

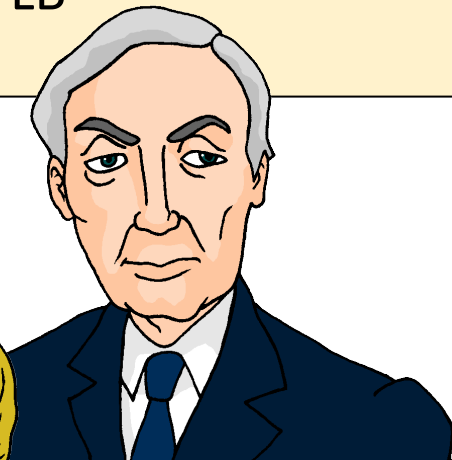
Philosophy A-Level COURSE HANDBOOK

AQA Philosophy A-Level (7172)

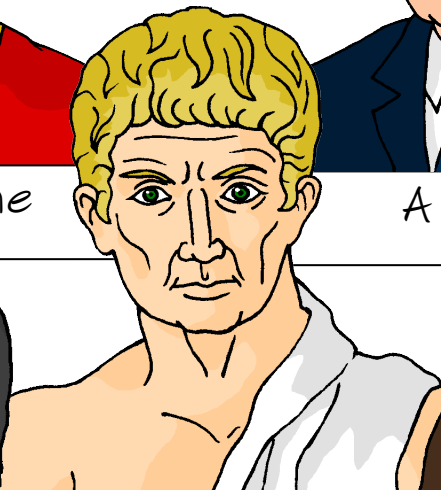
3;PLB and 4;PLB



David Hume



A J Ayer



Aristotle



Philippa Foot



René Descartes

NAME:

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INTRODUCTION TO THE DEPARTMENT

Welcome to Philosophy We hope that you enjoy your time in the department and find the process of studying the course a challenging and rewarding one.

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with a range of information and advice to help you organise your programme of study, learn independently, and equip you with important information about the department and how it can support you.

We are a small department with three teachers. Our main classroom is on the top floor of the main building in room 154. If you wish to find us outside of lessons we can most likely be found in the Philosophy office (shared with the Maths department) which is on the middle floor of the main building, room 144/145; we may also be in the staff room (bottom floor of the main building).

We offer the AQA A-Level in Philosophy. We also offer the “Big Questions” +explore course and you can do an EPQ in Philosophy with us in the second year.

Teaching Staff:

- **Dan Mason** – d1m@godalming.ac.uk
- **Oli McAdoo** – oxm@godalming.ac.uk (works Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday)
- **Tom Messenger** – t1m@godalming.ac.uk (**Head of Department**)

Director of Faculty (Humanities and Social Sciences):

- **Debbie Haggart** – djh@godalming.ac.uk

Along with the names above, the following departments and places will be useful whilst studying on the course:

The ILC – your go-to place to complete work and independent study outside of lessons. The Silent Study area provides an area to work individually, whilst the library contains an excellent selection of wider reading. Make sure that you have familiarised yourself with the ILC when you start the course

The Exams Office – for any questions you have about your exam entries, exam timetable or remarks and script requests.

Learning Support – for any extra support or advice you need to help you study in general. If you are struggling to organise and manage your workload; need help refining your essay-writing technique; help with revision; or if you think you might be entitled to any exam concessions, learning support are the people to talk to.

Careers – when you start to think about your options after college, whether university or employment based, careers can give you advice on where to apply and help in producing a personal statement.

EXPECTATIONS

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF STUDENTS?

1. **Attendance and punctuality** – learning cannot begin if you are not in lessons or if you arrive late to them and miss important content. Students should maintain full attendance and punctuality. Any unavoidable and legitimate absences should be accounted for properly, meaning that students get a parent or a guardian to contact college and then email their teacher(s) to catch up on missed work
2. **To maintain a mature and respectful learning environment** – this means behaving in and out of lessons in a way expected of a Sixth Form student: listening carefully to the views of others and offering constructive contributions in class
3. **To stay up to date** – you will be set weekly structured preparation or homework tasks and it is essential that these are completed on time and in the required level of detail. We use structured homework to consolidate particular content or to set up lessons to come. If work is incomplete your understanding will be incomplete, and you will under-perform. If you arrive at a lesson having not completed preparation work, then your teacher may also ask you to leave and complete this elsewhere.
4. **To stay organised** – managing the demands of a minimum of three subjects is challenging, especially when you are being taught more than one unit in each. You need, therefore, to stay organised. This means preparing a folder for each of your units, bringing the correct materials to each lesson and recording homework in the same place every time
5. **To meet the 50/50 expectation** – students are expected to conduct 4.5 to 6 hours of independent study a week. This will include structured preparation or homework tasks set by your teachers along with proactive tasks you complete yourself to consolidate and extend your understanding. See the advice later in this booklet for more help on doing this.
6. **To make the most of feedback and support** – you will get a lot of feedback during your time on the course. This will come as written feedback on assessed work, verbal feedback on general class or homework, and targets set at formal 1-1s. Feedback needs to be recorded carefully by you and acted upon. When you get back assessed work, for example you will be asked to record your own targets based on this, and may, in addition, be asked to attend a lunchtime workshop to help process feedback.
7. **To be resilient** – any subject will at times be very challenging. At times you will not do as well as you want or will struggle to understand a new topic or idea. You need to be prepared to spend more time on areas such as these and to seek out extra help when needed. These experiences of finding areas where you are not doing so well and improving them are what lead to success.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT OF YOUR TEACHERS?

