile ways of using your time outside your course. The University offers *The York Award* to recognize students’ training and achievements in areas beyond their formal study. You can find out more about it here: [www.york.ac.uk/students/work-volunteering-careers-skills/york-award](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/work-volunteering-careers-skills/york-award)
Your course requirements

The modular structure: assessment and progression
All degree courses at York are organised into modules, and students gain between 10 and 40 credits for each module successfully completed, reflecting the work required. You must take 120 credits in each year; joint honours students obtain some of their credits from Philosophy modules and some from their other subject.

Each module is assessed by essays, by formal examination, by both or (in the case of the Project) by presentation, and you need to pass enough of these assessments to pass the modules, accumulate the 120 credits and progress to the next stage of your programme. So, although marks from your first year Philosophy modules do not count towards your final degree classification, your first year performance must be satisfactory in order for you to progress to the second year.

The pass mark for each module is 40. If you badly fail a module assessment (below 30) you will have to be reassessed, but there is a limit to the amount of reassessment allowed. Reassessment normally takes place in York in August. If you marginally fail a module (30–39), you may not need to be reassessed if your overall performance for the year is good enough to compensate. Again, there is a limit to the amount of compensation which is allowed.

For a guide to the University’s progression rules, see the Guide to Progression and Final Degree Classification, under ‘Assessment guides’ at http://www.york.ac.uk/philosophy/current/undergraduate/assessment/.

You will get results and feedback regularly throughout the year, and will be formally notified by the end of July whether you have completed the first year satisfactorily, or need to be reassessed in any module. If you are at all concerned about your progress, please speak to your supervisor as soon as possible—they are there to help.

Mitigating circumstances
You should keep your supervisor informed of any issues affecting your work, especially if you think that your performance in assessment may be affected by mitigating circumstances. The University defines a mitigating circumstance as a problem that you have encountered which goes beyond the normal difficulties experienced in life and which has affected your academic performance adversely during the assessment period for which you are claiming.

You notify the department of mitigating circumstances by submitting a Mitigating Circumstances Claim Form by the appropriate deadline. Details will remain confidential and will be disclosed only to those considering or administering the claim. A successful claim will not change your mark, but usually means that you can be reassessed in a module ‘as if for the first time’.

For details of the mitigating circumstances policy, the claim form and the departmental deadlines for claims, see under ‘Mit Circs’ at: http://www.york.ac.uk/philosophy/current/undergraduate/assessment/.
Your first year modules

Which modules you study in your first year depends on which degree course you are taking. The requirements for each course are outlined below, and the modules are described in the next section.

Teaching begins in Week 2 in the autumn and spring terms, and in Week 1 in the summer term; in the summer term teaching ends in Week 4 to allow time for assessment and marking.

Below are the details of the first year Philosophy modules for Single Subject and Joint or Combined Honours degrees run by the Philosophy Department.

**V500 - Single Subject Philosophy (120 credits in Philosophy)**

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Module Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>The whole year</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>PHI00001C</td>
<td>Beginning Philosophy (10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PHI00004C</td>
<td>First Year Project (10) *</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Reason and Argument A (20)</td>
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<td>Spring Term</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>PHI00008C</td>
<td>Knowledge &amp; Perception (20)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

*For alternative options see the First Year Project description below. You will need to respond to philosophy@york.ac.uk by Monday 5th September 2016 if you want to pursue one of these options.*

**QV35 – English and Philosophy Equal (60 Philosophy credits)**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Term</th>
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<td>Introduction to Ancient Philosophy B (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PHI00006C</td>
<td>Reason and Argument B (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Term</td>
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<td>Ethics (20)</td>
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<td>Summer Term</td>
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**RV15/RV25 – French/German and Philosophy Equal (60 Philosophy credits)**

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<td>Beginning Philosophy (10)</td>
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<td>Autumn Term</td>
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<td>Reason and Argument A (20)</td>
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<td>Summer Term</td>
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**VV15 – History and Philosophy Equal (60 Philosophy credits)**

