

PHILOSOPHY
COURSE UNIT OUTLINE 2018-19

PHIL30001/30002 Dissertation (20 credits), semester 1 or 2
PHIL30030 Dissertation (40 credits), semesters 1&2

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Classes: Intro Lecture (all students), Wed 26 September, 10am-12pm, Roscoe 2.2
Drop-in session: Thurs 27th September (week 1), 13.00-15.00. 2.55 HBS
Additional drop-in session for PHIL30002 students: Week 1, Sem. 2,
(time and date TBA)

Assessment: PHIL30001/2: 6,000 words (100%)
PHIL30030: 12,000 words (100%)

*****IMPORTANT INFORMATION – PLEASE READ****

Pre-requisites, PHIL 30001/2: 40 PHIL credits at Level 2

Pre-requisites, PHIL 30030: 40 PHIL credits at Level 2
Minimum level 2 grade point average of 60
At least one level 2 Philosophy grade of 70 or over

Communication: *Students must read their University e-mails regularly, as important information will be communicated in this way.*

Please read through this course outline very carefully as it provides essential information needed by all students attending this course

This course guide should be read in conjunction with the *Philosophy Study Guide*, available from the Philosophy Intranet:

www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/studentintranet/undergraduate/course-information/philosophy/

1. ABOUT THE COURSE

Summary

This course unit gives you the chance to write a 6,000/12,000-word dissertation on a question of your own design. The learning and teaching methods used are independent research and individual supervision.

Aims

Undertaking a dissertation should be regarded as one of the most rewarding academic ventures you will engage in during your undergraduate degree programme. It is unlike any other course you have so far taken, allowing you (if you want to) to bring together subject material from different course units studied over the previous two years of study or pursue a new topic that you're interested in but haven't had the opportunity to study (so long as we can offer supervision in that area).

Past students are quick to reflect that defining, researching and writing a dissertation was one of the most satisfying and interesting experiences of their undergraduate days.

What makes the dissertation different is that it offers you the opportunity to develop intellectual independence while specialising in depth in a topic of interest. The emphasis is on constructing an independent, inquiry-based study. This involves seeking out a researchable question, deciding on relevant literature to bring to bear on the question, employing an appropriate methodology and drawing your subsequent research together to offer a sustained and analytically reflective argument.

By defining, researching and writing a dissertation you will develop a valuable set of transferable skills: time management, meeting a deadline, initiative in deciding upon and locating relevant academic sources, problem-solving, developing a capacity for independent research, communicating effectively in writing, and working with academic sources.

A student who writes a philosophy dissertation will:

- improve their research, critical analysis, independent study, time-management and written presentation skills;
- have the opportunity for one-to-one philosophical discussions with an appropriate supervisor;
- be able to specialise in a topic that interests them and to develop intellectual independence.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course unit, students will be able to demonstrate that:

- they have the study skills necessary for focusing their topic and preparing the essay;
- they can present and defend their own view about a challenging philosophical issue;
- they can produce, and present professionally, a substantial independent piece of research into a question of their own design.

Study budget

- PHIL30001/2: University guidelines state that a 20 credit course unit requires **200 student study hours**.
- PHIL30030: University guidelines state that a 40 credit course unit requires **400 student study hours**.

Dissertations are examined with these figures in mind. You therefore cannot successfully do a 'rush job' in the last couple of weeks.

2. SELECTING YOUR AREA AND TOPIC

There is a **Dissertation Area of Study (DAS)** Form is at the back of this course guide. You need to cut and paste into a separate document, save as [your name] [dissertation course code] (e.g. Jane Smith PHIL30001), and upload to the Turnitin site for this course **by 2pm on the Monday of week 2, Semester 1**.

On the DAS, you will nominate **three** dissertation areas of study, in order of preference. These areas are broad (e.g. philosophy of mind, aesthetics), but please try to give some extra information underneath about what specific issue or topic you would like to investigate. This will enable you to clarify your preferences if you have a particular issue/topic in mind but are not sure which area you should classify it under, and will assist us in assigning you the most suitable supervisor.

