

GE1120: THINKING PHILOSOPHICALLY: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ARTS AND SCIENCES

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Thinking Philosophically: Bridging the Gap between Arts and Sciences

Subject Code

GE - Gateway Education

Course Number

1120

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

GE Area (Primary)

Area 1 - Arts and Humanities

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

Higher education must prepare students to think critically and creatively across traditional boundaries of disciplines and also to navigate the interrelationships of different disciplines. Philosophy examines questions in every aspect of human life and its methods of analysis and problem solving apply to problems in every discipline. This course provides students with an interdisciplinary introduction to the study of philosophical issues pertaining to the study of social sciences, natural sciences and other humanities. Special emphasis is placed on developing critical thinking and writing skills, and enhance students' understanding of the key themes in philosophy and their significance from a cross-cultural perspective. Learning activities include lecture, class discussion and debate, film screening, short quiz, group presentation and individual assignment. In lecture, students will be introduced to philosophical problems related to the study of social sciences, natural sciences and other humanities. Class discussion and debate, group presentation and individual assignment provide students with the opportunity to learn in an active and engaging manner.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Explain a range of philosophical problems pertaining to the study of social sciences, natural sciences, and other humanities	x	x	
2	Give an account of the methods and aims of philosophical analysis and its particular application to the problems related to the study of social science, natural science, and other humanities	x	x	
3	Develop and demonstrate an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural mindset and demonstrate a sophisticated and sympathetic understanding of the value and depths of philosophical analysis	x	x	
4	Apply philosophical analysis and problem solving techniques to construct solid arguments in response to interdisciplinary and cross-cultural problems and issues.		x	x
5	Appreciate how interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approaches can inform and improve traditional disciplines	x	x	

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

	LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Introduction of basic concepts, theories, ideas, and arguments; examination of philosophical problems pertaining to the study of social sciences, natural sciences, and other humanities	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
2	Class discussion and debate	An opportunity for students to clarify and evaluate key concepts and arguments through exchange and interaction with others and offering and receiving peer review; an exercise for students to listen to and appreciate alternative views and arguments.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
3	Use of multi-media aids (films, news coverage, documentaries, online resources, etc.)	A means to provide narrative examples to highlight abstract philosophical problems, stimulate imaginative thinking and critical reflection.	1, 2	
4	In-class Exercise and Final Quiz	Designed to test student' s grasp of basic concepts and arguments.	1, 2, 4, 5	
5	Group project and presentation	Offers students a chance to work out well-argued and defensible positions of their own through a process of collaboration	3, 4, 5	
6	Individual essay (response paper)	Short, focused paper requiring students to concentrate on the systematic presentation of key ideas and sharp arguments based on their independent analysis.	1, 2, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Final quiz: Designed to test student' s grasps of basic concepts and arguments. (To be held during the last week of the semester)	1, 2, 4, 5	40	-	No
2	Individual essay (800-1000 words): Short, focused paper requiring students to concentrate on the systematic presentation of key ideas and sharp arguments based on their independent analysis.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	-	No
3	Group presentation: Offers students a chance to work out well-argued and defensible positions of their own through a process of collaboration.	3, 4, 5	20	-	No
4	In-class exercises: Short problem sets e.g. multiple choices questions designed to test student' s grasp of basic concepts and arguments taught in the course	1, 2, 4, 5	20	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Final quiz

Criterion

Ability to give direct and adequate answers to questions
Critical and analytic skills to assess arguments and concepts learnt in the course
Grasp of the subject matter dealt in the course

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Ability to respond to questions directly, creatively and precisely; strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability, reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate understanding of the subject; ability to respond to simple problems.

Marginal (D)

Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without failing.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.

Assessment Task

2. Individual Essay

Criterion

Ability to give direct and adequate answers to questions
Critical and analytic skills to assess arguments and concepts learnt in the course
Grasp of the subject matter dealt in the course

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Ability to respond to questions directly, creatively and precisely; strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability, reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate understanding of the subject; ability to respond to simple problems.

Marginal (D)

Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without failing.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.

Assessment Task

3. Group presentation

Criterion

Research skills to delineate and synthesize materials
Ability to give direct and adequate responses to challenges
Critical and analytic skills to assess arguments and concepts learnt in the course
Grasp of the subject matter dealt in the course

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The ability to delineate materials; the use of relevant and stimulating materials; good and creative organization of materials; ability to conduct in-class discussion; capability in responding to questions derived from alternative perspectives; clear evidence of superior critical analysis and synthesis; excellent grasp of subject matter; evidence of in-depth knowledge.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The use of materials largely relevant to the topic; indications of good grasp of subject; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability, reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature; good ability to initiate dialogues with other students.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Basic and adequate understanding of the subject; ability to respond to simple problems during discussion.

Marginal (D)

An acceptable level of familiarity with the subject matter and grasps of materials.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Assessment Task

4. In-class Exercises

Criterion

Understanding and grasp of the concepts and arguments taught in the course

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent understanding and grasp of the concepts and arguments taught in the course

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good understanding and grasp of the concepts and arguments taught in the course

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair understanding and grasp of the concepts and arguments taught in the course

Marginal (D)

Some understanding and grasp of the concepts and arguments taught in the course

Failure (F)

Little understanding and grasp of the concepts and arguments taught in the course

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Philosophy of specific disciplines, including philosophy of science, philosophy of social science, philosophy of psychology, philosophy of computer science, environmental philosophy, social and political philosophy, philosophy of religion, philosophy of art, and so on.

