



## MA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence Programme Specification

Programme Title and Award	MA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence		
Programme Level	Level 7	HECoS Code	100337 100359
Relevant QAA Benchmark Statements	N/A	Programme Code	NCHPHAIMF (FT) NCHPHAIMP (PT)
Awarding Body	NCH at Northeastern Limited	Language of Instruction	English
Teaching institution	New College of the Humanities	Date Approved	June 2020
Mode of study	Full Time / Part Time	Duration of Study	1 Year (FT) 2 Years (PT)

### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The MA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence provides a well-integrated programme of study with a targeted focus on philosophical issues surrounding computing, data, information, and artificial intelligence. Presupposing no background in either philosophy or programming, it ensures students are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed for graduate study in philosophy, and offers opportunities to acquire relevant coding abilities, as well as knowledge of the techniques of data science that underpin recent advances in machine learning and artificial intelligence, should students so desire. At the same time, the MA programme allows for a progressive exploration of ethical, epistemological, and metaphysical issues arising in this area, with courses directly addressing them, and a dissertation devoted to a detailed investigation of an approved topic of the student's choosing. Graduates of the programme will be well-prepared to use their philosophical knowledge and skills to contribute to both the theoretical and practical development of artificial intelligence and its applications.

## **PROGRAMME INTEGRATION**

The programme comprises both compulsory and optional courses (totalling 120 credits), as well as a (60 credit) dissertation.

Some of the compulsory courses (Mind and Reality, and Values and Society – 20 credits each) provide the knowledge and skills that any graduate student in philosophy needs to master and that (more generally) support an informed, reflective and thoughtful approach to life. Others (AI and Data Ethics, and Minds and Machines – 15 credits each) ensure students have a strong grasp of central philosophical issues arising specifically in relation to computing, data, and artificial intelligence.

The optional courses between them offer opportunities for both breadth (the 20 credit courses) and depth (the 15 credit philosophy courses) of philosophical study, as well as the possibility of grounding students' philosophical investigations in knowledge of various techniques for programming with data (the 15 credit data science courses).

The dissertation (60 credits) is a sustained piece of independent research on an agreed topic of the student's choice.

The programme is designed and delivered so as to integrate the above component parts into a whole that ensures students graduate with the both breadth of background philosophical skills and knowledge, and the depth of understanding of issues specifically in the philosophy of artificial intelligence grounded in detailed knowledge of its applications, to be able to contribute practically and theoretically in this field.

## **FULL TIME PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

### **MICHAELMAS TERM**

NCHPH731 Mind and Reality

NCHAI749 AI and Data Ethics

Begin Breadth Option

Depth Option 1

### **HILARY TERM**

NCHPH734 Values and Society

NCHAI750 Minds and Machines

Continue Breadth Option

Depth Option 2

### **TRINITY TERM**

NCHPH721 Dissertation

## **PART TIME PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

### **YEAR 1**

#### **Michaelmas Term**

NCHPH731 Mind and Reality

Begin Breadth Option

#### **Hilary Term**

NCHPH734 Values and Society

Continue Breadth Option

#### **Trinity Term**

Begin NCHPH721 Dissertation

### **YEAR 2**

#### **Michaelmas Term**

NCHAI749 AI and Data Ethics

Depth Option 1

#### **Hilary Term**

NCHAI750 Minds and Machines

Depth Option 2

#### **Trinity Term**

Continue NCHPH721 Dissertation

## **COMPULSORY COURSES**

There are four compulsory courses, as indicated above. Two (Mind and Reality, and Values and Society) aim to instil research methods and skills, as well as breadth of knowledge in philosophy. Two others (AI and Data Ethics, and Minds and Machines) are designed to provide targeted exposure to key issues in the philosophy of data and artificial intelligence.

## **OPTIONAL COURSES**

Some optional courses are in Philosophy, while others are in Data Science.

