

(UPDATED 10 OCT 2023)

Guide to Courses (Syllabus) 2023–2024 – The Philosophy Tripos

Philosophy is the study of problems that are ultimate and general and which concern amongst other things the nature of human knowledge, the mind, language and value. University courses in philosophy lay special emphasis on precise and careful argument. In the earlier stages of the Cambridge course the central elements are metaphysics and the philosophy of mind, ethics and political philosophy, philosophy of language and logic. Later stages also cover the history of philosophy, philosophy of science and aesthetics. As the course proceeds the number of optional elements increases, so that in Part II there are no compulsory subjects.

The Tripos consists of three separate Parts, and it is possible for students to read the subject for one, two, or three years, and also either before or after reading another subject. It is not necessary for students to have done any work in philosophy before reading the subject at Cambridge and Part IA of the Tripos is taught on the assumption that they have not. Any combination of Arts and Science A levels is acceptable.

Part IA introduces the fundamental topics of metaphysics and philosophy of mind, ethics and political philosophy, philosophy of language and logic, together with detailed work on prescribed texts. All papers are compulsory.

In Part IB all candidates take a compulsory paper, 'Knowledge, Language and World'. Candidates also take three further papers from a list comprising experimental psychology, ethics, Greek and Roman philosophy, early modern philosophy, history of analytic philosophy, epistemology and metaphysics of science, political philosophy, aesthetics and philosophy of art.

In Part II, the subjects covered are metaphysics, philosophy of mind, ethics, European philosophy from Kant, philosophy in the long Middle Ages, philosophy of science, mathematical logic, philosophical logic, political philosophy, and Wittgenstein and his successors. Part IB and Part II also contain a general paper.

Tripos final degree classification and weighting for Philosophy

All undergraduate Tripos students beginning their study in **October 2020 and onward** will receive an overall degree classification at the end of their final year.

Students will still receive an individually classed result for each part of the Tripos but their final overall classification will be considered their degree outcome.

For the purposes of calculating final overall classification for the Philosophy Tripos, **the first year has no weighting**, which means that the assessment marks achieved in the first year do not contribute to the overall class.

Marks for the **second year will count towards the overall class at a weighting of 30%**.

The **third year will be weighted at 70%**.

General information about the structure of Cambridge undergraduate courses can be found here:

<https://www.camdata.admin.cam.ac.uk/structure-undergraduate-courses-cambridge>

and the Notice in the Reporter with more information is here, as the situation is more complex if students intermit and/or change Triposes:

<https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2019-20/weekly/6574/section6.shtml>

Please note that the Faculty does not undertake to lecture on every topic listed on the syllabus.

Change to philosophy after studying another subject

All students changing in to any part of the Philosophy Tripos are examined on the same number of papers per year as students who take the three year Philosophy course.

(1) Students who change to philosophy within their first year may take Part IA at the end of their first year.

(2) Students who change to philosophy at the end of their first year may attempt Part IB in one year. Alternatively, students who change to philosophy at the end of their first year may attempt Part II in two years, taking all Part II exams in the second year.

(3) Students who change to philosophy at the end of their second year, after gaining honours in their previous subject, may

- (a) attempt Part IB in one year
- (b) attempt Part II in one year
- (c) attempt Part II in two years

(4) Candidates who have previously taken Part IB of the Natural Sciences Tripos or Part II of the Classical Tripos may not offer any paper that they offered in that examination.

(5) Since 2013 it is no longer possible for candidates to get a BA after taking Part IB in their third and final year.

Affiliated students

Affiliated students normally take Part II over two years. In their first year they may take Part IB, and they must take Part II in their second year.

Parts IA, IB, and II of the Tripos

Details of the topics prescribed for the various papers in Parts IA, IB, and II of the Tripos are given below. Although students are not expected to have studied any philosophy before embarking on the Tripos, it is certainly useful for them to have read some books on the subject first, if only to enable them to get a better idea of what their work will be like. Any of the books on the following webpage can be recommended:

https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/prosp-students/Reading_list_for_prospective_students

Tripos Examinations (all parts of the Philosophy Tripos)

The Tripos Examination aims to test the breadth as well as the depth of candidates' knowledge. Accordingly candidates should in general **not receive additional credit for recycled material**.

Obviously this rule cannot be completely hard and fast. For instance, an argument that is well known in one area of the subject certainly merits credit when reused in some novel and interesting connection. However the rule does apply if in the examiners' judgement a candidate is using essentially the same content to make essentially the same point.

