

## Philosophy in practice: a hands-on guide

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**Start date** 31 March 2019

**End date** 31 March 2019

**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge

**Tutor** Dr Alex Carter

**Course code** 1819NDX048

**Director of Academic Centres** Sarah Ormrod

**For further information on this course, please contact** Head of Academic Centre Administration, Zara Kuckelhaus  
[zara.kuckelhaus@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:zara.kuckelhaus@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746204

**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

Dr Alex Carter - Academic Director, Institute Teaching Officer in Philosophy

Alex was awarded his PhD in Philosophy by the University of Essex in 2015. Before this, Alex studied Philosophy & Ancient History at the University of Wales, Swansea and Philosophy at the University of Bristol. Alex has over five years of teaching experience in Ethics, History of Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion. He has worked at the Institute of Continuing Education since 2015 as Academic Director for Philosophy and as a Panel Tutor.

Alex's teaching method was developed at the University of Essex where the principle aim is to get students to feel the "pain of the problem", i.e. to make plain the very real ways in which philosophical problems affect our lives. Accordingly, Alex is most keen to offer his support to philosophical projects that, not only to inform contemporary debates, but actively affect change. Alex's ongoing research interests include the theology of Simone Weil and Ludwig Wittgenstein's ethical philosophy.

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## Course programme

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09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	<b>Session 1 - Practical philosophy: thought in action</b>
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	<b>Session 2 - Descartes' mind games: illusions and delusions</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	<b>Session 3 - Workshopping: thinking together</b>
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	<b>Session 4 - Finding meaning: 'Don't think, look!'</b>
16:45	Day-school ends

## **Course syllabus**

### **Aims:**

The course will introduce students to some of the fundamentals aspects of Practical Philosophy. By participating in philosophical exercises, students will gain a deeper understanding of a range of philosophical problems; as well as how philosophers try to tackle them.

### **Content:**

Like comedians, philosophers often approach the world from an odd perspective. Yet, unlike comedians, philosophers often fail to relate their point of view to others. As a result, Philosophy and philosophers can seem remote and detached from reality. By bringing philosophy “down to earth”, students will experience a different kind of Philosophy; one that is accessible and enjoyable for all.

In particular, students will engage with “hands-on” activities, such as illusions, card sorting games and group challenges. We will debate certain pressing issues and ask certain pressing questions, such as “Are Jaffa Cakes cakes or biscuits?” and “Is Bridge a sport or a hobby?” In our final session, students will have their preconceptions—about *inter alia* truth, God and the value of money—challenged. We will end by reflecting on what we have learned and draw up an action plan about what, if anything, we will now do differently (even if the only change is to “Stop attending Philosophy classes”!).

### **Presentation of the course:**

The Day School will be comprised of workshops incorporating interactive presentations, discussion sessions and classroom learning activities. In each session, students will be invited to reflect, comment and pass judgement on the ideas introduced.

### **As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- Demonstrate greater understanding of philosophical terminology and argumentative techniques;
- Analyse philosophical concepts and apply those concepts critically;
- Gain a deeper appreciation of how traditional philosophical problems relate to everyday life;
- Recognise where and when philosophy can be made more fun and engaging.

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk \*

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Author	Title	Publisher and date
R Descartes	<i>Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies</i>  Also available online at: <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139042895">http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139042895</a>	CUP, 1996
T Cathcart, D Klein	<i>Plato and a Platypus Walk Into a Bar</i>	Andrews UK, 2011
J Haldane	<i>Practical Philosophy: Ethics, Society and Culture</i>	Oneworld, 2016

## Website addresses

Philosophy Talk: <https://www.philosophytalk.org>

Philosophy Now: <https://philosophynow.org>

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## Additional information

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### Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:

<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

### Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on [ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 746262.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 28 February 2019