1. **To deliver structured and engaging lessons** – your teachers will deliver lessons designed to challenge your understanding whilst also helping you to gradually build up your knowledge and skills. These lessons will follow the scheme of work, a version of which you can see in this handbook.
2. **Regular assessment and feedback** – in addition to your benchmark assessments (four in the first year and three in the second) your teachers will regularly set you exam-style questions to give you opportunities to practice and improve. Feedback will be given and will include the relevant mark scheme and clear developmental targets
3. **Structured weekly work** – you should expect to be given a significant amount of work to do by your teachers each week. You will be given guidance on how long this should take and completed work will be checked and/or taken in
4. **Additional support** – your teachers will be happy to provide extra help outside of lessons either informally, by responding to emails, or more formally through departmental workshops. Workshops are the best opportunity to receive additional help and work best when students come to lunchtime sessions with a specific area of confusion or set of questions to get answered

APPROACH TO REMOTE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Following the closure of schools and colleges in March 2020, teachers and students have adapted to a new environment of remote teaching and learning. How 'remote' this is depends on the wider context of COVID-19, but the department has clear plans, and expectations of its students, in each of the scenarios below.

1. Normal Opening: The College is open as normal; all students attend and follow a full, face-to-face timetable

In this situation the department would run lessons, as normal and all of the expectations of students and teachers on the page before would apply

2. Blended Learning: students will receive a mixture of physical and remote lessons, attending college physically one week and remotely the other

The department will continue to offer high quality lessons in this scenario although the exact nature of teaching and learning may vary depending on what content is being covered. Students should expect a mixture of:

- **Streamed lessons** – when appropriate, lessons including half of the class will be streamed live through Microsoft Teams to the other half of the class learning from home
- **Recorded content** – tutorials, demonstrations, presentations etc. will be pre-recorded for students to watch and complete a set of follow-up tasks
- **Structured independent work** – students may be longer project-style work, or work that is made up of several structured tasks and asked to work on this independently for a period of time, during which their teacher will be available for support
- **Preparation work** – class time may be used to set students independent work in the form of research or pre-learning to prepare them for a specific live lessons, which will then be used to assess students' level of understanding of the work they have completed.
- **Homework** – students will also be expected to complete homework tasks

3. Remote Learning: students will receive remote lessons and assessment will be conducted remotely

In the event that college is not open for physical lesson, teaching and learning will move online through the combined use of Microsoft Teams and Godalming Online. The specific nature of each week's learning will vary depending on what is being covered, but students should expect a mixture of:

- **Live lessons through Microsoft Teams** – this is a fantastic platform that allows classes to video-call, watch presentations, take part in Q&A, group work, 1-1s all in real-time. Teams lessons will be the main part of remote teaching and learning but may take a slightly different form or length than physical lessons to help students engage fully. For example, a 1.5 hour physical lesson might translate to a 30-45 minute Teams lessons, made up of a brief teacher-led presentation and class Q&A, followed by 45 minutes of structured independent work, during which time the teacher conducts 1-1s with students
- **Online submissions** – students will upload work regularly to help their teacher monitor their progress and offer support when needed. This will be done through the 'Assignments' feature on Teams or through Godalming Online
- **Remote Workshops** – in addition to remote lessons, department workshops will continue remotely to provide students with extra points in the week to get 1-1 help on content, homework or remote learning in general

Expectations of students in scenario 2&3 – if students find themselves learning remotely or in a mixture of physical and remote lessons, then the department has clear expectations of how they should work in this environment. The department has considerable experience in delivering content remotely and key to this is students remaining engaged, establishing a clear working routine and communicating effectively with staff. More specifically it is expected that students will:

- Attend all remote lessons unless told otherwise by their teacher
- Actively take part in remote lessons e.g. contribute questions and answers, take part in group work, turn webcams on (with the background blurred) when asked to by their teacher
- Submit all work via Godalming Online or Microsoft Teams by the deadline set
- Communicate regularly with their teachers, either as part of scheduled 1-1s or more informally to discuss work or any problems they might be having. This will be through Email or Teams.

To identify where your remote strengths and weaknesses might be, complete the specific department audit below. This is made up of the essential skills you would need to learn in a remote or blended environment.