We ask you for three areas of study because the work of supervising dissertations is divided amongst the staff according to their other teaching commitments, and each staff member has sufficient expertise to provide appropriate supervision only in certain areas. There is therefore no guarantee that you will be allocated your first – or even your second – preference of area of study, although of course we will accommodate your preferences as far as possible.

It is important that you give careful thought to all three of the areas you nominate, and that you submit the form by the deadline. If you hand in your form after the deadline (see below), you will be allocated a supervisor on the basis of who has got spare capacity to supervise you; they may or may not happen to have expertise in your area of study.

Please note that **you must not select a topic on which you have previously written, or are intending to write, as an assessed essay**. If you are concerned about whether or not you are satisfying this requirement, you should discuss it at an early stage with your supervisor once supervisors have been allocated.

20-credit or 40-credit dissertation?

Please bear in mind that the 40-credit dissertation is a very substantial commitment, in terms of both time and intellectual endeavour.

On top of the 40 PHIL credits at level 2, for the 40-credit dissertation we require in addition an average second-year grade of at least 60% and at least one first-class (70% +) course unit grade in your second year. These are the bare-minimum formal requirements, however. In practice, if you have struggled to write essays of at least a high 2.1 standard and/or have had difficulty managing your own time (e.g. you have found yourself leaving essay-writing to the last minute), the 40-credit dissertation is not for you.

Moreover, you should certainly not choose the 40-credit dissertation because you think it will be less work, since you will only have four rather than five taught course units. University guidelines expect **400 hours** of work for a 40-credit dissertation. That's ten weeks-worth of full-time work, and nobody is going to be clocking you in or monitoring your work rate!

3. WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, AND WHEN

See also the timetable, listing all of the deadlines and the supervision schedule, in §8 below.

(a) During the summer, before you make your course unit selections for the year

If you are taking PHIL30001/2, you will need to decide which to take, i.e. which semester to write your dissertation in. This may depend on which other course units you would like to take; or you may have an independent reason to want to take your dissertation in one semester rather than the other.

(b) Attend the introductory lecture and (if necessary) the drop-in session in Week 1 of the academic year

See p.1 of this Course Guide for details of times and locations.

The introductory lecture will be given by the Dissertation Coordinator and will provide some general guidance about writing your dissertation. There will also be guidance on the selection of dissertation areas and topics. **All dissertation students should attend this.**

The drop-in session is there if you need more help or advice on choosing your dissertation area and/or topic. (If you are taking PHIL30002 and are already sure about your area preferences, you might like to come to the second-semester session instead.)

The drop-in session will be repeated in week 1 of the second semester. These will be for students taking PHIL30002 who would like to be reminded of the guidance and/or would still like advice about final topic selection.

You can of course also consult your academic adviser about area or topic selection as well.

(c) Fill in and submit the Dissertation Area of Study Form by Monday of Week 2, 2pm

You should upload the form (see §2 above) to the Blackboard site for the Philosophy Dissertation via Turnitin, just as you would a philosophy essay.

You can upload the form any time from the beginning of Welcome Week.

Remember, if you hand in your form after the deadline, you will be allocated a supervisor on the basis of who has got spare capacity to supervise you; they may or may not happen to have expertise in your area of study.

(d) Get to work!

You should be informed of who your supervisor is by the end of Week 2, via a list that will be posted on the Blackboard site for the Dissertation course units. Please bear in mind, however, that knowing who your supervisor is not a prerequisite for getting on with working on your dissertation; it is your responsibility, and not your supervisor's, to decide on the topic you want to explore, attempt to find relevant literature, etc. So you should not wait to start work on your dissertation until your supervisor has been allocated.

(Of course if you are taking PHIL30002, you don't need to do anything further until the start of Semester 2.)

See §4 below for information about roughly when and how often you should aim to see your supervisor, and how to plan for your supervision meetings.

(e) Submit a dissertation plan to your supervisor

PHIL30001/2: You should aim to submit an essay plan of 1-2 pages to your supervisor in advance of your second scheduled meeting (see §4 below). Nothing terrible will happen if you don't do this (e.g. you won't be docked marks), but if by this point in the semester you are unable to produce an essay plan, that is a good sign that you have fallen behind schedule.

