



## **Program Learning Outcomes that pertain to this course:**

EN208 *Introduction to Philosophy* may be used as a humanities elective in the general education core, an English elective in the Liberal Arts degree, and is a major requirement of the AA Degree in Teacher Preparation. The following program learning outcomes from those areas most closely match the intent of EN208:

### **General Education Humanities Outcome:**

The student will demonstrate an ability for independent thought and expression in at least one of the following five areas: the arts, **ethical thought and moral values**, historical analysis, language, or literature.

### **Liberal Arts Program Outcome:**

Enrich and deepen self-knowledge by exploring different academic experiences.

### **Teacher Education Program Outcome:**

Demonstrate and use background knowledge in the areas of learning theories and principles, human development, educational foundations, and sociocultural issues.

## **Course Description:**

Introduction to Philosophy introduces the student to the nature of philosophy and philosophical thinking. Major areas of philosophical inquiry developed in the Western tradition are considered.

These major areas of inquiry can be broken down into the following general questions. Not all questions will be dealt with at equal length:

1. What is knowledge?
2. How can people act ethically?
3. Is there a God?
4. What is the nature of existence and reality?
5. How should society be governed?

## **I. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

### **A. General Objectives. The student will be able to:**

1. Read philosophical texts, in order to analyze their arguments and evaluate their answers to the questions of the course.
2. Use philosophical concepts to understand practical dilemmas.
3. Use logical reasoning skills to present and defend philosophical arguments.

## B. Specific Objectives.

- 1.1 Given a summary of a philosopher's ideas or summary of a single book written by a philosopher, the student will be able to analyze, evaluate and articulate the arguments of the philosopher.
- 1.2 Given a short text written by a philosopher, the student will be able to read, understand and respond to the ideas contained in the text.
- 1.3 The student will be able to evaluate ideas presented in a text by determining their logical validity, their implications, and their relationship to ideas beyond the text.
  
- 2.1 The student will apply the theories of individual philosophers to real-world situations.
- 2.2 The student will apply the theories of individual philosophers to their own personal life choices.
- 2.3 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the application of ethical frameworks to various situations.
  
- 3.1 The student will be able to respond to philosophical arguments by agreeing or disagreeing with them using logical reasoning.
- 3.2 The student will be able to defend their beliefs and answers to the questions of the course in a clear and complete manner.

## II. COURSE CONTENTS

According to the American Philosophical Association, "philosophy is fundamentally a matter of the cultivation and employment of analytic, interpretive, normative and critical abilities." This idea is reflected in the design of EN208 Introduction to Philosophy. Further the APA states, "It is only on the most superficial level of treatment of [philosophical topics] however, that one can find specific matters admitting of before-and-after measurement (e.g., being able to identify, define and distinguish different arguments for the existence of God, conceptions of truth, types of knowledge, or different moral theories, or knowing who said what about them in the history of philosophy). And to make instruction in such matters the focus of philosophical education... would be to reduce it to a caricature of the development of any real sophistication in students with respect to these issues."

Therefore, the design of EN208, while participating in the college's effort to use the student learning outcomes format is at the same time involved in creating opportunities for deeper sophistication among students. The following is a sample course content which includes both the specific measurable output of the students and, more importantly, the opportunity it presents for deeper understanding of philosophical issues.

Please see <http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/governance/statements/outcomes.html> for more information.

## Course Content

This is a sample, individual instructors may opt to use different chapters in the textbook, or spend more time on single issues.

Week and Subjects	Topics Covered	Philosophical Questions	Output and Learning Opportunity
Week 1: Introduction to Logic/Argument	Deductive and inductive reasoning. Creative thinking. Truth from experience and truth from reason. Truth vs. belief.	What is truth?	Output (O1): Several logic games completed.  Opportunity (O2): Deeper understanding of the nature of argument.
Week 2: David Hume <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> (Chapter 11)	Design argument and argument from first cause. Criticism of these arguments. Natural religion vs. fideism. Intelligent design and evolution.	What are the best arguments for the existence and nature of God?  Does evolution contradict faith in God?	O1: Short essay: "Should Intelligent Design be Taught in 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Biology?"  O2: Recognition that belief in God (and belief in general) can be logically debated.
Week 3: Rene Descartes <i>Meditations</i> (Chapter 5)	Cartesian doubt. Dualism vs. monism. Materialism. The cogito. Ontological argument.	What exists?  Do I have a soul/spirit?  How does a soul interact with a body?	O1: Quiz. Optical illusion worksheet. Paragraph on the brain in a jar.  O2: Beginning understanding of logical-metaphysical issues involved in the Western conception of a soul.
Week 4: Aristotle <i>Nichomachean Ethics</i> (Chapter 2)	Aristotle's view of a happy life. The golden mean. Weakness of will. Virtues vs. morals vs. ethics.	How can we lead a happy life?  How can we act morally?	O1: Quiz. Worksheet: "Describe the virtues your culture values most."  O2: Openness to the possibility that virtues and desired personal qualities are culture-based and changeable.
Week 5: Brauch de Spinoza <i>Ethics</i> (Chapter 7)	Spinoza's conception of mind/body vs. Descartes'. Pantheism. Free acts and ethical acts. Rationalism (truth	Do we have free will?  How do we act ethically?	O1: Quiz. Worksheet: "What are God's attributes?"  O2: Further developed understanding of the