Relationship between philosophy and other disciplines in humanities, social and natural sciences.
Philosophical significance of cross-cultural analysis in different disciplines.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Benton, Ted (2001), <i>Philosophy of Social Science: The Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought</i> , Hampshire: Palgrave
2	Burks, Arthur (1979), "Computer Science and Philosophy" in <i>Current Research in Current Research in Philosophy of Science</i> , edited by Peter D. Asquith and Henry E. Kyburg Jr., 399-420 East Lansing, Mich.: Philosophy of Science Association
3	Bynum, Terrell Ward, and James H. Moor (2000), <i>The Digital Phoenix: How Computers are Changing Philosophy</i> , Oxford: Blackwell Publishers
4	Cohen, Elliot (2000), <i>Philosophers at Work: Issues and Practice of Philosophy</i> , New York: Harcourt College Publishers
5	Colburn, Timothy (2000), <i>Philosophy and Computer Science</i> , London: M.E. Sharpe
6	Floridi, Luciano (2003), <i>The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Computing and Information</i> , Oxford: Blackwell Publishers
7	Goldstein, Laurence (1990), <i>The Philosopher's Habitat An Introduction to Investigations in, and Applications of, Modern Philosophy</i> , London: Routledge
8	Hansson, Sven Ove (2008), "Philosophy and Other Disciplines" <i>Metaphilosophy</i> Vol.39 No. 4-5 pp.472-483
9	Hollis, Martin (1994), <i>The Philosophy of Social Science: An Introduction</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
10	Jamieson, Dale (2001), <i>A Companion to Environmental Philosophy</i> , Oxford: Blackwell Publishers
11	Klee, Robert (1997), <i>Introduction to the Philosophy of Science: Cutting Nature at its Seams</i> , New York: Oxford University Press
12	Kopelman, Loretta (1990), "What is Applied about 'Applied' Philosophy?" <i>Journal of Medicine and Philosophy</i> 15:199-218
13	Kymlicka, Will (1993), "Moral Philosophy and Public Policy: The Case of the New Reproductive Technologies" <i>Bioethics</i> 7:1-26
14	Martinch, A. P. (2001) <i>The Philosophy of Language</i> , New York: Oxford University Press
15	O' Hear, Anthony (2007), <i>Philosophy of Science</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
16	Peterson, Michael (2004) <i>Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion</i> , Oxford: Blackwell Publishers
17	Reichenback, Hans (1954), <i>The Rise of Scientific Philosophy</i> , Berkeley: University of California Press
18	Reidy, David (2007), <i>On the Philosophy of Law</i> , Belmont, CA: Wadsworth
19	Sharrock, Wes (2002), <i>Kuhn: Philosopher of Scientific Revolutions</i> . Malden, MA: Polity
20	Soames, Scott (2010), <i>Philosophy of Language</i> , Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press
21	Sosa, Ernest (2008), <i>Interdisciplinary Core Philosophy</i> , Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers
22	Winch, Peter (1990), <i>The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy</i> , London: Routledge
23	Yeager, Leland (2001), <i>Ethics as Social Science: The Moral Philosophy of Social Cooperation</i> , Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar
24	Zimmerman, Michael (2001) <i>Environmental Philosophy: from Animal Rights to Radical Ecology</i> , Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall
25	Darwin's Dangerous Idea (BBC, 2009)
26	Eastern and Western Philosophy (Culture Video, 2006)
27	The Examined Life: An Introduction to Philosophy (INTELECOM, 1998)
28	The God Delusion Debate (Fixed Point Foundation, 2007)

29	Human Footprint (National Geographic, 2008)
30	Lord of the Flies (MGH Home Entertainment, 2003)
31	Judgment Day - Intelligent Design on Trial (Nova, 2008)

Additional Readings

	Title
1	http://www.philosophersnet.com [The website of The Philosophers' Magazine]
2	http://www.philosophynow.org [The website of Philosophy Now]

Annex (for GE courses only)

A. Please specify the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) that the course is aligned to and relate them to the CILOs stated in Part II, Section 2 of this form:

Please indicate which CILO(s) is/are related to this PILO, if any (can be more than one CILOs in each PILO)

PILO 1: Demonstrate the capacity for self-directed learning

3, 4

PILO 2: Explain the basic methodologies and techniques of inquiry of the arts and humanities, social sciences, business, and science and technology

1, 2, 5

PILO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking skills

1, 2, 4

PILO 4: Interpret information and numerical data

1, 2

PILO 5: Produce structured, well-organised and fluent text

4

PILO 6: Demonstrate effective oral communication skills

4

PILO 7: Demonstrate an ability to work effectively in a team

4

PILO 8: Recognise important characteristics of their own culture(s) and at least one other culture, and their impact on global issues

3, 5

PILO 9: Value ethical and socially responsible actions

1, 2

PILO 10: Demonstrate the attitude and/or ability to accomplish discovery and/or innovation

3, 4, 5

B. Please select an assessment task for collecting evidence of student achievement for quality assurance purposes. Please retain at least one sample of student achievement across a period of three years.

Selected Assessment Task

Group Presentation