PHIL30030 only: This is a very challenging course unit, and if you have not made sufficient progress early on in the academic year, you are quite likely to fail. We need to do our best to ensure that this doesn't happen.

For this reason, you **must** submit a dissertation plan of around 1,500 words plus an indicative bibliography to the Dissertation Coordinator by **Tuesday of Week 8 in Semester 1**. Some guidance on writing your dissertation outline is provided in §7 below.

You should submit a draft of your plan and indicative bibliography in advance of your second scheduled meeting (see §4 below).

If (still just PHIL30030) you do not submit the outline by the deadline, or your outline is deemed – by your supervisor and by the Dissertation Coordinator – to be lacking in sufficient quality and/or detail, you will have to transfer onto PHIL30001, thus writing a dissertation of half the length, and choose an additional second-semester course unit.

(f) Submit the dissertation

The deadline for PHIL30001 is Tuesday 15th January 2019.

The deadline for PHIL30002 is Thursday 2nd May 2019.

The deadline for PHIL30030 is Thursday 2nd May 2019.

4. YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF YOUR SUPERVISOR

Frequency, timing and lengths of supervisions

For PHIL30001/2, you should aim to meet your supervisor as follows:

Around Week 3: Initial meeting to finalise your precise dissertation topic/question

Around Week 7: Discussion of your essay plan

Week 12 (PHIL30001) / Week 9 (PHIL30002) (just after Easter): Discuss draft material

For PHIL30030, you should aim to meet your supervisor as follows:

Semester 1, around Week 3: Initial meeting to finalise your precise dissertation topic/question

Semester 1, Week 7: Discussion of your essay plan (prior to submitting formally in Week 8)

Semester 1, around Week 12: Discussion of progress

Semester 2, Weeks 1-7: Two further meetings to discuss progress

Semester 2, Week 9 (just after Easter): Discussion of draft material

You should expect each meeting to last for 30-45 minutes, assuming you have enough to discuss to fill the time.

Preparing for your supervisions

For the **initial meeting**, you should have put quite a lot of thought in to the precise topic you would like to pursue and the question you might like to pose as your dissertation title. This will involve quite a lot of reading around to identify key issues and texts that you think you will have interesting things to say about, which will form the backbone of your dissertation. You might also construct a list of texts you have already looked at and others that you have tracked down and intend to read, to show to your supervisor. Basically, the more work you have already done, the better value you are going to extract from this meeting!

For the **second meeting**, you should prepare and submit to your supervisor **at least 3 working days in advance** a brief dissertation plan of 1-2 pages (or a longer one for PHIL30030; see §3(e) above). This may be quite sketchy and/or provisional or very detailed and/or definite, depending on how much work you have put in since the first meeting; but remember, the better shape your plan is in, the more useful to you your supervision meeting will be – and the less work you will still have left to do!

It is very useful to include a **brief bibliography** with your dissertation plan (in addition to the 1-2 pages), where you list the key texts you are planning to build your dissertation around. You should refer to these in the plan so it is clear what role these texts are going to play in your argument.

For the **discussion of draft material meeting**, you should submit to your supervisor **at least a week in advance** up to 3,000 words of draft material that you are expecting to go into your

dissertation (6,000 words for PHIL30030).

It's up to you what you submit for this; it could just be the first 3,000 words, or you might have written some later sections that you would especially like feedback on (e.g. the section(s) where your main argument is developed). (If so, you may need to provide a little bit of background so that your supervisor can see how this material fits into the dissertation as a whole.)

What to expect from your supervisor

- Availability during the time periods listed above for supervision meetings;
- Useful feedback on your topic/question ideas, dissertation plan and draft material. You may get written feedback on your plan and/or draft material, or your supervisor may simply go through what you have submitted verbally during your meetings. Please bring a pen and paper so you can write things down!
- You are of course also welcome to come to your supervisor's office hours for additional discussion and advice. It is always useful to think in advance about exactly what it is that you're stuck on or would like help with.
- You are also (of course!) welcome to talk to other members of staff during their office hours, especially if they have particular expertise in the topic of your dissertation. You should not ask them to read your essay plan or draft material (unless you can hand it to them for a quick look on the spot – but be realistic about how much information they can absorb on the hoof!), but please do feel free to use them as an additional sounding board for ideas, ask whether they have any suggestions for further reading on a specific issue, etc.

