

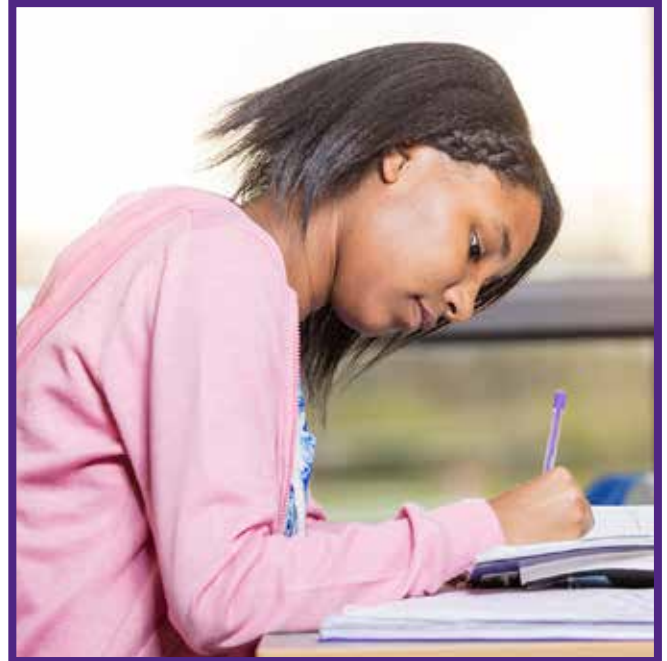
A level Philosophy

Why study Philosophy?

Philosophy breaks down the assumptions that we make about the world we live in and subjects them to close and careful scrutiny. We claim to know things, but what does it mean to have knowledge? Can we know things without sufficient evidence, and what might count as evidence? What does it mean to say that something is good and can we ever get close to a proper guide to moral thinking? What does it mean to say that you have a mind? Can a computer be conscious? These questions and more are considered in detail. We look at the various arguments that have been proposed as answers to them and attempt to offer some sort of evaluation.

Why study Philosophy at Solihull Sixth Form College?

- One of two main modes of teaching is discussion and engaging with the questions being raised, which involves reading and researching schools of thought and a lot of debate.
- A second main mode of teaching is writing. In order to do well, as philosophers and learners, we must be able to articulate these arguments and learn how to deploy them effectively.
- Debate is a key element of this course, but it is important to stress that while there are competing schools of thought and we will not present any of these schools as 'right', it is essential that we are prepared to examine these approaches with vigour and precision. As such this is a demanding and challenging course and should not be considered as an extension of your own opinions.



"Each of my teachers were really supportive and they were happy to help me if there was something I was struggling with. It is that and making the most of my time outside of lessons that helped me to achieve my final grades."

- student Rudi Fraser

Case Study

Among the recent successful learners to have taken this course is **Rudi Fraser**.



He came to the College from Queensbridge School and excelled at A level, achieving all A* grades in Philosophy, Politics and English Literature. He has progressed to the London School of Economics to study International Social and Public Policy with Politics.



Course Outline

There are four modules. The first half of each module is studied in Year 12 and the second half of each module is studied in Year 13.

Epistemology

- What is knowledge?
- Perception (how reliable is our sense experience?)
- Reason as a source of knowledge (can we know things that we have not experienced?)
- The limits of knowledge (is there anything we cannot know?)

Moral Philosophy

- Normative ethical theories (methods of calculating what is right or wrong)
- Applied ethics (applying moral arguments to real problems such as theft, lying, eating animals, simulated killing – such as in video games)
- Meta-ethics (how we understand moral claims)

Metaphysics of God

- The concepts and nature of God
- Arguments relating to God (arguments for and against God's existence)
- Religious language (can we speak meaningfully about the transcendent?)

Metaphysics of Mind

- What do we mean by 'mind'?
- Dualist theories of mind (is the mind separate from the body?)
- Physicalist theories of mind (is the mind physical?)
- Functionalism.

Assessment

As a linear course all examinations are at the end of the second year. There are 2 three hour examinations, each accounting for 50% of the marks. Examination (100%)
Examining Board – AQA

Special Entry Requirements

A minimum of four GCSEs at grade 6 or above is required. The standard A level entry requirements also apply - www.solihullsfc.ac.uk/courses/entry-requirements.

Prohibited Options

There are no prohibited options. While there are some similarities to A Level Religious Studies there are also significant differences. It is perfectly acceptable to select both courses – some learners do.

What do our learners go on to do?

While few learners go on to become philosophers, all find that studying philosophy offers support both to university applications or to career choices beyond university. Indeed, philosophy graduates enjoy higher employment rates than most other humanities and social science graduates thanks to its abstract and critical nature. Typical career progressions include law, teaching, journalism, civil service, local government, as well as many graduate training schemes.

Cost Implications

None.

Examination Results

In the past two years, this course has seen high levels of achievement:

Year	Pass Rate A*-E%	A*-C%
2022	100%	84%
2023	100%	74%

Contact

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