

# Philosophy

*Top 20*

IN THE UK  
FOR PHILOSOPHY\*

UNDERGRADUATE  
GUIDE



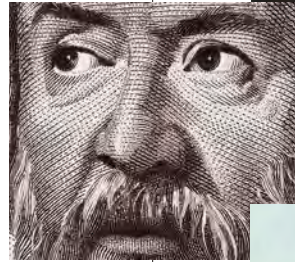
**Investigate and  
address real-life  
social issues whilst  
sharpening your  
skills.**



## Why is Philosophy at Aberdeen the best choice for me?

Philosophy at Aberdeen is a vibrant, diverse and inclusive department that carries forward a tradition of over 500 years. We offer a comprehensive programme with a mix of contemporary and historical topics. We place a strong emphasis on research-led teaching: Aberdeen was ranked 4th in Scotland and 14th in the UK for Philosophy in Complete University Guide 2022. Through co- and extra-curricular opportunities, you can enhance your intellectual, social and employability skills, and feel part of a welcoming community that is passionate about Philosophy.





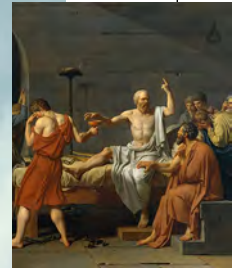
Aberdeen is structured a little differently from other universities and these differences make Aberdeen special. To help you get started let us explain the basics.

At Aberdeen we offer as much variety as we can, so you always get a chance to sample something new. In your first year you experience a range of subjects in and beyond Philosophy, without the need to commit long-term. You can experiment with different subjects. Usually in the second year you start to focus on your main degree interests. By the end of the second year, you'll know which subjects you want to continue with at honours level. Having discovered where your strengths and interests lie, you can tailor your degree accordingly, taking advantage of the wide range of courses offered in the discipline.



University shouldn't just prepare you for your first job, but for the rest of your life.

**Nicky Campbell OBE**  
TV and radio presenter and Aberdeen alumnus



# The Big Questions

As a philosophy student, you will engage with important and fascinating questions in a variety of branches of philosophy through critical thinking and the study of arguments. This will develop your skills of analysis and communication, your ability to question assumptions and to think critically and creatively.

## YEAR 1

Core:

### Experience, Knowledge and Reality (15 cr)

- Two 1500 word essays

And at least two from

### Controversial Questions (15 cr)

- 1500 word essay and take-home exam

### Logic and Argument (15 cr)

- Problem sets and two take-home exams

### How Should One Live? (15 cr)

- 1500 word essay and take-home exam

+ Plus further courses to reach 120 credits

## YEAR 2

At least 3 from

### Metaphysics and Epistemology (15 cr)

- Quizzes and 1500 word essay

### Feminist Philosophy (15 cr)

- Quizzes, 2000 word essay and take-home exam

### Mind in a Physical World (15 cr)

- three 1000 - 1250 word writing exercises

### Life, Death and Meaning (15 cr)

- 2000 word essay and take-home exam

+ Plus further courses to reach 120 credits



## Sharing our treasures

Great universities have great libraries. At Aberdeen our internationally important special collections and archives date from the third century BC to the present day. As well as 230,000 rare printed books, and more than 4,000 items from the sixteenth century, we have irreplaceable archival collections.



## YEAR 3

Choose courses from

- Philosophy of Games and Sports (30 cr)
- Creativity (30 cr)
- The Open Future (30 cr)
- Global Justice (30 cr)
- The Metaphysics of Possibility (30 cr)
- Genes, Brains and Evolution (30 cr)
- Junior Honours Research Project (30 cr)
- Ancient Ethics (30 cr)
- Scepticism (30 cr)
- Free Will and Moral Responsibility (30 cr)
- Contemporary Topics in Philosophy (30 cr)
- Ancient Chinese Philosophy (30 cr)
- And other course options

+ Plus further courses to reach 120 credits

## YEAR 4

Core:

### Dissertation

(10,000 words, supervised by staff)

