

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY
Department of Philosophy
Guidelines on PHI4301 Directed Research Project

Background Information about the course

1. The course PHI4301 is only available for Final year BA Philosophy (i.e. normally students in their 4th year of study) and BA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence (i.e. normally students in their 2nd year of study) students.
2. Depending on your cGPA in Philosophy courses*, there will be different arrangements in terms of supervising:

Students with cGPA of 3.0 or above in Philosophy courses* (i.e. course with prefix PHI or PAI):	Students with cGPA of lower than 3.0 in Philosophy courses* (i.e. course with prefix PHI or PAI):
Only one supervisor is required.	Two supervisors are required.

**CCC8011 and cluster courses operated by the Department are NOT counted.*

3. The course is a 6-credit course and spread across two terms: normally the course will start in the beginning of Term 1 (i.e. September), and continue until the end of Term 2 (i.e. April in the next year).
4. For students of the BA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence (2-year programme), your topic must be related to Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence.

Details about the courses

5. The Directed Research Project will consist in a philosophical paper of between 5,000 and 10,000 English words written under supervision. Philosophy majors who undertake Directed Research Projects on Chinese philosophy are permitted to write their theses in Chinese. If written in Chinese, the thesis is expected to contain between 6,000 and 12,000 words. The project will be assessed on the scope, cogency and clarity of its argument, on its use of scholarly apparatus, and where applicable, on its originality.
6. The thesis will be marked by the supervisor(s). A second reader will also be invited to comment and propose a grade on the thesis, but the supervisor(s) will make the final decision on the student's final grade.
7. The student's progress will be monitored regularly and reviewed after one term (in the examinations period). If the student's progress is not satisfactory, viz. is expected to be unable to achieve B- or above at the end of the project, the supervisor has the option to discontinue the Directed Research Project at this stage and to award either 3 credits with a grade of C+ or below or no credits (i.e. F Grade) on the basis on the student's written work at that point.

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8. If the student's progress is satisfactory, the student will carry on the project in the second term (without receiving a formal grade after the first term). The supervisor will assign a grade at the end of the second term, on the basis of the student's work in the whole two-term project, and the grade will be associated with 6 credits.

Important Dates for the course

9. Students should take note on the following important dates for the project:

7 Sept 2026 (Mon) (End of add/drop Period)	Submission of a short proposal of the project (about 100 words) to the General Office of Department.
Nov 2026*	Submission of a longer proposal of the project (about 500 words) with the anticipated structure of the thesis and a brief bibliography to the Supervisor.
April 2027*	Submission of the final thesis to the Supervisor

**Note: These are suggested deadlines for the said submissions. Students should discuss with the supervisor directly about the exact date for these submission deadlines.*

Important Notes about the course

10. Doing a Directed Research Project should not be regarded as a “must” for good and ambitious students. Taking two elective courses instead is a strategy that can suit many students' interests better and is actually an option that everyone should consider very seriously.
11. The topic of a Directed Research Project has to be approved by a teacher who agrees to be the supervisor of the project.
12. The short proposal should clearly define the topic of future research, and before official submission it should be approved by the supervisor.
13. The longer proposal should reflect a better knowledge of the direction of future research and increased familiarity with the relevant literature.
14. In the thesis itself, the student is expected to (a) present the state of the discussion of the selected topic clearly and fairly, (b) evaluate the existing arguments for the opposing views and (3) ultimately defend his or her own opinion on the matter.

15. Before you embark on writing, you should have a pretty clear idea about the structure and content of your thesis. This does not mean that you cannot change these things later, as your work proceeds, but it does mean that if you have only some vague plans to begin with, then very probably you need to do more reading and consult with your supervisor before you start putting your thoughts on paper.
16. Directed Research project requires much more of your time and effort than a single course, so start your work early and don't let it be delayed by other "more important" obligations.
17. Regular meetings with the supervisor are essential. But they will not be useful if you do not prepare for them. Especially at a later stage, try to bring drafts of some parts of the project at regular intervals and get feedback for possible revisions, expansions, and improvements.

Department of Philosophy
August 2026