**Introduction to Philosophy**

**Instructor:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Office Hours:**

**Course Communication**

If you’d like to discuss matters with your instructor outside of class meeting times, the best way to reach them is through the email address listed above.

**Electronic Communications**

Your school or university provides all students with an “official” email account. To better protect your educational information and other data, this is the sole email account you should use to communicate with your instructor or other university officials.

PLEASE NOTE: Exams and assignments must be submitted through appropriate channels. Exams and assignments submitted electronically without authorization may not be accepted.

**Course Description**

Introduction to Philosophy presents the student with an opportunity to engage in a guided philosophical examination of the different questions, texts and concepts developed by thinkers from both Western and Non-Western cultures. The student reads primary works of philosophy and engages in thoughtful discussion about the ideas raised by and in these works. Students complete examinations, quizzes, and assignments, and engage in class discussion. All in-class and out-of-class activities focus on elevating the student’s critical ability to read philosophical texts, comprehend concepts and conceptual frameworks, and apply the ideas we study to their self-understanding, understanding of the other, and understanding of the world.

In this class you will learn about the different ways that people from a variety of cultures and historical contexts have responded to perennial problems and how those responses have sculpted our contemporary situation.

**Learning Objectives**

Through the close study of a selection of philosophers and thinkers, you will be able to identify and

evaluate some of the processes and critical debates that have sculpted human history.

With this knowledge you will be able to situate your thinking—and the thinking of others—in a

philosophically-informed context.

As you complete this course you will demonstrate your critical thinking acumen by completing writing activities and other assignments.

You will be assessed on your ability to effectively communicate your identification, analysis, and

evaluations of arguments and truth-claims.

You will discover and address personal biases by presenting convincing reasons and support for the conclusions you’ve drawn from class-related activities.

**Required Texts**

There is no text that you need to purchase or acquire for this course. We will be using open educational resources (OER) that will be available to you through links and PDfs on our course Moodle page.

The primary text that we will be using is

**Recommended Supplemental Resources**

**Evaluation**

The student will demonstrate performative competence in communicating (through writing and speaking) their understanding of the course material. The student should understand that this course is reading intensive, and that such competence as above is achieved in direct relation to the texts in question.

PLEASE NOTE: Reading and writing are difficult tasks. It is difficult to find the appropriate terms or phrases to effectively communicate what we intend. Sometimes, reading is slow and arduous, especially as we read historic and philosophical texts. These are difficulties we face at every stage in our academic journey. It’s normal and okay for philosophy to be hard. It’s also normal to not understand everything in a text.

This class is designed to support you as you hone your reading, writing, and thinking habits.

Your instructor will evaluate you by assessing the clarity of the arguments you put forward and the evidence you provide to support those arguments in your writing.

Examinations and assignments should be grammatically correct, free of careless errors, and reflect both the student’s concern for his/her work and the seriousness of the topic in question.

Due dates for all exams and assignments are firm. Students are encouraged to communicate with their instructor ASAP in the event of emergency, or if the student encounters a significant barrier to success in this course. It is the student’s responsibility to communicate with the instructor.

All course work must be typed and submitted via appropriate channels. Handwritten assignments will not be accepted.

The student must complete and turn in all exams in order to receive credit for the course.

Essay Examinations (%)

The exams emphasize close reading of texts, reasoning acuity, and composition skills. Each exam also reiterates what is addressed in class. The student will receive specific instructions and guidelines for each exam one week prior to its due date. No outside or secondary sources other than those studied in class are permissible.

Exams are evaluated by assessing whether or not there is an accurate presentation of the author’s ideas, correct use of relevant vocabulary items, accuracy of grammar and college-level composition skills, and the successful interpretation and critique of the author’s ideas.

Reading Quizzes (%)

There will be four quizzes that will occur during our semester. Each quiz will test for reading comprehension.

These assessments are designed to gauge your comprehension of the course materials.

Class Discussion and Participation (%)

Class participation is defined as free, willing, and spirited engagement with other students and the instructor in reading and discussing the topics at hand.

Arrive at each class meeting having read and written notes about the assigned readings. Prepare one question in response to the reading. These questions will help direct our discussion.