What NOT to expect from your supervisor

It is important to remember that the dissertation is conceived as an **independent piece of research**. 'Research' here includes not just writing your dissertation, but also choosing a topic, formulating a question to answer, identifying relevant literature, etc. Your supervisor can offer you some general advice and guidance on these matters but you should not expect your supervisor to, for example, find an interesting question for you to answer, provide you with a reading list, etc. Ideas for interesting issues to pursue or for additional readings on your chosen topic may of course emerge in the course of your discussions; but you need to remember that you, and not your supervisor, are supposed to be in the driving seat!

Also, you should not submit more work to your supervisor than that listed above (i.e. the dissertation plan and the draft material). Of course, as with e.g. course conveners, you might have a specific question that it's easier to put in an email than present verbally during a supervision meeting or office hour; that's fine (though of course your supervisor may then ask you to come to their next office hour to discuss rather than sending you a lengthy reply).

Finally, it is **your responsibility** to arrange meetings as per the above timetable, and to submit your dissertation plan and draft material by the stated deadlines. Your supervisor *may* chase you up if they don't hear from you, but it is not their responsibility to do so.

5. SUBMISSION OF THE DISSERTATION

Deadlines

PHIL30001	Tuesday 15 January 2019, 2pm
PHIL30002/PHIL30030	Thursday 2 May 2019, 2pm

Three copies should be submitted by the above time:

- Two **bound** copies to be submitted to the UG Office, G.001, Arthur Lewis Building.
You do not need to get your dissertation professionally bound. Stapled with a cheap plastic spine is fine.
- One **electronic** copy.

To submit your essay electronically to Turnitin follow the instructions on Blackboard at <https://online.manchester.ac.uk>

*When submitting electronically the title of the file you upload should be your student ID number. **Do not put your name** in the filename or in the essay.*

Any student who, without sufficient reason, fails to submit a dissertation by the above deadline will be penalised as follows: the mark awarded will reduce by 10 marks per day for 5 days (on a 0-100 marking scale), after which a mark of zero will be awarded.

Students who have reason (i.e. mitigating circumstances with the necessary documentation) for not being able to submit their dissertation on time should collect a mitigating circumstances form from the SoSS Undergraduate Office (Arthur Lewis Building, G.001), which should be completed and returned there. See the *Philosophy Study Guide* for more about extensions and penalties for late submission.

6. PRESENTATION OF DISSERTATION

For the main text, double or 1.5 spacing with a minimum font size of 12 must be used; single-spacing may be used for quotations, footnotes and references.

In addition to the text, the completed dissertation must have a title page, an abstract, a table of contents, references (or footnotes) and a bibliography.

Pages must be numbered.

The main text of the dissertation should normally be left-justified to aid accessibility and readability.

i. The **title page** must give

- (a) the full title of the dissertation
- (b) a statement as follows: 'A dissertation submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of xxx (Title of the degree) in the Faculty of xxx (Title of Faculty)' course code (PHIL30001/PHIL30002/PHIL30030)'.
- (c) the year of submission
- (d) your student ID number (**not** your name)
- (e) the name of the candidate's School.
- (f) the word count (the number of words of text, not including the table of contents, abstract or bibliography)

ii. After the title page, a **table of contents** gives the titles and page references of the chapters or sections.

iii. After that, an **abstract** of no more than 300 words that briefly summarizes the dissertation.

iv. After that, all UG dissertations need to include a declaration and intellectual property statement. (There is a form to download from Blackboard.)

v. Acknowledgements/dedications (optional)

vi. The thesis!

vii. Bibliography: You must use **references (or footnotes)** to credit the work of scholars that you have used. A **bibliography** of sources used comes at the end of the dissertation. The bibliography lists alphabetically by author all works used and provides full bibliographic information for each source.