Remote Learning Skills Audit that you need to master to succeed on this course	Tick
Log on to Office 365 using your college details (in college and at home)	
Open Microsoft Teams and find a class team	
Join a lesson on Teams and post a comment	
Download the Teams app on your phone	
Upload or attach documents in Teams	
Save documents on OneDrive	
Access your OneDrive files at home	
Share documents, PowerPoints etc without attaching them to emails	
Access Godalming Online course pages and download files	
Upload work onto Godalming Online	
Access E-textbooks needed on the course (details on Godalming Online)	
Log on to any magazines or websites useful for the course	
Access Estream to watch films/documentaries/pre-recorded content	

There are lots of places you can go to get help with the skills listed above.

To begin with, speak to your teachers to get help with the basics of using Microsoft Teams or Godalming Online. This can be done at the start of the year through departmental surgeries and through workshops. A good idea would be to bring the completed audit above to a workshop and go through this with your teacher to fill in any gaps.

The IT Department are also available to offer more technical support or if you run into a problem your teacher cannot resolve. If in college, IT can be found on the top floor of the 300s. Also have a look at the IT Helpdesk on Godalming Online, which has help on using features such as Office 365. Finally IT are also contactable via ITsupport@godalming.ac.uk

If you are concerned about how to organise your time and working habits during a period of remote learning, then speak to your tutor for ideas and techniques to work independently. The Learning Support Department are also available to discuss specific concerns or individual learning needs further.



Godalming Online...

COURSE OVERVIEW

The Exams

At the end of your second year you will take two exams:

Paper 1: Epistemology and moral philosophy (3 hrs / 100 marks / 50%)

- **Section A:** Epistemology
- **Section B:** Moral philosophy

Paper 2: The metaphysics of God and the metaphysics of mind (3 hrs / 100 marks / 50%)

- **Section A:** Metaphysics of God
- **Section B:** Metaphysics of mind

Each section has the same structure: a 3 mark, two 5 mark and a 12 mark question in which you will explain a variety of Philosophical concepts, and a 25 mark extended essay in which you will analyse and evaluate a Philosophical claim.

Paper 1	Topic A: Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is knowledge? • Perception as a source of knowledge • Reason as a source of knowledge • The limits of knowledge 	25%
	Topic B: Moral philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normative ethical theories (utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics) • Applied ethics • Meta-ethics 	25%

Paper 2	Topic A: The metaphysics of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept and nature of 'God' • Arguments relating to the existence of God • Religious language 	25%
	Topic B: The metaphysics of mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we mean by 'mind'? • Dualist theories • Physicalist theories • Functionalism 	25%

STUDENT SCHEME OF WORK

Below is a summary of how you will be taught the different units of the course and how this fits into the approximately 66 weeks of teaching time over the two years of your A-Level. You will also see the key assessment points given below. It is important that you know when these are so that you can organise your revision and preparation. An important idea to understand when looking at this student scheme of work, is that the course flows consistently over two years. The topics you study at the start of your first year are as 'difficult' as those you will look at the end of your second year. You need to treat all work in the same way and apply yourself fully throughout. Also consider that the May half term in the first year is, in reality, the mid-point of the course not the summer holiday. This time will go quickly so make sure you understand the structure of the course fully and get any help when it is needed.

A-LEVEL YEAR 1					
Week	Topic A:		Topic B:		Assessment
	1: Epistemology	2: God	1: Moral Philosophy	2: Mind	
Start of term/L6 Enrolment					
L6 Enrolment					
1	Direct Realism and associated issues		Intro to ethics/morality		
2	Indirect realism (sense-data, primary/secondary qualities)		Utilitarianism		
3	Indirect realism issues, idealism		Utilitarianism		
4	Idealism and issues		Applied Utilitarianism		
5	Consolidation and revision for Benchmark 1				
6	Sit Benchmark 1 in class				Benchmark 1
<i>Half Term</i>					
7	Plato arguments for innatism. Tabula Rasa		Kantian deontology		
8	Locke and Hume vs Leibniz		Kantian deontology		

9	Descartes' 3 waves. Intuition and deduction thesis	Issues with Kantian deontology	
10	Descartes' sceptical arguments and cogito	Applied Deontology	
11	Empiricists responses, Hume's fork	Virtue ethics	
12	Consolidation and revision for Benchmark 2		
13	Sit Benchmark 2 in class		Benchmark 2
<i>Christmas Holiday</i>			
14	1-to-1 meetings and feedback		
15	Types of knowledge, nature of definition, the Tripartite view	Virtue Ethics	
16	Necessity and sufficiency of JTB (Gettier cases)	Issues with virtue ethics	Student Review 1 Available
17	Infallibilism, no false lemmas, reliabilism	Applied virtue ethics	
18	Epistemic virtue	Meta ethics: moral realism and issues (Moore, Hume, and Ayer)	
19	Scepticism/limits of knowledge (more Descartes)	Meta ethics: moral anti realism (Mackie, Ayer, and Hare) and issues	
<i>Half Term</i>			
20	Epistemology review	Moral Philosophy review	
21	Consolidation and revision for Benchmark 3		
22	Sit Benchmark 3 in class		Benchmark 3
23	Epistemology review - Perception	Moral Philosophy review - Utilitarianism	

