

## Philosophy 12 Course Outline & Syllabus

### Summary

- Philosophy 12 presents learners with a unique opportunity to participate in a developmental course serving the needs of both face-to-face, for credit learners, as well as open online participants.
- This conceptual and thematic course will introduce learners to philosophical thought and theory throughout history.
- Participants will develop their imaginative, critical, analytical, and problem-solving skills through oral and written discussions and presentations. Guided practice in analytical reading and writing of well-argued philosophical prose will help students to articulate, examine, and reflect on their own and others' ideas.
- As a university preparatory course, it will be conducted as a [seminar](#) that requires a significant amount of reading and research.

### Instructional Strategies

The themes and concepts emphasized in the Philosophy 12 curriculum are designed to assist students to function effectively and with confidence in a changing society. Students will be required to employ a variety of acquired skills to solve real-life problems. Numerous practical and theoretical instructional strategies, which will be used to challenge students, include, but are not limited to:

- Group work: mock trials, debates, presentations
- Individual assignments: readings, personal reflection, presentations, tests
- Field trips: court visits, philosopher's cafe
- Guest speakers
- Cross-curricular: interpretation of philosophy in other courses

### Social Constructivism

*"Constructivism holds the opposite view [of Positivism], that the only reality we can know is that which is represented by human thought. Reality is independent of human thought, but meaning or knowledge is always a human construction."*

[Wikipedia](#)

Philosophy 12 will be presented this semester from a [social constructivist's](#) perspective, where the course will leverage aspects of digital publishing and online media to expand our individual and collective learning networks beyond the physical classroom. Learners will make use of a wikispace, as well as a class blog to share and reflect upon their artifacts of learning and development, allowing open participation across the Internet.

## **Course Materials**

Text: **Philosophy: Questions & Theories**. Pacquette et al. 2002 & others as discovered

In addition, learners will be expected to stay up-to-date with their classmates' writing and resources shared on the class site

## **Units of Study**

### **1. Introduction to Philosophical Inquiry**

In this part of the course, attention will be given to the purposes and benefits of studying philosophy. Students will be introduced to various types of philosophical questions and problems and to some of the areas of philosophy that deal with these questions – for example, epistemology (theory of knowledge), ethics (foundations of morality), metaphysics (theories of the nature of existence), and logic (principles of reasoning).

In working on some specific philosophical problems, learners will also become acquainted with some of the main methods of philosophical inquiry, such as Socratic dialogue or method, inquiry through the use of myth or anecdote, and textual analysis. Students should learn some techniques of argumentation in this introductory unit.

### **2. Logic and Scientific Philosophy**

In this unit the student will be introduced to the art of formal reasoning and discusses the principles involved in the philosophy of science. It examines what logic is, explains the history of logic, and introduces the form of logical arguments and some of the terms and methods used by logicians. Students will learn the form of logical arguments the differences between deductive and inductive reasoning; analyze syllogisms, formal and informal fallacies, and assess the worth of arguments. In addition, this unit will give an overview of the philosophy of science and explore differences between science and the philosophy of science. We will examine the effect of the ideas of theorists such as Nicolaus Copernicus, Albert Einstein, Charles Darwin, and Thomas Kuhn and to explore the challenges to various scientific views of the world.

### **3. Metaphysics**

Students will be introduced to the fundamental questions of metaphysics and will discuss many of the answers that metaphysicians have developed. The history of metaphysics will be examined with focus on two metaphysical issues: reality and appearance; and the self. The students will also look at the issues of personhood, as well as the relationship between minds, machines, and animals. Finally, they will focus on the quest for meaning by discussing theories of a supreme being, determinism and freedom, and various approaches to the idea that life has meaning.

4. **Epistemology**

This unit introduces the fundamental questions of epistemology and discusses many of the answers that epistemologists have developed. It discusses the history of epistemology, and then focuses on knowledge and knowing. It introduces rationalism and empiricism, discusses various conditions for knowing, and examines various kinds of knowledge. It will also introduce theories that try to bridge the gap between rationalism and empiricism and will summarize contemporary thinking about knowledge. Finally it will examine the links between truth and knowledge and investigates some of the difficulties of defining truth.

5. **Ethics**

This unit introduces some of the fundamental questions of ethics, the history of ethics, and the ethical theories that philosophers have developed to respond to them. Students will explore how philosophers from various world traditions have attempted to answer the questions. Finally, they will examine several current ethical issues and discuss how ethical theories can be applied to them.

6. **Aesthetics**

This unit introduces the history of and some of the fundamental questions of aesthetics and the theories that philosophers have developed to respond to them. It will focus on the challenges involved in defining art and explaining its value. Students will examine western aesthetic traditions and summarize various categories, theories, and types of art. Finally it will examine western and non-western concepts of beauty and how these concepts influence definitions of art. It also explores some of the questions raised by aestheticians, such as, How are aesthetics, art, and beauty related? and Should art have social value?