Referencing and bibliography

The lack of a proper bibliography and appropriate references (citations) will potentially greatly affect the mark for the work and may be considered plagiarism. For full guidance on how to refer to works you are citing and paraphrasing in your essay, and how to write a bibliography, is provided in Chapter 5 of the *Philosophy Study Guide*, which is available on the [student intranet](#).

You **MUST** follow this guidance. Bibliography and referencing conventions can vary from discipline to discipline. The ones in Philosophy may differ from those employed in other subjects you are studying. Up to 10 marks may be deducted for inadequate referencing and bibliography; see Chapter 5 of the *Study Guide*.

Word Length

PHIL30001/2: 6,000 words

PHIL30030: 12,000 words

These word limits include footnotes but exclude title page, abstract, table of contents and bibliography. You must indicate the word count on your title page: failure to do so will result in a deduction of 2 marks. If an essay goes over the word limit by 10% or more, 5 marks will be deducted and any text beyond the word limit + 10% will be ignored by the markers.

Reproduction of your own material

Dissertations must not reproduce in whole or in large part an assessed course essay and/or a previous extended essay. Any violation of this prohibition will be **severely penalised** by the deduction of marks, or even by a mark of 0 in serious cases.

If you are uncertain as to how to apply this rule, you should consult your dissertation supervisor.

7. TIPS FOR A GOOD DISSERTATION

(a) It's not like writing a 3,000-word essay

It's longer, obviously. But it's not just that you need more *words*....

- (i) Because a dissertation is longer, its *structure* is more important. You have the space to (a) explain and defend your background assumptions, (b) develop a sustained argument for your conclusions, (c) say why these conclusions might matter (e.g. what might *turn* on them), and (d) respond to possible objections.
- (ii) You have the time to read widely, think hard, and *experiment*. Good philosophical writing is often achieved through trial and error. So use the time to *try out* lines of thought, and ways of organizing them, and be prepared to change anything that can be improved.
- (iii) You are responsible for selecting and refining the topic and for deciding what material to read. That means that you get to decide what to include and what to exclude. Part of the skill of writing a dissertation is knowing what *to leave out*, e.g. which philosophical questions may be ignored, which assumptions need not be defended, which philosophers need not be discussed. By leaving out what is inessential you give yourself the space to define the terms of the issue *as you see it*, to focus on what most interests you, and ignore irrelevant things.

Of course, your supervisor will help you with all of this. But ultimately, it is up to you to address your topic *in your own way*, using whatever sources you think most relevant.

(b) Break the dissertation down into sections.

This will enable you write a structured, focused piece. Each section should have a purpose: a way in which it contributes to the overall argument. In your introduction you should briefly summarise the dissertation ('In §2, I do X; in §3, I do Y, ... ', and from that brief description the marker should be able to see why each section is needed in order for you to articulate and defend whatever claim your dissertation is supposed to be defending.

(c) Break your *work* on the dissertation down into sections.

Some students use the following method when writing essays: first, do the reading, then, at the last possible moment, stay up late and write the essay. That's not a good method, even for essays, but it is a *hopeless* way of writing a dissertation. Rather, you should be reading, thinking, and writing draft material of sections all together.

(d) Don't try to cover too much ground

Try to avoid taking too broad and unmanageable a perspective on your chosen topic. A professional philosopher will not attempt to give us her last word on life, the universe and everything in 6,000, or even 12,000 words (or, come to that, a whole book), and neither should you.

Even once you have refined the scope of your topic you should be prepared to further restrict it as you work, and to cut material that you were hoping to include. Almost every philosopher has had the experience of setting out to defend claims *a*, *b* and *c*, before discovering that, once they have explained and defended everything that they have to say on *a*, there is no space left for *b* and *c*.

You are likely to get *high* marks for a well-structured piece that explores an issue *in detail*, with argumentative rigour. A dissertation that attempts an overly broad survey of an area and ends up lacking precise argument and scholarship is liable to get *low* marks.