Choose courses from

- Sex Race and Disability (30 cr)
- Philosophy of Time (30 cr)
- Scientific Revolutions and Scientific Rationality (30 cr)
- Knowledge Power and Society (30 cr)
- Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (30 cr)
- Philosophy of Medicine (30 cr)
- Nietzsche and Philosophy After the Death of God (30 cr)
- Social Epistemology (30 cr)
- Freedom, Power and the Self (30 cr)
- The Medical Image (30 cr)

+ Plus further courses to reach 120 credits



# A week in the life of a Philosophy student

Here's an example of how the week's commitments pan out for a current first year undergraduate student who has chosen to study Philosophy.

## Monday



10am-11am | Lecture  
Democracy and Governance

11am-12noon | Lecture  
Experience, Knowledge and Reality Lecture  
- Causality

5pm-7pm  
Philo-Bobbin social with Philosophy staff/  
students



5pm-7pm  
Wise Club discussion group  
- Stereotypes and Stereotyping

1pm-2pm | Tutorial  
Democracy and Governance tutorial

12noon-1pm | Tutorial  
Controversial Questions tutorial  
- Free Speech

10am-11am | Lecture  
Experience, Knowledge and Reality Lecture  
- Causality

## Tuesday



## Friday

10am-11am | Tutorial  
Experience, Knowledge and Reality Tutorial  
- Scepticism

11am-12noon | Lecture  
Controversial Questions Lecture  
- Euthanasia

12noon-1pm | Lecture  
Democracy and Governance Lecture



2pm-3pm | Lecture  
Experience, Knowledge and Reality Lecture  
- Mind-Body Dualism



## Wednesday

10am-12noon  
Ultimate Frisbee practice

3pm-5pm |  
Aberdeen Philosophy in Education Group -  
training

7.30pm |  
Philosophy Society  
- Discussion night: The Philosophy of Time  
Travel

## Thursday



12noon-1pm | Lecture  
Controversial Questions Lecture  
- Euthanasia

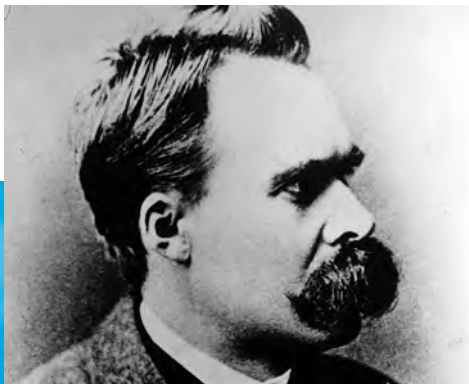
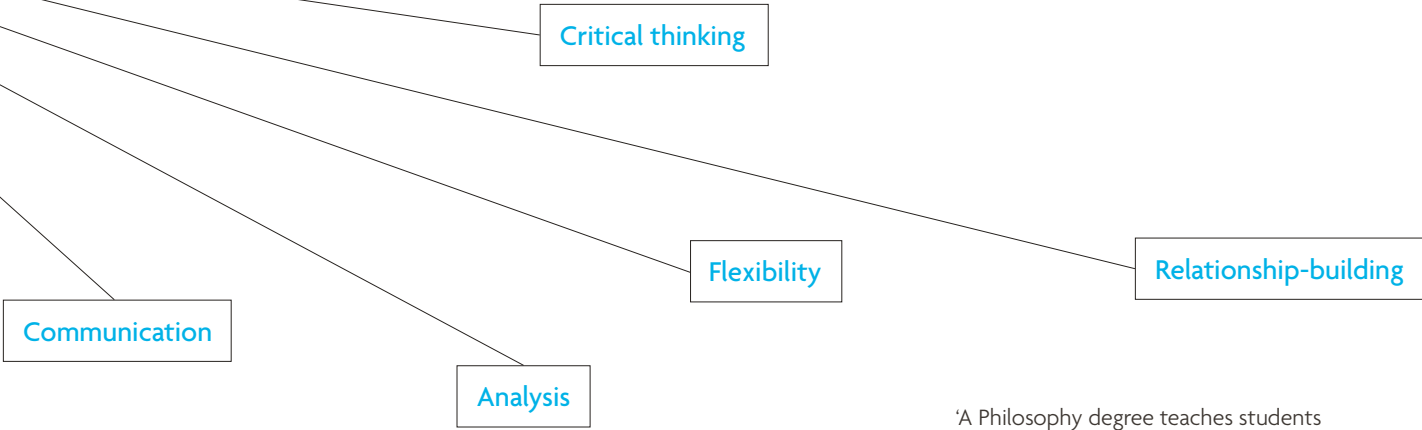
10am-11am | Lecture  
Europe in the 20th Century Lecture