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</thead>
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<td>Beginning Philosophy (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autumn Term</td>
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<td>Introduction to Ancient Philosophy B (10)</td>
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<td>Reason and Argument B (10)</td>
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<td>Spring Term</td>
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<td>PHI00007C</td>
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### V5Q1 - Philosophy and Linguistics Equal (60 Philosophy credits)

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<td>Spring Term</td>
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<td>Knowledge &amp; Perception (20)</td>
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<td>Summer Term</td>
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### VL53 – Philosophy and Sociology Equal (60 Philosophy credits)

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<td>Autumn Term</td>
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<td>PHI00010C</td>
<td>Introduction to Ancient Philosophy B (10)</td>
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<td>Reason and Argument B (10)</td>
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<td>Spring Term</td>
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<td>Ethics (20)</td>
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### GV15 - Mathematics/Philosophy Equal (60 Philosophy credits)

<table>
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<th>Period</th>
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<th>Course Name</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>The whole year</td>
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<td>Beginning Philosophy (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autumn Term</td>
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<td>PHI00005C</td>
<td>Reason and Argument A (20)</td>
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<td>Spring Term</td>
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<td>Knowledge &amp; Perception (20)</td>
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### F3V5/F3VM – Physics with Philosophy (40 Philosophy credits)

<table>
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<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>The whole year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or PHI00003C</td>
<td>Metaphysics (10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*We will contact you before the start of term with details of how to make your module selection online.*
**Degrees within the School of PEP**

The School of Politics, Economics and Philosophy (PEP) is a separate department, and its programmes and students are not managed by the Philosophy Department, but since PEP programmes typically involve a substantial philosophy component, details of those programmes are given below.

PEP students typically face a number of choices between modules. The School of PEP will advise on the options open to you, and you should refer to this advice.

**L0V0 - Philosophy, Politics and Economics Route 1 (30-40 Philosophy credits)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Beginning Philosophy (10) (or 0 credit option)</td>
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<td>Autumn Term</td>
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<td>PHI00006C</td>
<td>Reason and Argument B (10)</td>
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<td>Spring Term</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>PHI00007C</td>
<td>Ethics (20)</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>Knowledge &amp; Perception (20)</td>
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**L0V0 - Philosophy, Politics and Economics Route 2 (30 Philosophy credits)**

<table>
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<td>Spring Term</td>
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**LV15 – Philosophy and Economics Equal (60 Philosophy credits)**

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</thead>
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<td>Introduction to Ancient Philosophy B (10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PHI00006C</td>
<td>Reason and Argument B (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Term</td>
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<td>PHI00007C</td>
<td>Ethics (20)</td>
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<td>PHI00008C</td>
<td>Knowledge &amp; Perception (20)</td>
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**VL52 – Philosophy and Politics Equal (60 Philosophy credits)**

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<th>Term</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The whole year</td>
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<td>Autumn Term</td>
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<td>PHI00010C</td>
<td>Introduction to Ancient Philosophy B (10)</td>
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<td>PHI00006C</td>
<td>Reason and Argument B (10)</td>
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<td>Spring Term</td>
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<td>PHI00007C</td>
<td>Ethics (20)</td>
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<td>PHI00008C</td>
<td>Knowledge &amp; Perception (20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Term</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>PHI00002C</td>
<td>Early Modern Philosophy (10)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Your first year modules

The following pages provide brief descriptions of the modules offered to first year Philosophy students during 2016–17. You will receive more information at the start of each module.

THROUGHOUT THE FIRST YEAR

**Beginning Philosophy** (10 Credits)  
Convener: Dr Chris Jay

This module aims to introduce you to the methods of thinking and writing typical of Philosophy, and to some important philosophical topics that are not covered in your other modules. It consists of two parts. The first is an online module in the University’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which addresses writing skills and critical thinking, and which is assessed by online multiple choice tests. The site also contains a great deal of optional material to support your learning in other modules. All students studying Philosophy modules must complete this element.

