Option Modules for the MA in Philosophy 2018/19

Students on the MA in Philosophy must choose two option modules which are taken over the Autumn and Spring Terms as follows:

**Course Structure for Full-time Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1 Autumn</th>
<th>PHI00020M Topics in Theoretical Philosophy (20 credits)</th>
<th>PHI00008M Postgraduate Research Skills (10 credits)</th>
<th>PHI00022M Dissertation Preparation (20 credits)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term 2 Spring</td>
<td>PHI00019M Topics in Practical Philosophy (20 credits)</td>
<td>Option module (20 credits)</td>
<td>Option module (20 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 3 Summer</td>
<td>PHI00023M Dissemination Practice (10 credits)</td>
<td>PHI00017M Dissertation (Writing-up) (60 credits)</td>
<td>PHI00017M Dissertat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Vacation</td>
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**Course Structure for Part-time Students**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1 Autumn</th>
<th>PHI00020M Topics in Theoretical Philosophy (20 credits)</th>
<th>PHI00008M Postgraduate Research Skills (10 credits)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term 2 Spring</td>
<td>PHI00019M Topics in Practical Philosophy (20 credits)</td>
<td>PHI00013M Project Essay (20 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 3 (Summer) and Summer Vacation</td>
<td>PHI00013M Project Essay (20 credits)</td>
<td>PHI00022M Dissertation Preparation (20 credits)</td>
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<td>Term 4 Autumn</td>
<td>Option Module (20 credits)</td>
<td>PHI00022M Dissertation Preparation (20 credits)</td>
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<td>Term 5 Spring</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>PHI00022M Dissertation Preparation (20 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 6 Summer</td>
<td>PHI00023M Dissemination Practice (10 credits)</td>
<td>PHI00017M Dissertation (Writing-up) (60 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Vacation</td>
<td>PHI00017M Dissertation (Writing-up) (60 credits)</td>
<td>PHI00017M Dissertation (Writing-up) (60 credits)</td>
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***Please note that the list of available option modules below may change before the programme begins***

**Autumn Term Option Modules**

- PHI00051M Contemporary Issues in Bioethics
- PHI00060M From Marx to Critical Theory
- PHI00030M Language and Mind
- PHI00050M Metaphysics of Mind
- PHI00049M Philosophy of Art from Hume to Tolstoy
- PHI00059M Philosophy of Law
- PHI00058M Philosophy of Psychology

**Spring Term Option Modules**

- PHI00037M Consciousness
- PHI00032M Foundations of Maths
- PHI00039M German Idealism
- PHI00003M Philosophy and Cognitive Diversity
- PHI00046M Philosophy of Film
- PHI00013M Project Essay
- PHI00052M Value and the Meaning of Life

**Assessment for all option modules is by one essay of 4,000 words**

**Brief Descriptions**

**PHI00037M Consciousness (Spring Term)**

This module will look into the following issues:

1. Physicalism: reductive and non-reductive
2. Knowledge argument against physicalism
3. The explanatory gap between mind and brain
4. Modal arguments against physicalism
5. The role that ignorance and/or our cognitive limitations play in giving rise to the problem of phenomenal consciousness
6. Eliminativism about consciousness
7. Functionalism and Qualia
8. Higher Order Thought and Availability for Higher Order Thought theories of consciousness
9. Reflexive accounts of consciousness
10. Representationalism and Externalism about phenomenal properties
11. Self-Consciousness

**Key Texts include:**

- Tim Crane (2001), *Elements of Mind*, Oxford University Press
PHI00051M Contemporary Issues in Bioethics (Autumn Term)

The aim of the module is to explore philosophically the moral implications of advances in sciences related to medicine, specifically:

• to achieve an understanding of some recent relevant advances in sciences related to medicine;
• to look at the moral implications of such advances;
• to see how philosophical moral theory might help deal with the resultant bioethical issues.

Indicative key texts:


PHI00032M Foundations of Maths (Spring Term)

This module will explore some key issues in the philosophy of mathematics, including the foundations of mathematics. Students will develop an understanding of the mathematical and philosophical context (particularly the so-called ‘crisis’ in foundations of mathematics) that led to the development of the three foundationalist programmes (logicism, intuitionism, and formalism) at the start of the 20th century. The three foundationalist programmes will be evaluated in the light of formal results such as Russell’s paradox and Gödel’s incompleteness theorems. The module will consider contemporary debates over Platonism and anti-Platonism in mathematics, particularly in the light of Benacerraf’s epistemological challenge (to Platonism) and the challenge raised (for anti-Platonism) by the indispensability of mathematics in science.

