

COURSE OUTLINE **Philosophy I**

Course Description

PL 290. Philosophy I. 3 hours credit. This course will enable the student to appraise the philosophical concepts and arguments contained in the commentaries and/or selections from the works of various historical and contemporary philosophers. The student will apply philosophical principles to contemporary issues and synthesize the teachings of the philosophers into a coherent set of principles that can guide personal conduct and thought.

Course Relevance

Philosophy is the study of the intellectual foundations of virtually every area of human thought and endeavor. Courses in philosophy help students to develop critical habits of thinking and skill in understanding complex issues. "Philosophy I" provides students with the opportunity to explore, analyze and critique a broad range of philosophical perspectives, enhancing their skills both in the areas of critical thinking and in the area of written communication. "Philosophy I" provides students with the foundations for intellectual maturity and lifelong self-inquiry and with the foundations for the improvement of cultural awareness through the opportunity to explore the wide range of philosophical perspectives.

Required Materials

Soccio, D. (2010). *Archetypes of wisdom: An introduction to philosophy* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Sader, T. (2007). *A brief guide to critical thinking: The foundations of ethico-philosophical reasoning* (2nd ed.). Mason, Ohio: Thomson Custom Publishing.

Learning Outcomes

The intention is for the student to be able to:

1. Appraise the philosophical concepts and arguments contained in the commentaries and/or selections from the works of various historical and contemporary philosophers
1. Apply philosophical principles to contemporary issues
2. Synthesize the teachings of the philosophers into a coherent set of principles that can guide personal conduct and thought
3. Present his/her own views on the philosophical issues in discussion and/or written documents in a clear and precise manner

Learning PACT Skills that will be developed and documented in this course

Through involvement in this course, the student will develop ability in the following PACT skill area(s):

Analytical Thinking Skills

1. Critical thinking

- The student will address a philosophical topic that has been discussed during the semester. He/she will present the views of three philosophers and analyze those views, comparing and contrasting them with each other. The student will then apply the philosophical principles of each to his or her own position on the issue, appraising the philosophers' views and relating them to his or her own perspective.

Communication Skills

1. Creation and delivery of messages

- Through a variety of types of written work, the student will practice his or her writing skills, including his or her use of standard English wording and phrasing and his or her knowledge of standard English spelling and punctuation and grammar.

Technology Skills

1. General computer use

- Through the production of a major summative assessment task that requires that the text document be word processed and that the student make use of the internet to find information useful to his or her purposes, the student will use a computer to do research on his/her topic, to create a complete document, to make revisions in the document until it is in its final form and to produce a hard copy of the document to be turned in to the instructor.

Major Summative Assessment Task(s)

These learning outcome(s) and the Learning PACT skill(s) will be demonstrated by:

1. Preparation of a five to seven page essay on the following topic: "Examine the views of three philosophers (whom you have studied this semester) on a philosophical topic that the class has discussed this semester" (C and T skill). Present, analyze and critically appraise (A skill) the three views, and then discuss your own view on the topic and how their philosophical principles guide your personal conduct and thought.

Course Content

- I. Skills or Competencies- Actions that are essential to achieve the course outcomes:
 - A. Comprehend the philosophical concepts, principles and theories of the philosophers studied in this course.
 - B. Apply these philosophical principles to contemporary issues.
 - C. Critically appraise the above with sound reasoning to support the student's views.
 - D. Provide evidence of the ability to perform the above skills in a research paper that is clearly and precisely written.
- II. Themes - Key recurring concepts that run throughout this course:
 - A. The pursuit of happiness/the Good Life
 - B. The pursuit of knowledge
 - C. The pursuit of freedom
- III. Issues - Key areas of conflict that must be understood in order to achieve the intended outcome:

- A. Varied conceptions of human happiness/the Good Life
- B. Varied perspectives on the source of human knowledge
- C. Varied conceptions of the free human person
- II. Concepts - Key concepts that must be understood to address the issues:
 - A. Eudaimonism
 - B. Hedonism
 - C. Rationalism
 - D. Empiricism
 - E. Utilitarianism
 - F. Marxism

Learning Units

- I. Introduction: What is “Philosophy?”
 - A. The meaning of the term “philosophy”
 - B. The various areas or branches of philosophy
 - C. The terms and concepts of sound critical thinking
- II. Socrates
 - A. Key aspects of the life and character of Socrates
 - B. Key aspects of Socrates’ thought, his method and his principles
- III. Plato
 - A. Key accomplishments of Plato’s career
 - B. Key components of Plato’s Idealism
 - C. Key Platonic theories
- IV. Aristotle
 - A. Present and explain Aristotle’s principal objections to Plato
 - B. Identify key aspects of Aristotle’s ethical philosophy
 - C. Identify key aspects of Aristotle’s political philosophy
- V. Hedonism
 - A. Hedonism and its two general types
 - B. Aristippus, his “Egoistic Hedonism” and its three principal doctrines
 - C. Epicurus, his “Epicurean Hedonism” and its key components
- VI. Rationalism
 - A. The principal terms of Rene Descartes’ rationalism
 - B. The key components of Rene Descartes’ rationalism
- VII. Empiricism
 - A. The principal terms of and the empiricist perspective of John Locke
 - B. The principal terms of and the empiricist perspective of George Berkeley
 - C. The principal terms of and the empiricist perspective of David Hume
- VIII. Kantianism
 - A. Key concepts and theories of Immanuel Kant’s epistemology

B. Key concepts and theories of Kant's ethical theory

IX. Utilitarianism

- A. Jeremy Bentham's "Simple Utilitarianism" and the concepts and principles he developed in regard to this ethical theory
- B. John Stuart Mill's "Refined Utilitarianism" and the concepts and principles he developed in regard to this ethical theory

X. Marxism

- A. The philosophers who were significant in the development of Karl Marx's philosophy and his response to them
- B. The terms and theories essential to Marx's Historical/Dialectical Materialism
- C. The terms and theories essential to Marx's critique of capitalism

Learning Activities

Independent and collaborative learning activities will be assigned within and outside the college classroom to assist the student to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Learning activities will be geared toward practices that will be useful not only in the comprehension and critical analysis of assigned class readings but also in the analysis of other types of written communications. The learning activities will emphasize the importance of good writing skills which is a benefit to students both inside the classroom and outside the college classroom in a variety of situations. Examples of activities which contribute to the learning process include: instructor lectures, class discussions, panel discussions, audio-visual aids, films followed by group discussion, guest speakers, daily exercises, reading assignments, handouts, study guides, field trips and individual conferences with the instructor. Other learning activities include: tests, both essay and objective (including quizzes, chapter or unit tests and comprehensive examinations), writing assignments (both inside and outside of class), research papers, student projects, student presentations, attendance and class participation. These methods and other methods deemed suitable may be used individually or in combination by all instructors.

Online and Blended course instruction is based on the use of the computer as a distance learning/communication tool. This course also may include other avenues to student learning as deemed suitable by the instructor.

Grade Determination

The student will be graded on the completion of the assessment tasks as well as additional learning activities employed at the discretion of the individual instructor.