24	Epistemology review - Reason	Moral Philosophy review - Kant	
25	Epistemology review - What is knowledge?	Moral Philosophy review - AVE	
<i>Easter Holiday</i>			
26	Epistemology review - Limits	Moral Philosophy review - Applied	
27	Epistemology review	Moral Philosophy review - Meta ethics	
28	Epistemology review	Moral Philosophy review	
29	Consolidation and revision for Benchmark 4		
30	Sit Benchmark 4 in class		Benchmark 4
31	The concept of God - omnipotence, paradox of stone, omnibenevolence	What is Mind?	
<i>Half Term</i>			
32	1-to-1 meetings and feedback		
33	The concept of God - Euthyphro, Omniscience, Free will	Substance dualism	
34	The concept of God - God and time	Substance dualism	
35	The problem of evil (Logical, Evidential, & Midgley)	Issues with Substance dualism	
36	The problem of evil (Plantinga & Hick)	Intro to Materialism (Physicalism, Supervenience, and Behaviourism)	
37	Half week – recap/end of term activities		Student Review 2 and Predicted Grade Available

A-LEVEL YEAR 2

Week	Topic A:		Topic B:		Assessment
	1: Epistemology	2: God	1: Moral Philosophy	2: Mind	
38	Review summer work/recap course so far				
39	Consolidation and revision for Benchmark 5				
40	Sit Benchmark 5 in class				Benchmark 5
41	1-to-1 meetings and feedback				
42	Ontological Arguments		Behaviourism		
43	Issues with Ontological Arguments		Issues with Behaviourism		
<i>Half Term</i>					
44	Teleological Arguments		Mind-brain Type-Identity Theory		
45	Issues with Teleological Arguments		Issues with Mind-brain Type-identity Theory		
46	Consolidation and revision for Benchmark 6				Benchmark 6
47	Sit Benchmark 6 in class				
48	1-to-1 meetings and feedback				
49	Cosmological Arguments		Eliminative Materialism		
50	Issues with Cosmological Arguments		Issues with Eliminative Materialism		Student Review 3 available

<i>Christmas Holiday</i>			
51	Religious Language (cognitivism and non-cognitivism)	Functionalism	
52	Religious Language (Logical Positivism)	Varieties of Functionalism	
53	Religious Language (the 'University Debate' and falsification)	Issues with Functionalism	
54	Religious Language (the 'University Debate' and falsification)	Property Dualism & Epiphenomenalism	
55	Review metaphysics of God	Issues with Property Dualism and Epiphenomenalism	
56	Consolidation and revision for mock (Benchmark 7)		
<i>Half Term</i>			
57	MOCK EXAMS		Benchmark 7
58	1-to-1 meetings and feedback		
59	Review Epistemology	Review Mind	
60	Review God	Review moral philosophy	Student Review 4 Available
61	Review Epistemology	Review Mind	
62	Review God	Review moral philosophy	
<i>Easter Holiday</i>			
63	Review God	Review moral philosophy	
64	Review Epistemology	Review Mind	

65	Review God	Review moral philosophy	
66	Review Epistemology	Review Mind	

ASSESSMENT

When starting the course, it is important to know how the course is assessed. All assessed work is marked around what are known as ‘**assessment objectives**’ (AOs) which have been set by the exam board. You need to understand what each of these is and how many marks it carries for each type of question. If you can do this then you will know what skills to demonstrate and to what extent for each question on the exam.

AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy, including through the use of philosophical analysis.	60%
AO2	Analyse and evaluate philosophical arguments to form reasoned judgements.	40%

What do these mean?

AO1 requires you to demonstrate you can use knowledge and understanding to explain how philosophers have argued for or against a certain position.

AO2 requires you to be able to evaluate other philosopher’s ideas and arguments and to construct your own arguments.

EXAM STRUCTURE

There are two papers, one on Epistemology and Moral Philosophy, the other on the Metaphysics of God and Metaphysics of Mind. Each paper has two sections, so there is one section per unit. All questions are compulsory. Each section has the same structure. There are three types of question.

1. Questions that ask students to define or explain an important philosophical idea – a distinction, concept, claim or brief argument. These take the form of 3-mark questions.
2. Questions that ask students to explain some philosophical material. 5-mark questions may ask students to explain a claim, theory or argument, or to compare or contrast two theories. 12-mark questions ask students to explain a more complex argument or a set of arguments, a theory or a comparison between theories, or again a theory and an argument for or against it, or some other material, e.g. to apply a theory to an issue (in moral philosophy).
3. 25-mark open-ended essay questions that ask students to evaluate a philosophical claim.