Indicative key texts:

- Stewart Shapiro, *Thinking about Mathematics* (OUP, 2000)

PHI00060M From Marx to Critical Theory (Autumn Term)

This module aims to: 1) introduce students to key debates, positions, and arguments in what has come to be known as “Western Marxism” and “Critical Theory”; 2) to give a historical overview of the development of these debates, positions, and arguments; 3) to enable students to develop their skills in critical analysis, argument, and communication.

Indicative key texts:

- Marx, K. *Capital: Volume One*.
- Lukacs, G *Reification and Class Consciousness*
- Sohn-Rethel, A. *Intellectual and Manual Labour*
- Horkheimer, M & Theodor Adorno *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
- Adorno, T *Negative Dialectics*

PHI00039M German Idealism (Spring Term)

This module will consider the moral, legal, and political philosophy of German idealists such as Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel and will consider the relevance of their philosophy for debates in contemporary moral, legal, and political philosophy.

Indicative key texts:

- Hegel, G. W. F. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.)

**PHI00030M Language and Mind (Autumn Term)**

This module will examine topics that sit at the intersection of Philosophy of Mind and Language. We will be focussing on what account is to be given of a speaker’s ability to understand a language and to look at such topics as truth (and theories of truth), reference, and sense.

**Key Texts include:**

- Donald Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*
- Michael Dummett, *The Seas of Language*
- John McDowell, *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*

**PHI00050M Metaphysics of Mind (Autumn Term)**

This module will explore the relationship between the mind and the external world, focusing on nonphysicalist theories of consciousness and reality. We’ll explore the arguments for and against dualism, panpsychism, and idealism. The module will end with an exploration of the “unity of consciousness” – how our experiences come to form a single coherent experience. We’ll look at various psychological conditions in which this unity (arguably) breaks down, and consider what implications the unity of consciousness has for panpsychism and idealism.

**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

**PHI00003M Philosophy and Cognitive Diversity (Spring Term)**

This module will engage in debates about the epistemic significance of cognitive diversity and the metaphysical significance of cognitive diversity.

**Indicative key texts:**


**PHI00049M Philosophy of Art from Hume to Tolstoy (Autumn Term)**

This module will critically examine central themes in 18th and 19th century aesthetic theory and will provide an understanding of how an aesthetic theory can depend on, and itself help to invigorate, an overall metaphysical theory.

Among the topics to be discussed will be:

1. Whether beauty is more properly an object of contemplation or feeling
2. The nature of artistic genius
3. The status of the work of art
4. The aesthetic point of view, and its alleged differences from the practical and theoretical points of view.

**Indicative key texts:**
- Francis Hutcheson *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty*, including 'Preface' (to both Inquiries)
- David Hume *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*
- Thomas Reid *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind*, Essay V Chap VII
- G W F Hegel *Lectures on Fine Art* (especially his ‘Introduction’)
- Leo Tolstoy *What is Art?*

**PHI00046M Philosophy of Film (Spring Term)**

In this module we 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.

**Indicative key texts:**
- George Wilson, *Seeing fictions in film*
- Greg Currie, *Image and Mind*
- Berys Gaut, *The Philosophy of Cinematic Art*

**PHI00059M Philosophy of Law (Autumn Term)**

This module will introduce students to some key debates, positions, and arguments in the philosophy of law. Topics considered will include some or all of the following: the nature of law; the debate between natural law theory and legal positivism; the nature of rights (Hohfeld’s analysis of rights); the choice and benefit theories of rights: human rights, justification of human rights.

**Indicative key texts:**
PHI00058M Philosophy of Psychology (Autumn Term)

The aim of the module is to explore the impact of scientific theorising about the mind on our everyday understanding of ourselves. Specifically, we will do this via reading, discussing and writing about:

- Views of the nature of Folk Psychology
- Views of the architecture of the mind that have been thought to have an impact on Folk Psychology
- Specific phenomena or experiments that have been thought to show that some aspect of what we usually think about ourselves is mistaken

**Indicative key texts:**


PHI00013M Project Essay (Spring Term)

This module is designed to enable students with specialised interests to pursue independently a topic of their own choosing. Students taking this module propose an independent study topic. The proposal will be considered by the Board of Studies. If it is successful, the student will be assigned a suitable member of staff who will supervise the project.

PHI00052M Value and Meaning of Life (Spring Term)

This module will explore some key issues concerning value, and the different kinds of value, in particular as this relates to human and non-human life. We will ask, what makes a life worth living/worth saving? The module will also consider, especially in connection with human life, notions of well-being, happiness, meaning, and to investigate the relations between these.

**Indicative key texts:**

- Ronald Dworkin *Life’s Dominion* Knopf 1993 (just some parts of this)
- Susan Wolf *Meaning in Life and Why it Matters* Princeton UP 2012