It might be best to focus the discussion of the dissertation on a handful (5 to 10) key articles or book chapters (though you should certainly read more than this). This should give your dissertation some focus and precision.

For PHIL30001/2, you might also try taking a look at some articles in the journal *Analysis*. *Analysis* has a word limit of 4,000 words, so 1/3 shorter than your dissertation. But it should give you an idea of just how narrow an issue one can feasibly cover to a high standard of argumentative rigour in what might previously have seemed to you to be a lot of words!

For PHIL30030, think about the many journal articles you will have already read during your study so far. Most journal articles are less than about 8,000 words; longer ones are around 12,000. Again, think about how narrow the focus of these articles tends to be: they often try to establish or refute a single, very specific claim.

(e) Start writing early

Too many students kid themselves by saying that the dissertation is ‘all there, in my head; it just needs to be written up.’ Philosophy doesn't work like this. Philosophical arguments don't really become clear until one starts to formulate them in writing. To write a successful dissertation, you will need to draft and re-draft each section, often revising much of what you've written in the light of your supervisor's comments.

(f) Learn from your heroes and heroines

If a philosopher *x* has written a paper or book that you think is excellent, ask yourself, ‘What *exactly* is so good about it?’, ‘What *skills* must *x* be using to write so well?’ Then try to cultivate those skills in yourself, by trial and error.

(g) Don't bullshit

If you are not entirely sure what you mean by a sentence, no-one else will understand it. Write another sentence instead: one that makes its meaning clear. Be clear and precise.

Be honest too. If you don't understand something, don't pretend to.

And be confident. If you are sure of something, then say it clearly and boldly. But don't *just* say it! Give your readers reasons to agree with you. And try to anticipate concerns or objections that your readers might have, and to answer these concerns and objections.

(h) Thoroughly correct the final draft

Remember to check the final typescript for errors of spelling, punctuation, footnote numbering, typing, missing bibliography entries, incomplete citations, etc. And make sure that every single sentence makes sense, and is as clear as you can possibly make it. Do not underestimate how long this process can take!

You cannot do a good job if you don't work consistently on your dissertation throughout the entire semester.

Please also make sure you have read and implemented all of the essay-writing guidance in the *Philosophy Study Guide*.

6. ASSESSMENT

Assessment Criteria

For the assessment criteria for all PHIL course units, see the *Philosophy Study Guide*, which also provides further guidance concerning the assessment criteria.

Marking of Dissertations

Your dissertation will be marked anonymously by an independent internal marker, and in every case your supervisor will act as a second internal marker. The external examiner adjudicates if the two internal markers cannot agree upon a mark, and also when the dissertation is a borderline case (39, 49, 59, and 69). In addition, the external examiner reads all possible first-class and fail dissertations.

Receiving your mark and feedback

As with other Philosophy course units, marks and feedback will be released online. You will be advised by the programme administrator when they are available to view.

Feedback

The School of Social Sciences is committed to providing timely and appropriate feedback to students on their academic progress and achievement, thereby enabling students to reflect on their progress and plan their academic and skills development effectively. Students are reminded that feedback is necessarily *responsive*: only when a student has done a certain amount of work and approaches us with it at the appropriate fora is it possible for us to feed *back* on the *student's work*. The main form of feedback on this course is through meetings and e-mail correspondence with your dissertation supervisor.

Return of Hard Copies of Dissertations: If you want it back, you will be able to pick up one of the hard copies of your dissertation from the SoSS UG Office, ALB G.001. The programme administrator will let you know when it is available for collection.

Authorship

Submission of a dissertation bearing a student's name is not sufficient evidence that the submitted work is actually the student's. A student must establish authorship of the submitted dissertation by (a) meeting with her/his supervisor to discuss the topic, sources, arguments, the student's progress, etc., (b) submitting the dissertation plan and draft material, (c) retaining and, if requested to do so, submitting notes on her or his reading and research and/or drafts, and/or (d) if requested, by taking a viva (oral examination) to answer questions about her/his dissertation to the satisfaction of the examiners.

For this reason, you must keep your notes and drafts until the mark for the dissertation has been confirmed by the examination boards and must submit them if requested to do so by the School.