The intention is also that the rule be applied proportionately. Clearly then the reuse of, say, a few sentences cannot invalidate the answer where they reappear. And it is also acceptable

for a student to report in one essay a point or argument from another, as a premise for then continuing and expanding on that idea. Examiners are asked (as always) to use their judgement, to ensure that withholding of marks only applies to cases of substantial recycling.

Part IA

Part IA may be taken only at the end of a student's first year as an undergraduate. All the following papers must be taken.

1. *Metaphysics*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Causation
- Free will
- Induction and Miracles
- Personal Identity
- Mind and Matter: Dualism and Functionalism

2. *Ethics and political philosophy*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Metaethics: fact and value; objectivity and subjectivity
- Normative ethics: consequentialism; deontology; virtue ethics
- Moral psychology: egoism and altruism; empathy; cognitive and affective attitudes
- Political obligation and authority: classical social contract theory; natural duty and fair play theory; anarchism
- Equality of opportunity: varieties of equality of opportunity; justifications and controversy; positive discrimination

3. *Meaning*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Conditionals: Grice
- Frege and Russell on names and descriptions
- Necessity, Analyticity, The a priori
- Intention and convention: Grice and Lewis
- Causal theories of names
- Verificationism

4. *Set texts*

The paper will be divided into three sections, one on each of the set authors. Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least twelve set, which must be chosen from at least two sections.

Plato, *Meno* (lectures provided by the Faculty of Classics).

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

J. S. Mill, *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women*.

5. *Formal Methods*

Paper 5 is worth $\frac{1}{9}$ of the total marks at IA, and each of the remaining four papers $\frac{2}{9}$. Paper 5 is in two sections, A and B. Candidates are asked to answer all five questions in section A and two out of four questions in section B. Section A is worth 45 marks and section B is worth 40 marks. Note that students should not expect to have any supervisions on Paper 5. (They should learn by attending the lectures and logic classes, and studying independently.)

- Basic notions: object-/meta-language; use/mention; validity
- Truth-functional logic: syntax; semantics; proofs
- First-order logic: syntax; semantics; proofs
- Theories: the definitions of consistency, soundness, completeness, independence
- Classes and relations
- Elementary probability

Part IB.

Candidates must take Part IB Papers 1 and 10 and three other papers. Students taking Paper 8, Experimental Psychology, are exempt from taking the General Paper, Paper 10. (For candidates who have not done Part IA Philosophy, please see section 'Change to philosophy after studying another subject'.)

Essays

In place of any one of Papers 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9 a candidate may submit two essays, each of not less than 3,000 words and not more than 4,000 words in length, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography, on two topics proposed by the candidate and approved by the Chair of Examiners, which shall both fall within the syllabus of that paper, provided that a candidate who chooses to submit essays may not write in the General Paper, Paper 10 an essay on a subject that overlaps significantly with either of the submitted essays.

The two essays must cover substantially different parts of the syllabus of the paper concerned. If a paper lists four or more main topics, then the two titles must come from different main topics. If a paper lists three or fewer topics, then the titles, can, in principle, come from the same topic. In this case, the titles must (at least) come from different sub-topics. (Meeting this constraint is not, however, immediately sufficient for approval; decisions on acceptability will be made on a case-by-case basis.)

Candidates who choose to offer two essays must submit the proposed titles of the essays, together with a statement of which paper they are intended to replace, and the papers that they intend to offer in the examination, to the Faculty Office not later than two weeks before the end of Michaelmas Full Term. The Faculty Office passes these titles on to the Chair of Examiners for approval. The titles must be approved by the Chair of Examiners not later than the last day of Michaelmas Full Term.

Candidates must submit the essays to the Faculty Office so as to reach it not later than the last day of the Lent Term immediately preceding the examination. Each pair of essays must bear the examination number but not the candidate's name. The Faculty systematically uses text-matching software (currently "Turnitin") to screen all submitted work from students for possible plagiarism. The Examiners have power to examine a candidate *viva voce* on the essays.

The papers in Part IB are:

1. *Knowledge, Language and the World*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- The Nature of Knowledge
- Scepticism
- Primary and Secondary Qualities
- Logical Form
- Truth
- Modality: Semantics and Metaphysics

2. History of Analytic Philosophy

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

The philosophical work of Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein and Ramsey from 1879-1930, with particular reference to the following:

- Frege** *Begriffsschrift*, Preface, §§1-12 and §§23-4 (1879)
 The Foundations of Arithmetic (1884)
 Function and concept (1891)
 On sense and reference (1892)
 On concept and object (1892)
 The Frege-Hilbert correspondence
 Thoughts (1919)
- Russell** *The Principles of Mathematics*, chs IV-VIII (1903)
 On denoting (1905)
 On the nature of truth (1906)
 Mathematical logic as based on the theory of types (1908)
 On the nature of truth and falsehood (1910)
 Knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description (1911)
 The relation of sense data to physics (1914)
- Wittgenstein** *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922)
- Ramsey** The foundations of mathematics (1925)
 Universals (1925)
 Facts and propositions (1927)

The paper also includes comparisons of the approaches of the named authors to the following issues: complex and fact; particulars and universals; quantifier and variable; logicism; the theory of types; judgment; truth; knowledge; the mind. Candidates are therefore expected to study more than one author.