7. **Social and Political Philosophy**

This unit introduces the history of and some of the fundamental questions of social and political philosophy and explores the theories that philosophers have developed to respond to them. It will explore philosophers' arguments justifying the existence of political states and summarize various approaches to the relationship between individuals and the state. It will focus on the theoretical underpinnings of western and eastern social and political thought. We will discuss issues, such as the social contract and the conflict between liberalism and Marxism that have dominated social and political debate at various times. Finally we will study concepts of law and justice and explore how these notions affect individual people.

## **Learning outcomes**

The learning outcomes that follow are the observable/measurable knowledge, skills, and values that participants in Philosophy 12 are expected to have acquired and demonstrated by the end of the course. Learners taking the course for credit should demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes in both written and oral forms, as appropriate.

### **Knowledge**

It is expected that learners will:

- demonstrate knowledge of some major philosophers and schools of thought;
- demonstrate knowledge of some of the main concepts in philosophy, including definitions of concepts;
- demonstrate knowledge of examples of philosophical explanations taken from such sources as philosophical and scientific texts;
- demonstrate knowledge of a variety of methods of philosophical inquiry;
- demonstrate knowledge of the terminology and main techniques used in formal and informal logic;
- explore the current limits to knowledge and the limits to understanding, and examine possibilities for increasing knowledge;
- articulate an understanding of connections between reason and feeling and between cultural and intellectual traditions;
- express their conclusions with awareness of the degree to which these conclusions are supported by evidence;
- include in their writings suggestions for further thought and research.

### **Skills**

It is expected that learners will:

- identify assumptions that underlie theories, arguments, and positions in selected writings and the media, and in everyday life;
- demonstrate imaginative, creative, and reflective abilities by articulating philosophical insights;
- detect fallacies and evaluate arguments by assessing validity and soundness and the relevance of conclusions to premises;
- demonstrate increased use of reasoned argument to support their views;
- articulate counter-arguments to their own positions;
- present effectively in writing an extended argument on a topic of philosophical significance;
- think, write, and speak clearly, and recognize clarity of thought in the work of others;
- ask questions to clarify problems further;
- extract central ideas and arguments from print and non-print sources.

### **Values**

It is expected that learners will:

- demonstrate openness and intellectual humility by approaching situations involving a conflict of views in a spirit of inquiry;
- identify and reflect on values through analysis of case studies in such areas as racism, justice, violence, and the impact of humans on the environment;
- reflect on their intellectual and intuitive responses to issues concerning values;
- demonstrate growth in intellectual curiosity and the ability to reflect by posing increasingly wide-ranging and probing questions;
- identify gender and cultural biases in arguments, concepts, and methods;
- demonstrate increasing awareness of the complexity of issues and of the necessity of examining issues from many different perspectives;
- recognize that there are alternative approaches to apprehending truth and reality.

## **Assessment and Evaluation**

This class will in many ways be anchored around your ongoing, regular participation and interaction with your classmates and the course content. In keeping with the constructivist's approach to knowledge creation / retention (ie. *learning*), this will largely revolve around the creation of learning artifacts and experiences that will benefit the classroom community within the building, as well as online.

It is expected that learners complete at least one group, and one individual assignment for each unit covered. An Assignment Proposal and Evaluation sheet will need to be submitted and kept as part of each learner's portfolio, as well as published / presented on the class blog for each assignment completed.

There will also be required a mid-term presentation covering each learner's individual progress and developing personal philosophy, as well as a final presentation.

### **The marks breakdown will be approximately:**

*Participation: 20%*

*Assignments: 50%*

*Mid Term: 10%*

*Final: 20%*

## **Assignments**

Your assignments can take many shapes and directions, so long as they are deemed by teacher and peers to contribute to the learning of the community, are related to the chapter at hand, and can be shared or documented digitally on the class site (should you wish to take an assignment in a direction that you would feel more comfortable publishing either anonymously, or keeping within the classroom walls, don't hesitate to speak with your instructor).

*Some assignment ideas:*

- Philosopher Profiles
- Movie / Book / Current Events review w/ Philosophical lens
- Debate / Group Presentation / Leading a class discussion or workshop
- Reflection or Critique on Reading (either from web, text, or classmates' posts)
- Summary of Related Readings
- Tutorials

## Participation

Mark	Explanation
5	Contributes effectively and in a positive manner. Provides insightful and logical conclusions during discussions with others. Works cooperatively and shows some significant contribution while in groups. Individual work habits are superior.
4	Positive contributes to class discussions. Logical conclusions brought forth. Solid work habits that show focus on the task at hand.
3	Good work habits. Often contributes to class and group discussions with basic accurate information.
2	Fair work habits. Somewhat focused and can usually return to task at hand with little prompting. Sporadic contributions to discussions with basic information and no conclusions drawn.
1	Poor work habits and must be constantly reminded to return to task at hand. Contributions to class discussions are poor with little or no forethought. Behavior is below the level expected of a student at this grade level.
0	No demonstrable work habits observed. Behavior during class and during group work is disruptive and is not corrected after being given clear and repeated direction. Exerts a negative influence on those around him/her.