Amongst the philosophy options, some are intended to provide additional breadth of philosophical knowledge. These 'breadth' options include:

NCHPH722 Aesthetics (20 credits)

NCHPH723 Ancient Philosophy (20 credits)

NCHPH744 Early Modern Philosophy (20 credits)

NCHPH726 History of Ethics (20 credits)

NCHPH743 Kant and Post-Kantian Philosophy (20 credits)

NCHPH729 Metaphysics (20 credits)

NCHPH733 Political Philosophy (20 credits)

Other courses allow for more targeted investigations of specific areas of Philosophy. These 'depth' options include:

NCHPH751 Epistemology (15 credits)

NCHPH752 Formal Logic (15 credits)

NCHPH753 Philosophical Logic (15 credits)

NCHPH754 Philosophy of Language (15 credits)

NCHPH755 Philosophy of Mind (15 credits)

NCHPH756 Philosophy of Science (15 credits)

NCHPH757 Technology and Human Values (15 credits)

There are also 'depth' options in Data Science:

NCHAI758 Programming with Data (15 credits) introduces the basics of coding in Python, a language commonly used for data science and AI programming. It is pre-requisite for:

NCHAI759 Foundations of Data Science (15 credits), which introduces more advanced coding techniques.

NB: Optional courses will be subject to availability, which is to be determined by a combination of student demand and faculty requirements.

## **ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Entry requirements - our typical offer for postgraduate study is an upper second-class honours undergraduate degree (or the equivalent) in an academic subject such as Economics, English, History, Languages, Philosophy, Politics, Sociology, Psychology; but each applicant will be assessed on an individual basis, including relevant professional experience where applicable. If English is not an applicant's native language, they will need to demonstrate proficiency in English in order to study at the College. For a list of equivalencies, please check [here](#).

## **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

Where a student wishes to apply for the recognition of prior learning on the basis of certificated or experiential learning, they should follow the College's [Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy](#).

## **AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME**

The programme aims to:

- Provide a strong foundation in relation to key issues in the philosophy of data and artificial intelligence.

- Develop students' critical engagement with the pertinent concepts, theories and arguments in this field.
- Enable students to form, elaborate and defend their own views in the field.
- If relevant options are chosen, build a basis for understanding some of the techniques of data science that underpin recent advances in machine learning and artificial intelligence.
- Develop an understanding of how philosophical thinking can contribute to the beneficial development of artificial intelligence.

The overall aim of the programme is to:

- Provide a teaching and learning environment which achieves the above aims by enabling students to demonstrate the learning outcomes below.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

A student will be able to:

- K1d Demonstrate wide-ranging knowledge and systematic understanding of key questions, debates, and theories in philosophy, especially those concerned with data, information processing, and artificial intelligence.
- K2d Offer detailed critical engagement with the texts and theories of key philosophical figures.
- K3d Demonstrate a fine grasp of logical structure and truth-preserving patterns of inference.
- K4d Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key concepts and techniques underpinning artificial intelligence.

### SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS

A student will be able to:

- S1d Make original use of advanced scholarly techniques to clarify and situate philosophical ideas and arguments, especially in relation to computing, data, and artificial intelligence.
- S2d Engage with unfamiliar material at the forefront of philosophy and artificial intelligence, selecting and analysing information, questioning assumptions, and critically evaluating competing methodologies, sources of data and arguments.
- S3d Identify and employ a range of philosophical devices to articulate, develop and synthesise alternative positions.
- S4d Apply key concepts and techniques of data science to make qualitative and quantitative analysis of a given dataset, if relevant options are taken; and use their understanding of both philosophy and data science to engage effectively with contemporary questions concerning the development and application of artificial intelligence.

## TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

A student will be able to:

- T1d Take initiative and personal responsibility; work independently, effectively, and to deadlines.
- T2d Respond systematically and creatively to complex, wide-ranging, and unpredictable data, arguments, and theories.
- T3d Display self-direction to produce original, sophisticated, clear, and persuasive presentations (written and oral).
- T4d Demonstrate resilience and ingenuity in the face of difficulties in designing, pursuing and delivering a sustained piece of independent research.
- T5d Understand the importance of embedding ethical considerations into the development and application of new technologies in a professional context.

For the exit awards see [Appendix A](#).