3. Ethics

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Consequentialism: demands of beneficence; aggregation
- Deontology: contractualism; promise; consent
- Virtue ethics: Aristotle; contemporary accounts; empirical challenges
- Early modern moral philosophy: voluntarism; rationalism; sentimentalism
- Moral psychology: moral motivation; moral learning; practical reasoning

4. Greek and Roman philosophy (taught and examined by Classics)

Examination by three hour set examination.

Candidates are asked to answer three questions, at least one from Section A and at least one from Section B.

Section A: questions on a set text – for 2023-24 Plato *Phaedo*

Section B: questions covered in other lecture courses – for 2023-24 Aristotle: the Greatest Hits; Early Greek Philosophy; Cicero *On Fate* and Hellenistic Philosophy

5. Early Modern philosophy

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set, at least one question from each section.

Section A: Early Modern Thinkers

- Leibniz
- Hume
- Descartes
- Du Châtelet

Section B: Themes in Early Modern Philosophy

The thinkers of Section A and the themes of Section B are subject to change, and will be set in advance each Lent term.

For 2023-24: Early Modern Feminisms, Mind-Body Problems

- Some comparative questions may be set.

6. *Epistemology and Metaphysics of Science* (Paper 5 of Part II History and Philosophy of Science course in the Natural Sciences Tripos)

Examination by three hour set examination.

[Note that there is a maximum quota of 30 Philosophy students able to take this option.]

7. *Political philosophy*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Democracy: forms of democracy; justifications of democracy; the democratic boundary problem
- Equality and egalitarianism: the value of equality; distributive equality; economic justice and gender
- Liberty and liberalism: the concept of liberty; Rawlsian liberalism; liberal feminism
- Property: labour, property and theft; the limits of markets

8. *Experimental psychology*

(The subject Experimental Psychology in Part IB of the Natural Sciences Tripos, for which the examination consists of two papers.) Students taking this paper are exempt from taking the General Paper, Paper 10. Paper 8 is worth 40% of the total marks, and each of the remaining three papers 20%.

9. *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Aesthetics: aesthetic judgments and properties; realism and anti-realism; aesthetics beyond art.
- The nature of art: the definition of art; the ontology of art; representation; expression; imagination and fiction.
- The values of art: the value of originality; aesthetic and cognitive value; aesthetic and moral value; interpretation and criticism.
- History of aesthetics: Ancient aesthetics; Early Modern aesthetics; Kant's aesthetics.

10. *General Paper*

Candidates are asked to write a philosophical essay on one of at least fifteen questions set.

Part II

Candidates must take four Part II papers from among Papers 1–10 and the papers borrowed from other Triposes. All candidates must offer either Paper 11 (General Paper) or a Dissertation in lieu of Paper 11.

Part II may be taken in one year after Part IB of the Philosophy Tripos or in two years or one after any other Honours Examination except Part IA of the Philosophy Tripos. For candidates who have not done Part IB Philosophy, please see section 'Change to Philosophy after studying another subject'.

Dissertation

Candidates for Part II have the option of offering a dissertation in place of Paper 11 on a topic of philosophical interest proposed by them and approved by the Chair of Examiners. A dissertation must be of not more than 8,000 words and (except with the permission of the Chair of Examiners) not less than 6,000 words in length, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography.

Essays

In place of any one of Papers 1–10, and the papers borrowed from the Classical Tripos, candidates may submit two essays, each of not less than 3,000 words and not more than 4,000 words in length, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography, on two topics proposed by them and approved by the Chair of Examiners, which shall both fall within the syllabus of that paper, provided that

i) **candidates who choose to submit essays may not write in the General Paper, Paper 11 an essay on a subject that overlaps significantly with either of their submitted essays,**

and that

ii) **candidates who choose to submit essays may not write in place of the General Paper, Paper 11 a dissertation on a subject that overlaps significantly with either of their submitted essays.**

Dissertations and Essays: General rules

Candidates may submit both a dissertation in place of the General Paper (Paper 11) AND extended essays in lieu of a subject paper, and thus have the option of submitting 40% coursework.