Except for the 25-mark questions, all the marks available are for AO1. For the 25-mark questions, 5 marks are for AO1 and 20 marks are for AO2.

The following questions are from the specimen exam papers, produced by AQA:

Paper 1

Section A Epistemology

1. What is philosophical scepticism? (3 marks)
2. Explain **one** way in which a direct realist could respond to the argument from illusion. (5 marks)
3. Explain how Berkeley’s idealism differs from indirect realism. (5 marks)

4. Explain how Descartes argues that we can gain *a priori* knowledge through intuition and deduction. (12 marks)
5. How should propositional knowledge be defined? (25 marks)

Section B Moral Philosophy

6. Briefly explain why Aristotle thinks that pleasure is **not** the only good. (3 marks)
7. Explain why emotivism is a non-cognitivist theory of ethical language. (5 marks)
8. Explain the analogy drawn between virtues and skills within Aristotelian ethics. (5 marks)
9. Explain how Kant's deontological ethics can be applied to the question of whether we should ever tell lies. (12 marks)
10. How convincing is utilitarianism as an account of what makes an action morally right? (25 marks)

Paper 2

Section A Metaphysics of God

1. Explain the difference between the claims 'God is eternal' and 'God is everlasting'. (3 marks)
2. Explain the evidential problem of evil. (5 marks)
3. Outline Aquinas' Third Way. (5 marks)
4. Compare and contrast Paley's and Swinburne's versions of the design argument. (12 marks)
5. Is religious language meaningful? (25 marks)

Section B Metaphysics of mind

1. What do eliminative materialists claim about mental states? (3 marks)
2. Outline Descartes' conceivability argument for substance dualism. (5 marks)
3. Explain how Block's China thought experiment can be used to argue against functionalism. (5 marks)
4. Outline mind-brain type identity theory and explain how the issue of multiple realizability challenges this view. (12 marks)
5. Does philosophical behaviourism give the correct account of mental states? (25 marks)

Levels of response mark schemes are used. These are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the performance at the mid-point of the level. The marker will first determine which level the answer as a whole falls into. Within the level, the marker starts from the default that the answer receives the middle mark, and then considers whether this should be raised or lowered. For essay questions, the weighting of the Assessment Objectives and range of skills displayed is important.

The mark schemes mention 'redundancy'. Material is redundant if it does nothing to help answer the question. Hence, irrelevant material is redundant, as is repetition (unless helpfully clarifying or drawing threads together). It is not the job of the examiner to identify that part of the answer that is correct out of a rambling discussion. The presence of redundant material – even alongside material that correctly answers the question – indicates that the student has not mastered various philosophical skills, e.g. precision, concise presentation, and the ability to discriminate between what is relevant and what is not. Such an answer, therefore, receives a lower mark than an answer that contains no redundancy.

3-mark questions

The first questions of each section test *accuracy* and *precision* of understanding. The examiners want students to be *concise*. In some cases, only a definition is needed. In every case, students should state the definition/claim/argument clearly and precisely and then move on. They shouldn't waffle or talk around it. At no point in the exam should students try to impress using big words or long sentences – it just gets in the way of clarity and precision.

Full marks: correct, precise, no significant redundancy

5-mark questions

Students are asked to outline and/or explain a distinction, concept, claim, argument, or comparison. Explaining involves not just describing the idea, but giving a sense of the reasoning or thought behind it. It is important not only to state the essential claims but to *order* them and *link* them logically. Students should say enough to give a full explanation, but again, stay concise and not waffle. It's fine to use numbered premises and conclusion.

Full marks: Explanation is full, clear, and precise, with logical links between points, and no redundancy.

12-mark questions

These questions generally ask for an explanation or account of a more complex argument or a set of arguments, a theory or a comparison between theories, or some other material. The marks are still all for AO1, so there should be no evaluation (which would be redundant). As with the shorter questions, the examiners are looking for clarity, precision, and an explanation that sets out the central claims in a way that demonstrates the logical links between them. The answer needs to work as a single 'whole', rather than a number of disconnected 'bits'.

Full marks: Content is clear, correct, detailed, precise, and relevant, with very little redundancy. Form is clear, integrated and logical. Technical philosophical language is used precisely.

25-mark questions

These questions are much more open-ended. Students are asked to evaluate a claim. To do this, they will need to construct and evaluate arguments for and against the claim. In addition to evaluating individual claims and arguments, the answer as a whole needs to work as one long argument. Arguments have a clear conclusion; this need not take a 'yes' or 'no' form, e.g. students may answer that we cannot know. However, the conclusion should never be simply 'there are points against and points in favour'.