## MAP OF COURSES TO PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

COURSE TITLE	KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING				SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS				TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS				
	K1d	K2d	K3d	K4d	S1d	S2d	S3d	S4d	T1d	T2d	T3d	T4d	T5d
Mind and Reality	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x		
Values and Society	x	x			x	x			x	x	x		
AI and Data Ethics	x							x	x				x
Minds and Machines	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	X		
Dissertation	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Programming with Data				x				x	x		x		
Foundations of Data Science				x				x	x		X		
Epistemology	x	x	x		x	x			x	x	x		
Formal Logic	x		x		x	x			x	x	x		
Philosophical Logic	x	x	x		x	x			x	x	X		
Philosophy of Language	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	X		
Philosophy of Mind	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	X		
Philosophy of Science	x	x	x		x	x			x	x	X		
Technology and Human Values	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	X		x
Aesthetics	x	x					x		x	x	x		
Ancient Philosophy	x	x			x				x	x	x		
Early Modern Philosophy	x	x			x				x	x	X		
History of Ethics	x	x			x				x	x	X		
Kant and Post-Kantian Philosophy	x	x			x				x	x	X		
Metaphysics	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	X		

COURSE TITLE	KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING				SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS				TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS				
Political Philosophy	x	x			x				x	x	x		

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

### TEACHING METHODS

- Lectures/seminars
- Student presentations
- Collaborative group work
- Individual essay-based tutorials
- Written feedback on formative essays
- (Mock) examination and examiner's report (for formal logic option)
- Labs (for data science options)
- Office hours (for data science options)
- Online discussion forums
- Individual dissertation supervisions (which support both written and oral communication skills)
- (Structured) independent study and research

At the College, we teach in small groups and are committed to providing individual attention and guidance. Lectures/seminars always include student interaction and dialogue, and often occur in groups of fewer than ten people. Each student will receive at least 170 contact hours (made up of a little over 160 hours of lectures/seminars and approximately 10 hours of individual tutorials and supervisions; and for those taking data science options there will be up to 30 further hours of labs and up to 40 hours of drop in office hours). As indicated below, they can also participate in the Faculty's regular research seminars (including the meetings of the Cognitive Science Research Group) and, with the relevant faculty members' permission, audit other lectures and seminars of their choice. Assessment, as indicated above, is in a variety of modes: exam, coursework essay, coding and/or written assignment, oral presentation with PowerPoint or handout, and dissertation with viva.

### LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The faculty's regular research seminars – both the Philosophy Research Seminar, which is often combined with the student-run Philosophical Society, and the meetings of the Cognitive Science Research Group – offer a lively and varied menu of talks and discussions involving both internal and invited speakers. MA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence students are invited and encouraged to attend these in all three terms.

Students will also be encouraged to attend the broad programme of liberal-arts professorial lectures at the College given by our visiting professors.

### INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

The faculty (in both Philosophy and Data Science) are deeply committed to widening participation in Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence and their intersection, both through

outreach activities and through a teaching environment that is inclusive towards a variety of backgrounds and learning styles. Members of the faculty are much engaged in the public dissemination of their discipline, visiting a wide range of schools, hosting open lectures, engaging with the media, and publishing in accessible formats.

The high staff-student ratio at the College is especially important to the faculty's ability to give individualised attention to students, and thus to be inclusive towards a variety of backgrounds and learning styles. The faculty facilitates a wide range of academic and social events in which academics and students are brought together.

The College will make reasonable adjustment for students with disabilities, in accordance with the recommendations of the Student Wellbeing Team. Where necessary, following consultation with the Student Wellbeing Team, alternative forms of assessment may be offered.

The variety of modes of assessment in this programme may render it more inclusive than those which assess in more uniform ways.

## **E-LEARNING**

The College ensures students are supported outside of class contact time by means of a virtual learning environment, through which students access learning materials and communicate with fellow students and faculty. Students are enrolled onto their degree courses as well as onto the NCH Forum (dedicated to reviews of plays, books, films and other cultural activities for both students and staff alike). Students can additionally access past faculty lecture videos and general study information, on such topics as time-management skills and how to read effectively.