A student who does not meet conditions (a) and (b) to establish authorship of the submitted work may be asked to submit draft chapters and/or notes and/or to take a viva in order to establish authorship of the submitted work. When requested to do so, failure to provide the requested notes and/or drafts will normally result in a mark of 0 and will also constitute probable evidence of plagiarism.

The School of Social Sciences may require any student to attend a viva (an oral examination) to answer questions about her/his dissertation in order to help establish whether the submitted work is the student's. In a viva, a student's inability to answer, to the satisfaction of the examiners, questions about the content of her/his dissertation and also the sources used to write her/his dissertation will normally result in a mark of 0 and be taken as probable evidence of plagiarism.

7. GUIDANCE ON WRITING A DISSERTATION PLAN FOR PHIL30030 STUDENTS

PHIL30030 students will need to submit a 1,500-word dissertation plan, along with an indicative bibliography, to the Dissertation Coordinator by the Tuesday of Week 8 in Semester 1.

Your dissertation plan should provide a rough outline of the dissertation, divided into sections that correspond to the sections of the proposed dissertation. The following must be clear from the plan:

- The specific question your dissertation addresses (this should be clear from the title!).
- That you have a sufficient grasp of the philosophical context within which that question arises (e.g. by saying which sources you will be drawing on in the section where you explain the context).
- Roughly how your argument will go for the claim that the dissertation aims to establish.
- That you have read and understood a sufficiently large body of literature that bears on your argument.
- That your standard of writing (especially clarity and conciseness) is sufficiently good to enable you to complete a 12,000-word essay.
- How items listed in your indicative bibliography will be brought to bear on the context-setting and your argument (by citing items in the bibliography and, where necessary, making it clear how the claims/arguments in those texts will be used).

The indicative bibliography should include all texts cited in the plan, but you might also want to list additional texts that – having already looked at them – you think you might want or need to draw on.

We're aware that it is a big ask to complete a detailed plan for a 12,000-word dissertation only 8 weeks into the year. However we need to be assured that you have made sufficient progress by that date so that you have enough time to complete the shorter dissertation PHIL30001 if you have not made sufficient progress for the purposes of PHIL30030.

On the other hand, we don't expect you to have absolutely everything completely worked out in your own mind by this stage. It is fine, for example, to note in the course of the plan places where you need to develop your argument further, or where it has gaps, note objections you have not yet thought of responses to, etc. Indeed noting such things is a good sign that you have a good grip on how your overall argument is supposed to go and what its current weak points are, and hence a good sign that you are capable of completing the 40-credit dissertation.

You should complete a draft of your dissertation plan and indicative bibliography in time for your supervision meeting in Week 7. This will give you the opportunity to make final improvements on the basis of your supervisor's feedback.

How will me dissertation plan and indicative bibliography be assessed?

The dissertation coordinator will consult your supervisor and they will together determine whether you may continue with the 40-credit dissertation. They will decide whether what

you have submitted does everything on the bullet-pointed list above.

In addition, they will consider whether you have been making appropriate use of your supervisor. In particular, failure to produce work for, or to arrange, the week 7 supervision may be used as evidence that you lack the time-management skills to complete the 40-credit dissertation, as may ignoring your supervisor's feedback in preparing the final plan that you submit.

You'll be notified of the decision, by the dissertation coordinator, within a week of submitting the plan.

8. HANDY DISSERTATION TIMETABLE

All students

Action	When
Read this Course Guide! Especially §§2 and 3	Straightaway!
Course unit selection: Decide whether PHIL30001, PHIL30002 or PHIL30030.	Course unit registration deadline: 6 August
Think about your subject area preferences	Up to the end of Week 1 (28 September)
Attend introductory meeting	Wednesday 26 September, 10am-12pm
Attend drop-in session (optional)	Friday 28 September, 2pm-4pm
Submit Dissertation Area of Study Form	Deadline: Monday Week 2 (2 October), 2pm

PHIL30001 (Semester 1)

