

# GE2106: PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE: A DIALOGUE

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Philosophy and Life: A Dialogue

### Subject Code

GE - Gateway Education

### Course Number

2106

### 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

SA/POL3405 Philosophy of Life

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course aims to introduce to students the method of philosophy, to explore the nature of human existence, and to articulate a deepened understanding of human life in all its richness and contradictions. It seeks to develop in students an appreciation of some of the most important problems and approaches of philosophical ethics in both the Eastern and the Western traditions. The course will foster their skills and sensitivity in applying these philosophical approaches to reflect on and to analyse concrete day-to-day problems arising from questions about the human condition, human values, and what it means to be human. The goal is to cultivate students' moral sensibility and analytic skills to support the development of a philosophical outlook on life based on respect for oneself, for fellow human beings, and for the natural environment.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Give an account of philosophy as an intellectual discipline and explain the major features of the method of philosophical analysis.		x	x	
2	Identify, articulate and explain some of the central issues and questions arising from philosophical reflections on the human condition and the nature of human existence. Interpret how an understanding of the greater natural world inevitably is part of people's views of themselves. Evaluate how an understanding of human evolution has shaped and informed our orientation and values.		x	x	
3	Enumerate and interpret several major schools and traditions of philosophic ethics in both the West and the East.		x		
4	Apply Western and Eastern philosophical approaches and perspectives to analyse and address central issues and questions about human values, the meaning of life, and the nature of human existence. Nurture and demonstrate a sympathetic understanding of the views of a range of peoples and cultures and manifest a greater sense of how common problems have been addressed in sophisticated yet different ways.		x	x	x
5	Construct philosophical arguments based on philosophical reflections and critical thinking. Assume greater individual and social responsibility and develop a capacity for lifelong learning		x	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 issues arising from reflections on the human condition and the nature of human existence.	1, 2, 3, 4
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, 5
3	Film screening and the use of multi-media aids (music, documentaries, images, online resources, etc.)	A means to provide narrative examples to enhance moral sensibility, stimulate imaginative thinking and critical reflection on philosophical and ethical issues. Students will be provided with a short introduction on the philosophical and cultural background of the film in advance. A list of discussion questions will be given to students to help them to identify the key philosophical concepts. Class discussion and the presentation of individual interpretations and assessments of films will follow each viewing to allow students a chance to argue for their own positions.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

4	Short quiz	Designed to test student' s grasp of basic concepts and arguments. (Students will be given a number of short philosophical dialogues and they are required to critically comment on one dialogue and argue for their own views.)	1, 2, 4, 5	
5	Group presentation	Offers students a chance to work out well-argued and defensible positions of their own through a process of collaboration.	4, 5	
6	Individual essays (response papers)	Short, focused papers 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	Participation in in-class discussions and debates.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10	-	Yes
2	Short quiz	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	-	No
3	Individual essay	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	-	No
4	Group presentation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	-	No

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Examination (%)**

0

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

1. Participation in in-class discussions and debates.

**Criterion**

Knowledge (50%); Critical analysis (50%)

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of original thinking; good organisation, capacity to analyse and synthesise; 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-)**

Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

**Marginal (D)**

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

**Failure (F)**

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

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**Assessment Task**

2. Short essay and short quiz

**Criterion**

Knowledge (50%); Critical analysis (50%)

**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.

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**Assessment Task**

3. Group presentation

**Criterion**

Knowledge (50%); Critical analysis (50%)

**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.

## Part III Other Information

**Keyword Syllabus**

Philosophy

What is philosophy?

What is the relationship between philosophy and human life?

How to think philosophically?

What are the core ideas of major philosophical ethics in the East and West, including “consequence-based” ethics, “duty-based” ethics and “virtue-based” ethics?

Human relationships

What are friends for?

What does it mean to love another person?

Is sex without love right or wrong?

Is the family essential for human flourishing?

Life and death

Is death the end?

Should we have designer babies?

Is abortion morally wrong?

Should we allow euthanasia?

Questions about morality

Is morality relative?

Can there be morality without religion?

Is a life of pleasure a meaningful life?

What is the good life?

Philosophy, science, and human nature

What can evolutionary biology tell us about how to live?

Does determinism show that we are not free?

Can biotechnology alter human nature?

Does science have a monopoly of truths and knowledge?

The meaning of human life and our existence

Is life absurd?

How is a human life different from an animal’s life?

What is the relationship between work and leisure?

What is the value of nature?

**Reading List****Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Irwin, Terence (trans.) (1985), Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, Indianapolis: Hackett.
2	Nehamas, Alexander and Woodruff, Paul (trans.) (1989), Plato: Symposium, Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett.
3	Blackburn, Simon (1999), Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4	Cooper, David, E. (2003), World Philosophies: A Historical Introduction, 2nd edition, Oxford: Blackwell.

5	de Botton, Alain (2000), <i>The Consolations of Philosophy</i> , Harmondsworth: Penguin.
6	Halberstam, Joshua (1993), <i>Everyday Ethics: Inspired Solutions to Real-life Dilemmas</i> , New York: Viking,
7	Deutsch, Eliot and Bontekoe, Ronald (eds.) (1997), <i>A Companion to World Philosophies</i> , Oxford: Blackwell.
8	Hsu, Fu-kuan (???) (1962) <i>The History of the Chinese Philosophy of Human Nature: The Pre-Chin period</i> , Taiwan: Commercial Press.
9	Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden (eds.) (2006) <i>Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy</i> , Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. <Translations of original texts.>
10	Law, Stephen (2000), <i>The Philosophy Files</i> , London: Orion.
11	Palmer, Donald (2002), <i>Does the Centre Hold? An Introduction to Western Philosophy</i> , 3rd edition, Boston: McGraw Hill.
12	Rachels, James (1999), <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> , third edition, McGraw-Hill.
13	Tao, Julia and Yan, Hektor K. T. (eds.) (2006), <i>Meaning of Life</i> , Singapore: McGraw-Hill Education (Asia).
14	Tu Weiming and Tucker, Mary Evelyn (eds.), <i>Confucian Spirituality: Volume I</i> , New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, pp. 220-32.
15	Warburton, Nigel (2004), <i>Philosophy: The Basic</i> , 4th edition, London Routledge.

### Additional Readings

Title	
1	<a href="http://www.philosophersnet.com">www.philosophersnet.com</a> [The website of The Philosophers' Magazine]

## 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

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

#### PILO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking skills

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

#### PILO 4: Interpret information and numerical data

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

#### PILO 9: Value ethical and socially responsible actions

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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

1, 2, 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**

Individual essays (response papers): Short, focused papers requiring students to concentrate on the systematic presentation of key ideas and sharp arguments based on their independent analysis.