

**NVCC COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
PHI 102 - INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY II (3 CR.)**

Course Description

Introduces a broad spectrum of philosophical problems and perspectives with an emphasis on the systematic questioning of basic assumptions about meaning, knowledge, reality, and values. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

To provide the student with an opportunity to systematically develop a personal philosophical perspective on the great questions about meaning, knowledge, reality, and values. This opportunity will be provided through a study of the nature of philosophical questions, the differences between philosophy and other areas of learning, a survey of the way certain of the “great questions” have been treated by philosophers of various times and persuasions, and critical discussion of philosophy in its relation and application to our own lives and concerns.

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

None

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, the student will have an understanding of the nature of philosophical questions and will know many of the attempts that have been made to answer them. In addition, the student will be able to apply philosophical questions and methods to the analysis and solution of real-world problems and issues. Specifically, the student should be able to:

- Define the term “philosophy” with an appreciation of the many philosophical issues involved in the very attempt to do so, and identify instances in the real world where these issues are relevant.
- Distinguish such typical philosophical terms as epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics, and demonstrate how each of these branches of philosophy can be brought to bear on problems relevant to the real world.
- Identify and critically evaluate the positions taken by great philosophers on typical philosophical questions.
- Understand how to assess a philosophical argument for persuasiveness, logical consistency, and applicability to other arguments and issues, and apply this understanding to the construction of philosophical arguments which deal with real situations.
- Appreciate the importance of philosophy as the systematic questioning of basic assumptions, and identify some basic assumptions of their own to which philosophy can be applied.

Major topics to be Included

Critical attention will be given to the following basic questions of philosophy, including applying these questions to situations and issues in the real world:

- Who am I? (What is the nature of man?)
- How can I know? (What are the sources and methods of acquiring knowledge?)
- How shall I live well? (What are the principles upon which we make judgements of value)
- What can I hope for? (What is the telos or purpose of human life?)

These questions will be asked through a critical examination **and application** of several of the following major philosophical issues:

- Metaphysical Issues: The existence of God; the nature of the mind; the structure of reality; the nature of meaning; the free-will issue; odes or kinds of existence; etc.
- Epistemological Issues: The nature, sources, and justification for claims to know; knowledge vs. Opinion; the role of the senses; the possibility of a prior knowledge; the role of language; etc.
- Issues in the Theory of Value: The nature of the “good life”; the definition of happiness; the justification for claims about the good, the right, and the morally obligatory; deontology vs. utilitarianism; absolutisms vs. relativism; metaethics; etc.