In addition there is a lecture series introducing various philosophical topics, to give you a flavour of what philosophy is about beyond what you study in your other first year modules. At the end of the spring term you will submit an assessed essay on a topic of your choice from these lectures, following the writing advice given in the online material. An introductory lecture in Week 2 of the autumn term will explain the module more fully.

**First Year Project** (10 credits)  
Convener: Dr Chris Jay

(Philosophy single subject students only)

In this module you carry out an independent study of the ideas of a major philosopher. Following an introductory lecture in the autumn term, you will select a subject for your essay and be allocated a project adviser. You should produce a brief plan for discussion with your adviser by the start of the summer term, and present your completed work later that term. Assessment for this module will be by presentation of a poster. You will be expected to produce an academic poster on the idea(s) you have focussed on in your independent research, but you will also be expected to present your work orally, in a relaxed conversation with one or two members of staff (not in front of an audience!) explaining your topic in greater depth and answering questions.

_Students may take a Languages for All (LFA) module or a 20 credit elective in another department as an alternative to the Project and one of the summer term modules. See the enclosure with your welcome letter for details of how to apply for this option; in case of difficulty contact the department at philosophy@york.ac.uk_

_Please note that if you intend to take an LFA module for credit (i.e. not just as an extra curricula activity, which is also an option), you must notify the department – don’t register direct on the LFA website. If you want to take an LFA module as an extra curricula activity for free (but not for credit) then you can register direct on the LFA website._

_Please also note that if you are taking an LFA module for credit, you must ensure that you enrol at an appropriate level in relation to previous study – so if you already have an A Level in German, you can't take the Beginner LFA module in German, for example! See [http://www.york.ac.uk/lfa/courses/](http://www.york.ac.uk/lfa/courses/) for more details._
AUTUMN TERM 2016

Reason And Argument A (20 credits), B (10 credits)  Convener: Dr Barry Lee
This module introduces some key concepts and skills that are widely used in philosophy. Typically, philosophers argue for the positions they advocate; they lay out claims which they think their audience will accept, and reason from these to their favoured conclusions. Understanding and evaluating philosophical positions, then, involves identifying, clarifying, and evaluating arguments. Additionally, an important part of philosophical practice is a careful examination of the ways in which language and thought relate to reality and to one another. A grasp of the basics of logic is essential to further study in philosophy.

We will consider the ways in which formal logic can be applied to understanding and evaluating arguments and claims expressed in everyday language. The topics covered include: validity, logical form, ambiguity, quantification, and the semantics/pragmatics distinction. The module is taught by lectures and workshop-style classes. Regular exercises are set to help you develop your skills and understanding.

Teaching: Two lectures and one seminar workshop each week.
Assessment: Reason and Argument A (20 credits): an essay (to be submitted in Week 10 of autumn term) and an examination (in Week 1 of the spring term).
Reason and Argument B (10 credits): an examination (in Week 1 of spring term).
Books: The module follows:
You do not have to buy this book, although some students find it helpful to have access to a copy. There are several copies available in the library.
If you would like to do some preparatory reading, try:
Nigel Warburton Thinking from A to Z (Routledge, 1996/2000)

Introduction to Ancient Philosophy A (20 credits), B (10 credits)  Convener: Mr Josh Cockayne
This module provides an introduction to Ancient Philosophy through the study of Plato’s Republic. This famous work is still one of the best ways to study the intersection of ethics and politics, and of epistemology and metaphysics. Study of Plato’s text should enable students both to engage critically with Plato’s arguments, and to reflect on the philosophical questions that he addresses.

Students should have read ‘Book 1’ of Plato’s Republic (see recommended translation below) by the start of term.

