

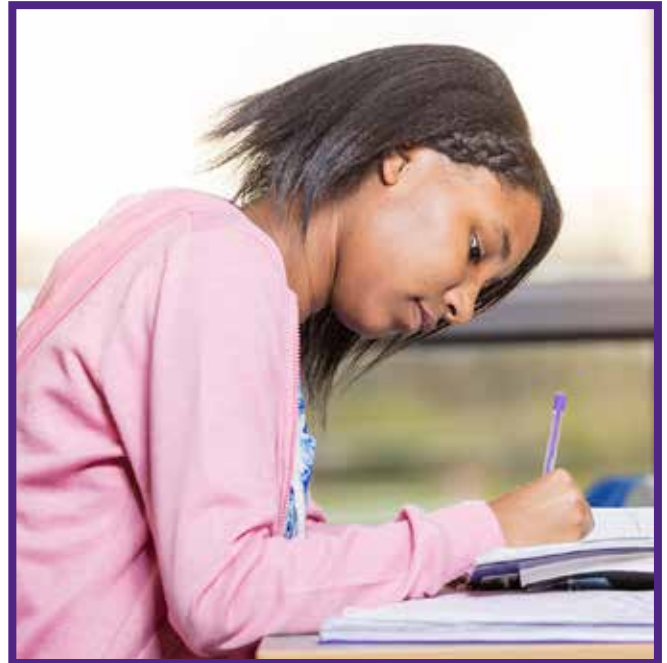
# A level Philosophy

## 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 students, 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.



## Case Study

Among the recent successful students to have taken this course is **Sachpreet Kaur**.

She came to the College from Lode Heath School and excelled at A level, achieving A\* grades in both Philosophy and Law and A in English Literature.



She has progressed to the University of Bristol to study Law and hopes to become a barrister.

***“The best thing about College is the fact that you get to learn about things that you are genuinely interested in; A levels are so much better than GCSEs because they’re based around things you’re passionate about. I enjoyed having one-on-one time with my teachers, as well as being able to ask them for help with literally anything.”***

***- student Sachpreet Kaur***



## Course Outline

There are four modules. The first two are studied in Year 12, the latter two 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 a product of the brain?)
- 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.solihullsf.ac.uk/courses/entry-requirements](http://www.solihullsf.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 – many students do.

## What do our students go on to do?

While few students 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

This is a new course, which started in September 2018, so there are only one set of exam results:

Year	Entry	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	A-E%
2020	13	1	1	4	4	3	0	0	100.0%

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