The examiners are more interested in the *quality* than the quantity. Three points:

1. Students should not aim for a comprehensive discussion of the claim, covering all the angles, arguments and objections. Discussing two arguments – ones that are really strong or important – with depth and rigour is worth more than many weak or superficial points.
2. The examiners don't expect students to try to make both sides seem plausible. They are testing students' skill at arguing. So the answer can take the form of a strong argument in favour of the conclusion and then strong replies to objections that can be raised.
3. The answer needs to have a logical structure, to be a coherent whole. So each point in the answer should make some contribution to the conclusion.

Once again, it's fine to use numbered arguments. It's also fine to use bullet points, particularly when running out of time.

Full marks: Content is detailed and precise, with philosophical language used precisely. The student argues with clear intent throughout, so that the argument is sustained, coherent and integrated, with a clear conclusion. Arguments and counter-arguments are stated in their strongest forms, with crucial arguments being distinguished from less crucial ones. The conclusion is robustly defended, reasoned judgements about the weight of arguments are made on an ongoing basis.

Philosophy A-level Department Assessment Policy 2020-2022

The Importance of Feedback and Learning Outside the Classroom – '50:50'

Learning will not happen instantly and takes time; attending lessons is not enough, you also need to be working outside of class, to learn new information and consolidate learning. In the process, you will make mistakes but hopefully feedback will enable you to learn from these mistakes. Better to make a mistake during the year and correct it, than make your first mistake in the final exam! Feedback is essential for your learning and will consist of whole class (teacher runs a session in lessons), written (teacher marking), peer (where you feedback on someone else's work in the class) and self (where you assess yourself).

There are 66 weeks of teaching weeks in total at College to help you learn and prepare for your final assessments. The classes are shared equally between two teachers for 2.25 hours, with each teacher delivering one of the two units; one of your tutors will be the Lead Subject Tutor who will be responsible for formalised 1-2-1s, writing your Student Reviews, seeing your parents at parents evening and for writing Action Plans.

In line with the College's '50-50' initiative, each week, homework will be set and could take between 4.5 to 6 hours in total. Each teacher therefore could set you up to 2.25 to 3 hours homework per week. If a homework from one teacher only takes you 1 hour for a week, then you will have a further 1.25 to 2 hours to conduct further reading and consolidate learning.

The Final Assessment

At the end of the two years, students will complete two three hour exams worth 100% of their final grade (Details are in the previous section)

Types of Assessment

- **Homework (Weekly):** Homework does not necessarily need to be completed at home! You can use free periods during the day to complete these tasks outside of lessons. To keep a good work/life balance, you might like to treat College as an 0845 to 1615 day and use your free periods in the library completing tasks. This will minimise the work you need to complete at home and might make you more productive. Homework tasks can consist of several types of work:
 1. **SHORT TASKS/QUIZZES:** These will generally involve you practicing skills and knowledge learnt in class and will be similar to the short answer questions in the final exam. Not all homework will be marked by the teacher, but you will have an opportunity to check your answers and have your answers checked by your peers.
 2. **ESSAY PLANS:** These will help you check your understanding of a unit as a whole and will usually involve short questions which together combine to give you a structure for the 25 mark essays.
 3. **EXTENDED ESSAYS:** You will likely receive one of these per teacher per half term. Using the essay planner you will produce a 25-mark essay, for which you will receive feedback.
 4. **REVISION:** There are a variety of tasks you can do to help you revise past content. We recommend using your essay planners and booklets to engage in retrieval practice. You could also consider using flash cards with a question/key term on one side and the answer/definition on the back, this will help you to quiz yourself, another recommended technique is to produce a mind map, from memory on a topic.
- **Mock Exams and Benchmark Checkpoints (Half-Termly):** After a period of teaching, there will be the opportunity to sit a benchmark which will be an assessment under timed conditions. Each benchmark will allow you to access the full grade range from A* to U grade, given the topics covered so far and exam technique. They are an indicator of how well you have understood and can apply the content to questions you will meet in the final exams at the end of the two years. Benchmarks and mock exams are extremely important and should be treated like the actual exam. They are an ideal point to see how you are progressing and to get valuable feedback. You will make mistakes in these assessments and so the follow up work is to test whether you have learned from those mistakes to become better at the subject and exam technique.

Tracking your Progress: Student Reviews, Action Plans and Parents Evenings

The College's policy is to deal with you, the student, first but we also report to your parents at regular intervals to let them know how you are progressing and to inform them of what our expectations are through four Student Reviews spread throughout the two years at College and also four parents evenings.

If the department feel you are under-performing based on evidence such as benchmark grades and your approach to learning in between these periods, then your Lead Subject Tutor may place you onto a Formal Department Action Plan and we will formally write to your parents after a 1-2-1 with yourself and to try and get you back on track in a supportive way

Student Review 2, the ARG and Predicted Grades

At the end of the first year (June 2020), your Lead Tutor will have a 1-2-1 to discuss your Annual Review Grade or ARG and also finalise your Predicted Grade which might be used for UCAS applications for University and other destinations.

