

Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method

Philosophy is the discipline concerned with questions of how one should live (ethics); what sorts of things exist and what are their essential natures (metaphysics); what counts as genuine knowledge (epistemology); and what are the correct principles of reasoning (logic).

Departmental Facts

Karl Popper, the founder of the Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method, moved to the LSE after publishing *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1935), *The Poverty of Historicism* (1944) and *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945). Popper was one of the foremost defenders of democratic liberalism in political philosophy, which made the London School of Economics and Political Science a natural home for him. Rational criticism was the cornerstone not only of his political philosophy, but also of his views on the nature and practice of the natural and the social sciences. It was through Popper's efforts that falsificationism entered public consciousness as the defining criterion of the nature of science. Both he and his successor Imre Lakatos, who joined the department in 1960, were instrumental in shaping the thought of 20th century philosophy of science.

The Department's longstanding reputation in the philosophy of natural science is now matched by its strength in the philosophy of economics and social science, most notably in methodology and rational choice theory, and philosophy of public policy. The Department was ranked joint third in the UK for the proportion of its work deemed 'world-leading' in the Research Assessment Exercise 2008. Thirty five per cent of its research received this top classification and a further 30 per cent was recognised as 'internationally excellent'. Moreover, it was ranked first in the UK in the subject tables of the Independent newspaper Complete University Guide 2010.

Careers

Philosophy is respected as an especially challenging subject that combines the precision and analytical rigour of the natural and social sciences with the communication skills and creativity emphasised in the humanities and the arts. As a result, philosophy graduates are equipped with skills that make them attractive to a large number of diverse employers. Specific skills gained from studying philosophy include:

- the ability to understand the logical structure of complex problems;
- the ability to employ detailed argument to support or criticize generalisations about a subject;
- the ability to absorb and sift complex data and to develop and advance complex arguments in speech and writing;
- the ability to conceive, research and write an extended project;
- confidence to challenge established views;
- ability to be reflexive (self awareness and self criticism) and appreciate alternative perspectives and positions;
- ability to analyse problems in a multi-dimensional way.

Previous philosophy graduates have found work in: higher education (research and teaching); the media; management consultancy, banking and other financial services and local and national government.

Philosophy courses available to General Course students include:

PH101 Logic	PH213 Scientific Revolutions: Philosophical and Historical Issues
PH103 Reason, Knowledge and Values: An Introduction to Philosophy	PH214 Morality and Values
PH200 Mathematical Logic	PH217 Set Theory and Further Logic
PH201 Philosophy of Science	PH220 Evidence and Scientific Method
PH203 Philosophy of the Social Sciences	PH221 Problems of Analytic Philosophy
PH211 Philosophy of Economics	PH299 Essay on an approved subject in Philosophy