The two essays must cover substantially different parts of the syllabus of the paper concerned. If a paper lists four or more main topics, then the two titles must come from different main topics. If a paper lists three or fewer topics, then the titles, can, in principle, come from the same topic. In this case, the titles must (at least) come from different sub-topics. (Meeting this constraint is not, however, immediately sufficient for approval; decisions on acceptability will be made on a case-by-case basis.)

Candidates who choose to offer a dissertation and/or two essays must submit the proposed title of the dissertation and/or the proposed titles of the essays, together with a statement of the Papers that they intend to offer in the examination, and in the case of essays a statement of the Paper that they are intended to replace, to the Faculty Office not later than two weeks before the end of Michaelmas Full Term. The Faculty Office passes these titles on to the Chair of Examiners for approval. These titles must be approved by the Chair of Examiners not later than the last day of Michaelmas Full Term.

Candidates must submit extended essays to the Faculty Office so as to reach it not later than the last day of the Lent Term immediately preceding the examination. Dissertations must be submitted so as to reach the Faculty Office not later than the second Friday of the Easter

Term. Each dissertation or pair of essays must bear the examination number but not the candidate's name. The Faculty systematically uses text-matching software (currently "Turnitin") to screen all submitted work from students for possible plagiarism. The Examiners will have power to examine a candidate *viva voce* on the dissertation or the essays. The papers in Part II are:

1. *Metaphysics*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Realism and its alternatives; conceptual schemes; transcendental arguments
- Objects and properties: the contrast of particular and universal, and of abstract and concrete, realism about universals and alternatives
- Causation: theories of causation; realism about causation; direction of causation
- Time: dynamic versus block conceptions; the direction of time; the existence and persistence of entities in time
- Self: theories of the self; no-self in Western and non-Western philosophy

2. *Philosophy of mind*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Epistemology of mind: knowledge of one's own mind; knowledge of other minds
- Consciousness: varieties of consciousness; intentional theories of consciousness; the explanatory gap; the unity of consciousness
- Intentionality and mental representation: theories of content; externalism and internalism; perception and belief
- Mental faculties: intention and the will; imagination; desire

3. *Ethics*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Expanding the Moral Circle: animal ethics; environmental ethics and climate justice; future generations
- Metaethics: metaphysical foundations of ethics; moral epistemology
- Kant's ethics and Kantian ethics: duty and motive; morality and freedom; conditioned and unconditioned value; the categorical imperative; autonomy
- Topics in moral psychology: trust, ethics of knowing, responsibility

4. *European philosophy from Kant*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* to the end of the Transcendental Dialectic (A704, B732).
- Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Introduction, Consciousness, Self-consciousness (paragraphs 73-230); *Hegel's Logic: being part of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, paragraphs 1-111; *Introduction to Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, as far as (but not including) *The Geographical Basis of World History*; *Introduction to the Philosophy of Right*, paragraphs 1-40, 104-114, 141-157 and 257-259
- Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

5. *Philosophy in the Long Middle Ages*

This paper covers philosophy in the period from c. 400 to c. 1700, in the Latin, Arabic and Hebrew traditions. All texts are studied in translation. For 2023 - 2024, the two set themes will be (a) Scepticisms and (b) Happiness and Love. The examination will consist of fifteen questions on the set texts below. Of these, two will be commentary questions, one on an extract from each of the two asterisked texts under Theme 1, the other one on extract from

each of the two asterisked texts under Theme 2. Candidates must answer **three** questions, **including one or both** of the commentary questions. They may answer essay questions using texts on which they have commented in a commentary question, so long as any substantial repetition of material is avoided.

Theme 1: Scepticisms

Set Texts:

***Al-Ghazali**, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 17th Discussion; *Deliverance from Error*, 1-17

William Crathorn, *Questions on the Sentences*, bk. I, q. 1, in *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts*, ed. Pasnau, vol. 3, CUP, pp. 245-301.

***Nicholas of Autrecourt**, *Letters to Bernard of Arezzo*, in *Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*, ed. Klima, Blackwell, pp. 134-142, *supplemented with an extract from *Exigit ordo (Universal Treatise)*, trans. Kennedy, Marquette University Press pp. 114-120.

John Buridan, *Questions on the Metaphysics*, bk. II, q. 1, in *Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*, ed. Klima, Blackwell, pp. 143-150, supplemented with an extract from Buridan, *Questions on the Posterior Analytics*, bk. II, q. 2, trans. K. Majcherek.