The ARG is determined by your Lead Tutor in communication with your other teacher and will rely on the following evidence base:

1. **Benchmark 1 to 4 Grades.** We will look at the grades achieved in Benchmarks 1 to 4, there is no exact formula but the ARG is normally similar to the grades achieved in these four assessments, with more weight placed on Benchmarks 3 and 4. Unless there are significant, documented extenuating circumstances which affected performance in benchmarks, your ARG cannot be higher than your best benchmark grades.
2. **Approach to Learning:** How you are engaging in your learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, how you have sought out extra support via workshops and your overall communication with your teachers. In the event of any of the course being delivered remotely we will also consider ability to meet weekly deadlines, regular contact with teachers via email/messaging and attendance at remote lessons.

The ARG plays a key part in determining the context in which you progress to the second year. Students who receive an A*-D grade (A-level) are encouraged to continue with their studies into the 2nd year. However for students who receive a U or E Grade (A-level) as their ARG, it suggests that for whatever reason they have struggled with the transition from GCSE to A-Level. This will be evidenced by poor performances throughout their benchmarks and an inconsistent or poor approach to learning in their student reviews and via formal Action Plans. Students who receive a U Grade are recommended to continue with the course and they would need to speak to a Senior Tutor about alternative pathways.

The College adopts a consistent and optimistic approach to predicting grades to ensure that they are both aspirational and achievable. A predicted grade is what we believe a student is likely to achieve by the conclusion of their course in positive circumstances and the predicted grade provides universities and colleges with some understanding of a student's academic potential alongside their Personal Statement and a written Reference from their Personal Tutor.

The ARG is important in forming the basis for the predicted grade. Our experience tells us that students rarely achieve more than a grade above their ARG, so we will normally predict on this basis. The predicted grade therefore can be aspirational for the students' ambitions although it must remain realistic and cannot be based on the idea that only now will the student start to work harder in the second year!

Other Considerations

- **LATE POLICY:** In line with the 'College Assessment Policy', the department are under no obligation to provide feedback to a student who does not meet the internal deadlines for weekly independent tasks or benchmark assessments. Students who fail to prepare adequately for the lesson as requested, maybe excluded for part of the lesson and asked to work independently at the back of the classroom. A continued failure to meet homework requirements will result in communication home and an Action Plan.
- **RETURNED WORK:** Work will be assessed and returned within 10 working days of it being submitted. While benchmark assessments will always be marked in detail by your teacher, assessment of other work can take several forms, not just individual written feedback from the teacher. In lieu of individual written feedback you may also receive verbal feedback, whole class feedback, peer assessment (where another student will assess whether you have met certain criteria), or you may be given the criteria and assess your own work.
- **PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism is submitting another person's work (eg an article, transcript of a video, another student's work) as one's own original work or using someone else's idea without referencing the source or using pictorial work without permission or referencing the source. It is not a good use of either your or your teacher's time to assess work that is not your own. If there is a suspicion of plagiarism on any piece of work, the Head of Department and Senior Tutor will be informed and a meeting will take place. If a student is found guilty, they will be subject to disciplinary action by the College. Students should be aware that the College is subscribed to software designed to detect plagiarism.