# What skills will a Philosophy degree from Aberdeen give me?



Philosophy students will gain extensive intellectual skills in critical analysis and communication and the ability to apply these to specific problems.

In a world where analysis and communication are ever more important, Aberdeen Philosophy graduates develop core skills essential to most careers - the ability to work independently and in teams, to think critically and creatively, and to present arguments clearly.



'A Philosophy degree teaches students transferable skills, such as presentation, research and communication, as well as the ability to think outside the box in problem solving, and write their obscure thinking coherently. Particular job areas include teaching and lecturing, barrister, civil service, local and national government, marketing, journalism, psychotherapy, solicitor, HR, PR and recruitment.'

# Graduating Class



## Beth Doran

The Philosophy courses at Aberdeen are interesting and accessible to all, regardless of prior experience in the subject. From first year, the courses teach you the skills you need to read and write philosophy papers, and provide engaging material to ponder. I have also found that the department are helpful and welcoming to new people, and they run a number of events which allow you to get to know other students and staff. In terms of employment skills, philosophy has taught me how to think critically and argue considerately, which I believe are necessary skills to have in many work places. The course has taught me how to write clearly and concisely in order to get my point across in the strongest possible way, something I value when trying to communicate complex arguments.

**75%**

**GO ON TO WORK  
OR FURTHER STUDY  
WITHIN 15 MONTHS**

NATIONAL STUDENT  
SURVEY (NSS) 2021



# What sort of career could I enter?

Focus groups and surveys show that employers highly value what humanities students learn at University. More than nine out of ten say a job candidate's capacity for thinking and communicating clearly and solving complex problems is more important than their degree subject, according to an AAC&U poll. More than three-quarters favor applicants who understand other cultures.

In the past, our graduates have had no difficulty in securing rewarding jobs in a wide variety of sectors, including NGO campaigns officer, senior policy officer, curator at the National Library of Scotland, senior HR manager, and many others.

## Was your degree at Aberdeen essential for getting to where you are now?

I never thought I would have to deal with so many legal documents, yet, having to read and analyse primary sources really isn't any different from analysing a contract. Also, having to form an opinion and back it up in essays has formed a good basis in being a good negotiator. It is not just about what is on the piece of paper after four years, but all the skills you have gained along the way.

*Buyer for a major supermarket chain*



Yes. It gave me confidence in myself and in my ability with words. It taught me not to always accept the accepted version of events, to try to see the 'big picture', to empathise with the people involved. It was essential in being able to distinguish the critical items from the merely important and to present them in a concise, legible manner.

*CEO, European manufacturing company*

I quickly found that the training I'd had at Aberdeen ... was an excellent preparation: skills in researching a subject, analysing it, and explaining conclusions orally and in writing.

*Civil servant in the Scottish Office*



“Philosophy gives you so much more than key concepts and skills. It is not so much a body of knowledge as a way to understand what knowledge can be. Philosophy teaches you how to think: the most important skill for a life well lived.”

**Beth Lord**  
Philosophy Professor



We are ranked  
**TOP20**  
in the UK for  
Philosophy

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Complete University Guide 2022

**Interested? Find out more:**

[www.abdn.ac.uk](http://www.abdn.ac.uk)

[study@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:study@abdn.ac.uk)

+44 (0) 1224 272861



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