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	from reason).	What are the best arguments for the existence and nature of God?	relationship between body/mind and how that affects conceptions of free will.
Week 6-7: Immanuel Kant <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals</i> (Chapter 14)	Good will. Duty. Categorical imperative: universal moral law & treating people as ends.	How do we act ethically?  Are ethics fixed or changeable?	O1: Quiz. Worksheet: "Apply the categorical imperative to ethical situations."  O2: Increased understanding of different types of ethical frameworks and their real-world consequences.
Week 7-8: John Stuart Mill <i>Utilitarianism</i> (Chapter 17) and Mid-term (comprehensive)	Higher and lower pleasures. Happiness. Utilitarianism. Hedonism.	How can we lead a happy life?  How do we act ethically?	O1: Mid-term (comprehensive)  O2: Familiarity with the ethical consequences of pursuing personal happiness.
Week 9: Woody Allen <i>Crimes and Misdemeanors</i> (Video)	The problem of evil. Situational ethics. Religion's (or lack of) role in making ethical decisions.	Are evil actions always punished?  Are all actions pointless without an ethical structure?	O1: Take home quiz/ short essay.  O2: Further understanding of the role that ethical models and religion play in making decisions.
Week 10: Plato <i>The Republic</i> (Chapter 1)	Allegory of the cave. Theory of forms. Individuals place in society. Government's role in controlling society.	What is truth?  Does knowing the truth make you seem crazy to average people? (Might you be wrong?)  What are the limits of personal freedom?	O1: Quiz. Design your own island republic worksheet.  O2: Possible realization that reality can be created by forces outside of the individual.
Week 11: John Locke <i>An Essay Concerning</i>	<i>Tabula Rasa</i> . Empiricism. Personal identity.	Are we born with innate knowledge?	O1: Personality quiz.  O2: Enhanced knowledge of

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<i>Human Understanding</i> (Chapter 8)		Am I the same individual over time?	how the mind creates and synthesizes the personality – possible understanding of the perhaps mutable nature of reality.
Week 12: Soren Kierkegaard <i>Either/Or</i> (Chapter 18)	Three realms of existence, aesthetic, moral and religious. Aspects of each. Leap of faith. Nature of religious belief. Existentialism.	If reality and morality are changeable how should I live my life?  What is the nature of religious belief?	O1: Quiz – fill in the story of a person who entered Kierkegaard's three realms of existence.  O2: Insight into the nature of personal choice and how it creates personality and belief.
Week 13: Freidrich Nietszche <i>On the Geneology of Morals</i> (Chapter 20)	Origins of the concepts of good and bad. Conscience. Asceticism.	How do we act ethically?  What place does individual freedom have in society?	O1: Quiz.  O2: Assimilation of various ethical guidelines, their changeable nature, and the role of power/powerlessness in shaping conceptions of right and wrong.
Week 14-15: John Paul Sartre <i>Being and Nothingness</i> (Chapter 22)	Existentialism. Freedom. Bad Faith. Being and nothingness.	Can we make free choices?  Does it matter what choices we make?  What is the nature of existence?	O1: Classwork: example of bad faith.  O2: Insight into the role of choice in shaping the individual. Appreciation of the possibility existence is ultimately meaningless. Understanding that individuals have to make choices anyway.
Week 16: Review	Review, primarily of existentialism.		
Final Exam			O1: Comprehensive final exam, with emphasis on material studied in weeks 11-16.

This sample course content is written thematically, with emphasis on knowledge, the nature of reality, ethics, and existentialism. The textbook could be used to place emphasis on other areas as well, such as theories of government or education.

### **III. TEXTBOOK**

Warburton, Nigel. *Philosophy: The Classics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Routledge, New York. 2001.

### **IV. REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

An active e-mail address may be required for this course.

### **V. REFERENCE MATERIALS**

Numerous books and films are available from the Learning Resources Center.

### **VI. INSTRUCTIONAL COST**

None.

### **VII. METHOD OF INSTRUCTION**

The instructor may use but is not limited to lecture, discussion, group discussion, group presentations, projects, quizzes, tests, videos, computer software and exercises in order to achieve the stated objectives of the course.

### **VIII. EVALUATION**

The instructor will create measurement instruments that demonstrate competency in the stated objectives. These may include multiple choice, short answer, and essay quizzes or assignments. The instructor will give a mid-term and final examination.

There is no credit by examination for this course.

### **IX. ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The COM-FSM attendance policy applies to this course.

### **X. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY**

The COM-FSM academic honesty policy applies to this course.