Christine de Pizan, *Le livre de l'advison Cristine*

Francisco Sanchez *That nothing is known*, ed. Elaine Limbrick and Douglas Thomson, Cambridge University Press 1988.

Theme 2: Happiness and Love

Set Texts:

Boethius: *Consolation of Philosophy*, Books 1-4 (many translations)

Ibn Tufayl: *Hayy ibn Yaqzân*, trsl. Lenn Goodman, new edn: London, University of Chicago Press, 2009

Maimonides: - Introduction to *Mishnah. Tractate Sanhedrin*, chapter 10 (*Perek Helek*), Trsl in Israel Abrahams, 'Maimonides on the Jewish Creed', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 19 (1906), 24- 58, available at <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2480532/fulltextPDF/25EF67DEF62641CBPQ/1?accountid=9851>

Eight Chapters in Ethical Writings of Maimonides, ed. Raymond Weiss and Charles Butterworth, New York, Dover, 1975, 27-104

***Henry of Ghent**: *Quodlibet* 12, q. 13 ('Is it rational for someone without hope of a future life to choose to die for the commonwealth?') = CT no. 5 (https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/7ABF264AEE6583B295FB8360B76354AB/9780511609183c5_p257-270_CBO.pdf/henry_of_ghent_is_it_rational_for_someone_without_hope_of_a_future_life_to_choose_to_die_for_the_commonwealth.pdf)

Marguerite Porete *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, trans. E.L. Babinsky (transl.), Paulist Press.

***Spinoza**: *Ethics*, Book 5 (many translations)

CT = *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts* Vol. II: Ethics and Political Philosophy, ed. A. S. McGrade, John Kilcullen and Matthew Kempshall, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

6. Philosophy of Science

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least fifteen set.

Topics for 2023-24:

- Philosophy of Physics I: the metaphysics of space and space-time: absolute and relational theories of space and space-time; geometry and conventionalism.
- Philosophy of Physics II: the interpretation of quantum mechanics; non-locality.
- Philosophy of Biology: biological kinds, the nature of species; biological laws; functional and causal explanation in biology.
- Philosophy of Economics and Social Science: social science versus natural science; rational choice theory and social science; social ontology.

- Philosophy of cognitive science: folk psychology; non-human minds; situated cognition; philosophy of psychiatry.

7. *Mathematical logic*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- First and second order logic: completeness, compactness, conservativeness, expressive power, and Löwenheim-Skolem theorems, cut-elimination.
- First and second order theories: categoricity, non-standard models of arithmetic.
- Set theory: embedding mathematics in set theory, the cumulative iterative hierarchy, elements of cardinal and ordinal arithmetic, the axiom of choice.
- Recursive functions and computability: decidability, axiomatizability, Church's thesis, Gödel's incompleteness theorems, Hilbert's programme.

8. *Philosophical logic*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Radical interpretation: Quine on radical translation; Davidson and Lewis on radical interpretation.
- Theories of meaning: the aims and structure of a theory of meaning; modest vs full-blooded theories.
- Indexicals and context-dependence.
- The language and logic of plurals.
- Conditionals: indicative; subjunctive.
- Interpretations of probability: subjective; frequentist; chance; logical.
- The nature of logic: analytic versus empirical; conventionalism.
- Intuitionism: intuitionistic logic; traditional and contemporary arguments for intuitionism in mathematics; indefinitely extensible concepts.
- The nature of mathematics: formalism; if-thenism; platonism; neo-Fregean logicism; structuralism and fictionalism.

9. *Wittgenstein and his successors*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

Wittgenstein, *Blue Book*, *Philosophical Investigations*

Anscombe, *Intention*

Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, *How to Do Things with Words*

The paper may also include comparative questions on the following themes: solipsism, action, mental states, perception.

10. *Political philosophy*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Global political issues: migration; international distributive justice; colonialism, historic injustice, and reparations; nationalism and cosmopolitanism
- Topics in feminism: pornography; sexual violence; sex work; misogyny
- Embodiment and identity: sex and gender; race and racism; disability and impairment; religion and culture; beauty and appearance
- Radical political theory: Marxism; power; ideal theory and its critics; resisting injustice

11. *General Paper*

Candidates are asked to write a philosophical essay on one of at least twenty questions set.

PAPERS FROM OTHER TRIPOSES THAT MAY BE TAKEN IN PART II

As well as the papers listed for Part II above, Part II students may also take a maximum of two papers from the following:

Classical Tripos:

- B1 Plato
- B2 Aristotle on Soul and Body
- B3 Greek and Roman philosophers on Beauty