University of Sheffield

Programme Specification

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

The content of our courses is reviewed annually to make sure it's up-to-date and relevant. Individual modules are occasionally updated or withdrawn. This is in response to discoveries through our world-leading research; funding changes; professional accreditation requirements; student or employer feedback; outcomes of reviews; and variations in staff or student numbers. In the event of any change we will inform students and take reasonable steps to minimise disruption.

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Politics and Philosophy		
2. Award type	Bachelor of Arts		
3. Programme details	**FHEQ Level:** 6	**Mode of Study:** Full time Full time	**Duration:** 3 years 4 years (Foundation)
4. Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences		
5. School	**Owning:** School of Sociological Studies, Politics and International Relations **Shared with:** School of History, Philosophy and Digital Humanities		
6. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	None		
7. HECoS code *Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.*	**Code:** 100491 **Percentage:** 50	**Code:** 100337 **Percentage:** 50	**Code:** **Percentage:**
Programme code (internal use)	SPRU003 (Full time) SPRU006 (Foundation)		

9. Programme aims

The programme aims to:	
A1	To produce graduates with broad knowledge and understanding of political phenomena, and of the concepts, theories, approaches and methods employed in the study of politics and philosophy.
A2	To enable students to evaluate different interpretations of political processes, events and controversies, and to critically assess issues of contemporary public concern.
A3	To equip students with an understanding of a range of philosophers and philosophical problems, while encouraging deep critical engagement with those philosophers and problems.
A4	To facilitate an awareness of the application of philosophical thought to other academic disciplines or to matters of public interest, encouraging students to apply philosophical skills more widely where appropriate.
A5	To enable students to develop a range of important intellectual, practical and key skills that enhance students' employability, including but not limited to logical thinking, critical judgement, and communication.
A6	To develop skills in logical thinking and foster a capacity for independent, critical judgement.
A7	To provide students with the tools to effectively acquire, select and communicate ideas and information.
A8	To prepare graduates for employment in a wide range of contexts, or for continued studies.

10. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding (K) On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:	
K1	Broad-based knowledge and understanding of political ideas, institutions and practices, and specialised knowledge and understanding of specific areas in politics and philosophy.
K2	The ability to apply a range of concepts, approaches and methods to analyse political phenomena, including knowledge and understanding of Western analytical philosophy.
K3	The ability to evaluate contemporary and historical political processes, events, and debates.
K4	The ability to appreciate and assess critically differing interpretations encountered within the writings of major philosophers and engage confidently with specialised philosophical terminology in the process.
K5	A critical awareness of major writings on moral and political philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind and language, as well as the major issues currently at the forefront of philosophical debate and research.
K6	An in-depth knowledge and understanding of some central areas of Western analytical philosophy.

K7	Knowledge of the theories and arguments of some of the major philosophers, encountered in their own writings, and some awareness of important areas of interpretative controversy concerning those philosophers.
K8	The ability to use and understand properly specialised philosophical terminology.
K9	Understanding of some major issues currently at the forefront of philosophical debate and research.
Skills and other attributes (S) *When considering the skills and attributes developed in this programme, please refer to the Sheffield Graduate attributes (SGAs). SGAs can be found here* On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:	
S1	Collect data and information from a variety of sources, including printed and electronic media, and using a variety of information and communication technologies.
S2	Understand and interpret both quantitative and qualitative data, including the strengths and weaknesses of textually-based philosophical arguments.
S3	Organise, synthesise and communicate (orally and in written form) a range of information, arguments, and evidence.
S4	Analyse issues, construct reasoned arguments, solve problems, and exercise critical judgement using a range of research strategies and methods.
S5	Manage independent and collaborative learning effectively, including self-assessment, team work, constructive use of feedback, time management, and the completion of an extended, self-directed project.
S6	Conduct an extended, self-directed, investigation of a specific issue (including project design and investigation followed by analysis and interpretation and concluding in the presentation of the findings).
S7	Communicate information and ideas effectively in both oral and written forms.
S8	Work independently, demonstrating responsibility, initiative, foresight and the capacity to manage time.
S9	Collaborate effectively with others to achieve common goals.
S10	Use information and communications technologies to retrieve and present information, and analyse data.
S11	Undertake self-directed learning to acquire further knowledge and skills.
S12	Identify and appraise a range of research strategies and methods.
S13	Ability to read carefully and interpret philosophical texts, and to identify textually-based arguments.
S14	Ability to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of arguments for and against a philosophical position.

11. Learning and teaching methods *(this should include a summary of methods used throughout the programme, including any unique features and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

The Politics and Philosophy BA uses a mix of teaching methods to help students develop knowledge, critical thinking, and research skills. In the early years, lectures provide core knowledge of subject material, while seminars and small group discussions allow for deeper engagement with specific ideas, writers, or events. As students progress, lectures take on more of a support role, whilst independent study and self-directed research become more important. The final-year research projects are a key milestone in the degree, which allow students to further develop their capacities to collect and interpret data, organise and synthesise information, extend their analytical and problem-solving skills, and increase their capacity to manage their own learning and development.

Throughout the degree, students are encouraged to read widely, reflect on a range of materials, and both evaluate and offer critical interpretations of those materials. Assessments, including essays and projects, help students to internalise their learning and provide opportunities for additional feedback and improvement. The curriculum is specifically designed to build a range of skills, from critical analysis and argumentation to research and data interpretation.

Modules across the curriculum promote cumulative learning of intellectual and practical skills as well as an appreciation for the variety of methods and research strategies used in social science. Explicit instruction in particular skills is provided by a compulsory module at Level One (Political Analysis I), which introduces core research and scholarship skills, and another compulsory module at Level 2 (Political Analysis II) that builds on this with training in empirical research methods. Alongside this training in empirical methods, philosophy modules help build students' ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical positions and encourage students to develop rigorous and logical lines of argumentation. Level 3 offers opportunities for further skills development through the independent research projects and a range of research-led specialised optional modules.

Across all levels, students refine their oral and written communication skills, work independently, and use digital tools for research. The programme fosters both intellectual independence and practical research abilities, preparing students for further study or careers requiring strong analytical and problem-solving skills.

12. Assessment and feedback methods *(this should include the range of types of methods used and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

Knowledge and understanding are assessed in a variety of methods appropriate to the specific material. Most modules involve both essays and unseen examinations. Some require the preparation of short written assignments (for example, book reviews or briefing reports), oral presentations and group exercises. Marks on project modules are determined on the basis of the written submissions. Formative assessment is provided in seminars and structured feedback is provided on all written and oral forms of assessment for which marks are awarded. Students preparing research projects also receive one-to-one supervision and further advice and feedback from module leaders at project workshops.

Assessment of skills and other attributes is closely linked to that of knowledge and understanding. Written comments returned after graded work provide feedback on the range and use of sources, the ability to properly interpret the texts used, the structure and quality of analysis and argument, as well as on the methods used. The assessment of skills is integrated within the evaluation criteria of course work at all Levels of the programme.

Version Number:	Purpose / Change:	Cohort affected: (academic year and level)	Date change approved:
1			March 2013
2			February 2018
3			February 2021
4			February 2024
5	Programme Simplification	25/26 - Foundation 26/27 - Year 1	June 2025

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