Be curious and supportive of your class and community. Cruel or abusive speech, hate speech, bullying, intimidating or threatening speech will not be tolerated and will result in immediate disciplinary action.

Discussion is designed to help the student and the instructor find meaningful ways of communicating their understanding of the materials.

Media Critique (%)

Compose four philosophical critiques of objects of information found in the current media. Acceptable media for critique are books, print journalism, films, exhibits, and arts and theatrical performances. No partial credit will be awarded. All critiques must be completed in order to receive credit for this component of the grade. Each critique must be at least 500 words in a well-organized and developed composition.

PLEASE NOTE: A critique is not a summary. The object is to explain the underlying philosophical claim in a media object and explain why or why not the media object is successful in making that claim.

Reading Outline (%)

Provide an original one sentence summary of each paragraph of a reading you select. Please provide a sentence explaining where the author’s argument “clicked” for you.

This assignment is designed to facilitate and enhance your reading and note-taking practices.

Argument Outline (%)

Using your reading notes and class notes, create an outline of an argument we’ve studied this semester.

There are three dimensions to this assignment:

1) Identify the author’s written and implied presuppositions.

2) Present the logical relationships between their presuppositions and their conclusions.

3) Identify at least two items in their arguments where you see an error in their logic, where they are factually wrong, or where they’ve made an error by omitting important information.

This assignment is designed to facilitate your reading and note-taking practices, and also demonstrates your comprehension and evaluation of course materials.

Personal Philosophy Paper: (%)

This is a two-part assignment.

Provide your own position about one of the essays we’ve read and write a brief essay stating your position (500 words).

Revise your initial position paper in light of what we have read and discussed in this class.

This assignment demonstrates the ways in which the student has developed in response to the materials

covered in this course.

**Plagiarism**

Failure to cite outside sources on the exams, known as plagiarism, will result in an “F” for the exam. Continued plagiarism will result in your being brought before the school judiciary. See Academic Integrity Statement below

If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please contact your instructor via email or contact your advisor.

**Academic Integrity Statement**

**Absence Policy**

Absences do not excuse students from delivering assignments on time.

In the event of an absence, students are responsible for making up class by conferring with classmates, i.e. sharing notes, discussing main topics, etc. Instructors will not repeat class lectures. Students are responsible for all course material covered (all readings, lectures, assignments, exams, etc.). Class participation depends on consistent engagement with course topics, which cannot be successfully maintained without regular attendance and participation.

Genuine medical or family emergency, illness, religious observance, jury duty, approved university athletic commitments, and military obligations may be considered reasonable causes for absence. It is the student’s responsibility to contact their instructor in advance of absence.

**Expected Outcomes**

By the end of the semester the student will…

* Be familiar with the concepts of the various philosophers, philosophical traditions and philosophical periods we have studied;
* Be able to write philosophically on a variety of topics;
* Understand contemporary events within the purview of a philosophical perspective;
* Be able to apply the ideas we study to their life;
* Understand the different contexts and criteria for knowledge;
* Have developed an understanding of the relation of philosophy to other disciplines and areas of inquiry.

**Course Program**

The course will be divided into four sections, which will correspond to the examinations.

Week 1: Introduction to Philosophy

Week I:

Quiz I Due:

Week 2: *Epistemology; How We Learn*

Week 3: *Epistemology; How We Learn*

Week 2 & 3:

Quiz 2 Due:

Week 4: Metaphysics; World Order of Things

Week 5: Metaphysics; World Order of Things

Week 4 & 5:

Quiz 3 Due:

Week 6: Philosophy of Religion

Week 7: Philosophy of Religion

Week 6 & 7:

Quiz 4 Due:

Week 8: Philosophy of Science and Technology

Week 9: Philosophy of Science and Technology

Week 8 & 9:

Quiz 5 Due:

Week 10: Ethics and Morality

Week 11: Ethics and Morality

Week 10 & 11:

Quiz 6 Due:

Week 12: Socio-Political Philosophy

Week 13: Socio-Political Philosophy

Week 12 & 13:

Quiz 7 Due:

Week 14: Art and Aesthetics

Week 15: Art and Aesthetics

Week 14 & 15:

Quiz 8 Due:

Week 16: Final Exams

NOTE: Schedule of events subject to change.