## **RESEARCH-LED PRACTICE-DRIVEN TEACHING**

All of the College's faculty have been recruited on the basis of their research activity, as well as their talents in teaching, and are encouraged to remain active in their research field, partly by being given an individual annual research budget and regular sabbatical leave. The teaching has been developed and allocated on the basis of research interests and expertise. The faculty are committed to supporting a lively, open, and interactive teaching environment, in which research and teaching are mutually complementary.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **ASSESSMENT METHODS**

- Examination (formative and summative)
- Oral Presentation
- Coding and/or written coursework assignments (including essays)
- Dissertation
- Viva voce

[Appendix B](#) is the programme structure and assessment summary.

### **ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS**

The College's Assessment Regulations for Taught Awards can be found [here](#).

## STUDENT SUPPORT

### DISABILITIES AND/OR SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (SPLDS)

Students are strongly encouraged to inform the College of any medical conditions, disabilities, specific learning difficulties (SpLD) or neurological differences as soon as is practical. Students will be asked to submit supporting documentation from a doctor, clinical or educational psychologist detailing the nature of their disability and the impact it is likely to have on their studies in order to help us put in place appropriate support and accommodations. More information can be found in the Student Disability Policy [here](#). This data is managed and securely stored by Student Support and Development (SSD). During Freshers' Week, a number of talks and events are held which are designed to support and inform students with regard to mental health, disabilities, safety and learning support.

SSD meet with students as soon as possible, and preferably before the start of the academic year, to discuss their needs and draft a Learning Support Plan (LSP) which outlines the support to be provided both within the College (if appropriate) and externally. If requested by the student, the SDD will then arrange to inform relevant faculty of the student's needs and any reasonable adjustments required.

If a student is undiagnosed but believes they may have a SpLDS (e.g. Dyslexia) the SDD will help them to access diagnostic services. If the assessment confirms a SpLDS, the SDD will work the student in preparing a LSP and will provide advice about accessing additional funding and support through the Disabled Students Allowance, where a student may be eligible.

For more information, please click [here](#).

## EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

As artificial intelligence and its applications become increasingly prevalent in society, there is a growing recognition, both within the industry and beyond, of the need to integrate ethics in the field, and of the value of diverse and interdisciplinary thinking in its development. The MA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence teaches a range of highly employable skills that answer to these needs. In particular, the study of philosophy at MA level cultivates skills that are employable across a range of sectors. These include the abilities to:

- Work independently, creatively, and to deadlines
- Conduct research and explore relevant existing knowledge
- Analyse, contextualise, and interpret complex ideas and materials
- Synthesise and evaluate information against a backdrop of uncertainty
- Solve problems through logical reasoning
- Present findings and opinions in a clear, structured manner, whether orally or in writing
- Engage in collaborative and constructive discussion

Students who pursue the data science options will also be able to:

- Write computer programs using Python
- Provide quantitative and qualitative analysis of a given data set

Above all, graduates of the MA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence programme will be able to:

- Think and communicate clearly about data, information processing, and artificial intelligence, and their theoretical, societal, and ethical implications.

### **CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE**

Masters students will have access to the College's Careers Advisory Service. This includes employer receptions with representatives from a wide range of sectors and our electronic Careers Centre, containing features and functionality for careers guidance, interview advice and job searching.

In addition, Careers Advisers, supplemented with support from tutors, offer advice, often one-to-one, on securing a professional future tailored to students' skills and ambitions.

### **QUALITY EVALUATION AND ENHANCEMENT**

#### **AWARD STANDARDS**

Every programme of study is developed by the Faculties, utilising their subject specialists and approved by the College's Academic Board.

#### **REVIEW AND EVALUATION MECHANISMS**

The College has robust procedures, as described in [AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modifications](#) and [AQF5 Annual Monitoring and Reporting](#), in place to assure the quality of the programme development, delivery, management, systematic monitoring and ongoing review and enhancement of all College programmes. Enhancements are made as necessary to ensure that systems remain effective and rigorous.

The College utilises constructive feedback from a variety of sources, internal and external, to inform its decision-making process to enhance the programme and student experiences. These feedback sources are listed below:

- Annual Course Reviews, written by the Course Leader, are prepared to enable the Course Leader to reflect on the course, using a variety of data and student/faculty feedback to enhance the course and support the Head of Faculty in writing the Annual Faculty Review.
- Annual programme reports, written by the Programme Director, are prepared in order to enhance individual programmes and to plan ahead.
- Annual Examiner reports are prepared by independent External Examiners, as appointed by the College, to confirm that a programme has been assessed in accordance with the approved documentation and that the student performance meets the appropriate academic standards.
- Formal student feedback mechanisms consist of termly student representatives attending Faculty Meetings and Student-Staff Liaison Committee meetings; course satisfaction surveys; and annual programme satisfaction surveys.
- Informal student feedback is also valued by the College and this can take the form of students talking to their Programme Director, Head of Faculty or professional staff.

**ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT**

<b>Title: MA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence Programme Specification</b>					
<b>Approved by: Academic Board</b>					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Programme Director	Location	Proposed next review date
1.1	February 2022	February 2022	Brian Ball	Academic Handbook/programme specifications and handbooks/postgraduate programme specifications/Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence MA Specifications	April 2025
1.0	June 2020	June 2020	Brian Ball	Academic Handbook > Programme Specifications and Handbooks	April 2025
<b>Modifications (as per AQF4)</b>					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Modification (including category number)		
1.1	February 2022	February 2022	Category 1: Corrections/clarifications to documents which do not change approved content.		
Referenced documents	Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy; Assessment Regulations for Taught Awards; Student Disclosure Form; AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modifications; and AQF5 Annual Monitoring and Reporting.				
External Reference Point(s)					

**DISCLAIMER**

The College has checked the information provided in this Programme Specification and will endeavour to deliver this programme in keeping with this Programme Specification. However, changes to the programme may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, and the review and update of courses and programmes. Where this activity leads to significant changes to courses and programmes there will be prior consultation with students and others, wherever possible, and the College will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students. It is also possible that the College may not be able to offer a course or programme for reasons outside of its control, for example, due to the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the College will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible, and where appropriate, will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable programme.

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**APPENDIX A – EXIT AWARDS**

**POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE**

3 x 20 credit Level 7 courses = 60 credits

**POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA**

6 x 20 credit level 7 courses = 120 credits

**APPENDIX B - PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

Code	Course Title	Credit	Type	Mode	Assessment Weighting % & Activity Type (code overleaf)			
					AE1	Activity type	AE2	Activity type
<b>FHEQ Level 7</b>								
NCHPH731	Mind and Reality	20	C	CD	40%	A	60%	A
NCHPH734	Values and Society	20	C	CD	70%	Oral	30%	A
NCHAI749	AI and Data Ethics	15	C	CD	30%	A	70%	A
NCHAI750	Minds and Machines	15	C	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH721	Dissertation	60	C	CD	80%	A	20%	Oral
NCHAI758	Programming with Data	15	O	CD	50%	Set	50%	Set
NCHAI759	Foundations of Data Science	15	O	CD	50%	Set	50%	Set
NCHPH751	Epistemology	15	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH752	Formal Logic	15	O	CD	100%	Exam		
NCHPH753	Philosophical Logic	15	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH754	Philosophy of Language	15	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPS755	Philosophy of Mind	15	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH756	Philosophy of Science	15	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH757	Technology and Human Values	15	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH722	Aesthetics	20	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH723	Ancient Philosophy	20	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH744	Early Modern Philosophy	20	O	CD	100%	A		

NCHPH726	History of Ethics	20	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH743	Kant and Post-Kantian Philosophy	20	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH729	Metaphysics	20	O	CD	100%	A		
NCHPH733	Political Philosophy	20	O	CD	100%	A		

**COURSE TYPE:** C = Compulsory; O = Option.

**COURSE MODE:** CD = Campus Delivery; BK = Block Delivery; BL = Blended Learning; DL = Distance Learning and Self-Directed Learning; EL = E-Learning; EX = Experiential; PL = Placement; WB = Work Based Learning,

**ASSESSMENT WEIGHTING:** AE1 = Assessment Element 1; AE2 = Assessment Element 2; AE3 = Assessment Element 3; AE4 = Assessment Element 4

**ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY TYPE**

Written exam

Take home exam

Written assignment

Report

Dissertation

Portfolio

Project output (other than dissertation)

Oral assessment and presentation

Practical skills assessment

Set exercise

**CODE**

Exam

TEx

A

R

Diss

F

P

Oral

Pract

Set