Benchmark Checkpoints, Student Reviews (Reports) and Mock Exams

Below is an overview of all the key assessment checkpoints

CHECKPOINT	DATE	DETAILS
Benchmark 1 Checkpoint	Oct	Two 45 Minute tests, one for each side of the course Each paper will consist of a 3 mark, two 5 mark and a 12 mark question. You will not be expected to do a 25 mark question at this stage of the course
Parents Evening (For All)	Nov	Meetings with your parents to discuss how you have settled in and transferred from GCSE to A-level learning based upon: 1. Approach to learning (how you are engaging in your learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, how you have sought out extra support via workshops and your overall communication with your teachers) 2. Performance Grade in Benchmark 1 and from your homework tasks
XMAS BREAK		
Benchmark 2 Checkpoint	Dec	Two 45 minute tests, one for each side of the course Each paper will consist of a 25 mark question. The questions will be seen and you will be given assistance in planning.
Student Review 1	Jan	A review of your progress in the first term (12-13 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor: 1. Performance grade (A to U) (based on benchmark 1 and 2 but also your homework tasks) 2. Approach to Learning (how you are engaging in your learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, how you have sought out extra support via workshops and your overall communication with your teachers).
Parents Evening (Targeted)	Mar	Meetings with your parents where teachers may have a concern about your progress since Student Review 1 in January.
EASTER BREAK		
Benchmark 3 Checkpoint	May	Two 1 hour, 30 minute tests, one for each side of the course This will be made up of both the short answer questions and the 25 mark question. The 25 mark question will be selected from a shortlist which the student will see in advance to aid their planning
Benchmark 4 Checkpoint	June	Two 1 hour, 30 minute tests, one for each side of the course This will be the same format as benchmark 3, but will be testing Paper 2 content.
Student Review 2	July	A review of your progress for the academic year (30-35 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor 1. Approach to Learning 2. Performance Grade (Annual Review Grade or 'ARG' – performance for whole year) 3. Predicted Grade
SUMMER BREAK		
Benchmark 5 Checkpoint	Oct	Two 1 hour, 30 minute tests, one for each side of the course This will be the same format as benchmark 3 and 4. It will contain questions from both Paper 1 and Paper 2 topics. You will be given some guidance on this to complete over the summer.
Parents Evening (All)	Oct	Meetings with your parents to discuss how you have settled in to the second phase of learning: 1. Approach to learning (how you have engaged since Student Review 2 including completion of summer homework and the first five weeks of teaching – deadlines met, engagement in class and communication with teacher) 2. Performance with reference to your draft coursework mark and to talk about the final deadline for after half-term. 3. How to support you: Discuss how parents can further support you and what is coming up in this year
Benchmark 6 Checkpoint	Dec	Two 1 hour, 30 minute tests, one for each side of the course This will be made up of both the short answer questions and the 25 mark question. All questions will be unseen.
Student Review 3	Dec	A review of your progress for the academic year since last Student Review (July) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor 1. Approach to Learning 2. Performance Grade (based upon benchmark 6 and homework tasks) compared to Predicted Grade
XMAS BREAK		
Benchmark 7 Checkpoint	Mar	Three hour Mock Exam This will be the first time you are able to sit a paper which will be identical in format to the final exam. The questions will be unseen and could come from any area of the course.
Student Review 4	Mar	A review of your progress for the academic year (30-35 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor (see above) 1. Approach to Learning 2. Performance Grade (based upon benchmark 7 Mock Exam) compared to Predicted Grade
Parents Evening (Targeted)	Apr	Meetings with your parents primarily where teachers may have a concern about your progress since Student Review 4.
EASTER BREAK		

Philosophy

50:50 Help and Advice



Key to your success whilst studying in the Department is the level of effort and work you put into your subjects outside of lessons. The college's expectation is that you match every hour of class time with an hour of independent study – **50:50**. This will include completing **structured homework** tasks set by your teachers but will also require you to **work independently**; finding ways to consolidate and extend your understanding. To help you to do this, the list below gives some ideas or activities to consider each week.

CONSOLIDATE YOUR WEEKLY WORK *(Suggested time = 1 hour per week)*

Go over your booklet and any other lesson materials and handouts from that week making sure that all activities have been finished in detail. You can find all resources used in class on Godalming Online, as well as wider reading. When you have looked at a new concept, argument or philosopher you could produce a simple mind-map to summarise the key information ready for future revision.

REVISE PAST CONTENT *(Suggested time = 1 hour per week)*

It is so important that you keep your knowledge of each topic up to date. Revision can take many forms – but it must be active. Just reading, copying or highlighting are ineffective. You must be doing something that involves recalling information from memory – read and then summarise from memory, make some flashcards to quiz yourself from, see if you can produce a mind map or essay plan from memory or grab a past paper and see if you can answer the questions.

READ *(Suggested time = 1-2 hours per week)*

The best Philosophy students are readers. On Godalming Online we have links to all of the primary texts and articles which relate to each topic, you definitely don't need to read all of them though! We also have a suggested reading list of more general books which will give you somewhere to start with wider reading. It's worth reiterating: **the best Philosophy students are readers**, ask us for a recommendation.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS:

Books:

A Little History of Philosophy - Nigel Warburton
Think - Simon Blackburn
How to Teach Philosophy to your Dog - Anthony McGowan

LISTEN TO A PODCAST *(Suggested time = 45 minutes per week)*

There are loads of superb podcasts out there. You could go on a run/walk/drive and listen at the same time but make sure you take 5 minutes to summarise what you've learnt on paper, it will really help you to remember what you've just listened to. Philosophy is a subject which is more enjoyable if you've got someone to discuss it with so it will be even better if you and friend listen to the same show and discuss the issues on there together.

Podcasts:

Philosophize This!
The Panpsycast
Philosophy Bites
The Philosopher's Arms

WATCH A LECTURE OR VIDEO *(Suggested time = 15 minutes per week)*

Using the list of relevant lectures and videos on Godalming Online, find a video clip or lecture. We have links to relevant, high quality videos from many different sources, from university lectures, to Youtube channels, to material designed specifically for this course. As you watch, make notes and jot down any questions that occur to you. Try and summarise the content of the clip from memory.

Videos/Lectures:

Crash Course Philosophy
Philosophy Tube
Massolit.io

GO TO A WORKSHOP OR EMAIL YOUR TEACHER *(Suggested time = 45 mins per week)*

If you get stuck or just want to discuss a topic with us you can attend our weekly workshop for help or guidance. You will always get more out of a workshop if you go with some planned questions or topics that you need help with. We are also happy to be contacted by email, and if necessary we can arrange a time to meet up 121 or a Teams call to support you.