Start work! Refine topic, background reading, etc.	Beginning of Week 2 (w/b 1 October)
Supervision 1: Initial meeting with supervisor	Around week 3 (w/b 8 October)
Submit dissertation plan to supervisor	At least 3 working days before next supervision
Supervision 2: discuss dissertation plan	Around week 7 (w/b 5 November)
Submit up to 3,000 words of draft material	At least a week before next supervision
Supervision 3: discuss draft material	Week 12 (w/b 10 December)
Submit dissertation	Deadline: Tuesday 15 January, 2pm

PHIL30002 (Semester 2)

Attend drop-in session (optional)	Week 1, Semester 2 (TBA)
Start work! Refine topic, background reading, etc.	Start of Semester 2 (28 January)
Supervision 1: Initial meeting with supervisor	Around week 3 (w/b 11 February)
Submit dissertation plan to supervisor	At least 3 working days before next supervision
Supervision 2: discuss dissertation plan	Around week 7 (w/b 11 March)
Submit up to 3,000 words of draft material	At least a week before next supervision

Supervision 3: discuss draft material	Week 9 (w/b 14 April)
Submit dissertation	Deadline: Thursday 2 May, 2pm

PHIL30030 (both semesters)

Start work! Refine topic, background reading, etc.	Beginning of Week 2 (w/b 1 October)
Supervision 1: Initial meeting with supervisor	Around week 3 (w/b 8 October)
Submit draft dissertation plan & indicative bibliography to supervisor	At least 3 working days before next supervision
Supervision 2: discuss draft dissertation plan & indicative bibliography	Week 7 (w/b 5 November)
Submit dissertation plan & indicative bibliography to Dissertation Coordinator	Deadline: Tuesday 13 November
Find out whether you are allowed to continue or must instead transfer to PHIL30001	Tuesday 20 November
Supervision 3	Around Week 12 (w/b 10 December)
Supervisions 4 & 5	First 7 weeks of Semester 2
Submit up to 6,000 words of draft material	At least a week before final supervision
Supervision 3: discuss draft material	Week 9 (w/b 15 April)
Submit dissertation	Deadline: Thursday 2 May, 2pm

The University of Manchester
School of Social Sciences
Philosophy
DISSERTATION AREA OF STUDY FORM

It is your responsibility to complete this form and upload it to Turnitin by **Monday 1 October, 2pm**

Please read the Course Guide -- especially §§2 and 3 – carefully before completing this form. Students who have a first preference an area listed as available in one semester only are advised to consult the Dissertation Coordinator by email as early as possible (see §3(a)).

Name:

Student number:

Degree programme:

PHIL30001 / PHIL30002 / PHIL30030 **(Please delete as appropriate)**

I confirm that I meet the pre-requisites for enrolling on PHIL30001/PHIL30002/PHIL30030 (see p.1 of the Course Guide): Please type your name here to confirm: _____

Dissertation topic preferences: Please order them 1, 2 and 3 according to preference.

Aesthetics	
Environmental Philosophy	
Epistemology	
Ethics	
Existentialism	
History of Analytic Philosophy	
History of Early Modern Philosophy	
Metaphysics	
Phenomenology	
Philosophy of Language	
Philosophy of Logic	
Philosophy of Mathematics	
Philosophy of Mind	
Philosophy of Religion	

Philosophy of Science	
Political Philosophy Note: Single Honours Philosophy students ONLY may tick this box. Students on other degree programmes wishing to write a dissertation on political philosophy should enrol on the Politics Dissertation course unit with the Politics Department and select the Political Theory option.	
Other (please state) NB We will endeavour to accommodate your request but may lack the appropriate supervisory expertise to do so.	

Please tell us more about the project you would ideally like to undertake (or two or three projects in order of preference – these should correspond to the preferences 1, 2 and 3 listed above unless your list of topic preferences includes more than one topic in the same area).

Preference 1:

Preference 2:

Preference 3:

Please:

- Copy and paste this form into a new document
- Save it as [your name] [dissertation course code] (e.g. Jane Brown PHIL30002)
- Upload it via Turnitin to the Blackboard site for this course **by 2pm on Monday 1 October 2018.**