Teaching: Two lectures and one seminar each week.
Assessment: Ancient Philosophy A: (20 credits) an essay submitted in Week 10 of the autumn term, and an examination in Week 1 of the spring term.
Ancient Philosophy B: (10 credits) an examination in Week 1 of the spring term.
Books: I recommend the translation of Plato’s Republic by Tom Griffith (Cambridge University Press); in addition students will find it useful to consult N. Pappas, The Routledge Guidebook to Plato’s Republic (2nd edition).
**SPRING TERM 2017**

**Ethics (20 credits)  Convener: Dr Chris Jay**

This module introduces some debates in various branches of moral philosophy. For example, we will consider some quite abstract questions about whether moral truths, if there are any, are absolute or relative to individuals or cultures. And we will consider some topics in 'normative ethics', such as whether equality is intrinsically valuable. We will also think about some issues in applied ethics, such as whether there are moral limits to what may be bought and sold, and what those limits might be, and what our personal duties with respect to preventing climate change are.

**Teaching:** Two lectures and one seminar each week.

**Assessment:** An examination in the second half of the summer term.

**Books:** You will be issued with a reading pack with all the essential readings in, but good sources of background reading include:


**Knowledge & Perception (20 credits)  Convener: Dr Louise Richardson**

This module introduces some fundamental issues in epistemology (the theory of knowledge). We will consider the nature and value of knowledge, as well some ways of acquiring it, especially perception.

**Teaching:** Two lectures and one seminar each week.

**Assessment:** An essay submitted at the start of the summer term.

**Books:** You will be issued with a reading pack, but good introductions to the issues are provided by:


**SUMMER TERM 2017**

**Early Modern Philosophy (10 credits)  Convener: Dr Nick Jones**

The aim of this module is to give you further experience in reading and studying passages of original philosophy, both to develop your sense of how philosophical arguments are structured and to confront some central issues in the subject. The passages in question are drawn from those 17th and 18th century philosophers who developed definitive treatments of these issues, notably Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

**Teaching:** Weekly two-hour seminars.

**Assessment:** An essay, submitted in the second half of the summer term.

**Books:** All the passages we will study are contained in a course pack and no other reading
is required. You will benefit, however, from reading further in the works of the philosophers concerned, especially:

George Berkeley: *Principles of Human Knowledge* and *Three Dialogues*
Rene Descartes: *Meditations* and *Discourse on the Method*
David Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
John Locke: Book 1 of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

There are useful extracts from some of these writers, and others, in:


**Metaphysics** (10 credits)  
Convener: Dr Robert Trueman

People often say that they change a lot after their first year at university – new experiences, new challenges, new friends, and new opportunities all make a difference to who they are. But that’s nothing compared to how much they’ve changed since, say, they were five years old. They’ve got very little in common with their five-year-old selves – not only do they think really differently but also they’re even made of entirely different matter. So what is it that makes that person that they were when they were five years old the same person that they are now, at the end of their first year of university? This is one of the big questions of metaphysics, and the question we’ll start out by considering. This is what we might call ‘a metaphysical question’, that of personal identity. Now, beyond pointing to certain metaphysical questions, like whether God exists, whether two objects can co-exist in the same space and time, or whether something can be spatially distant from itself, it’s hard to say just what metaphysics is – indeed, that’s a metaphysical question itself! We might say that it’s the study of the world in its most fundamental elements. But some metaphysicians deny that there’s a world! And others deny that there’s anything fundamental about this world – it’s just turtles all the way down, as the saying goes. So, though it’s hard to say what metaphysics is, it’s not hard to say what some of the most important metaphysical problems are, like what it is to be the same person from moment to moment, hour to hour, year to year; whether, if so how, we can be free if we’re physical beings subject to physical laws; whether time flows, and, if so, whether we could go against the current, as it were, travelling back in time; and why there’s something rather than nothing. These are just some of the big problems metaphysicians wrestle with, and some of the things we might discuss together.