

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY

PHI 100 – INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (3 CR.)

Course Description

Presents an introduction to philosophical problems and perspectives with emphasis on the systematic questioning of basic assumptions about meaning, knowledge, reality, and values. The assignments in the course require college-level reading fluency and coherent communication through written reports. **This is a Passport and UCGS transfer course.** Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

PHI 100 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.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

None

Course Objectives

- Interpret philosophical texts,
- Recognize philosophical arguments,
- Identify philosophical theories and locate them in terms of a methodical approach to philosophy, and
- Evaluate intelligently the foundations of Philosophy and the importance of that foundation for our way of life today.

Critical Thinking

- Apply critical thinking skills to develop and evaluate philosophical questions and arguments.
- Identify unexamined (or under-examined) assumptions in one's thinking.
- Implement effective and efficient search strategies to locate information that is relevant and appropriate for addressing complex issues.
- Evaluate information sources, arguments, or ideas for credibility and bias within the context of the learning task.
- Interpret information to reach well-reasoned conclusions.
- Combine and use information from multiple relevant perspectives to make sense of complex issues or solve complex problems.

Communication

- Identify central themes in the history of philosophy and demonstrate understanding of philosophical texts in speaking and in writing.

Civic Engagement

- Engage in discussion and debate with those who hold differing views and identities and understand the value of debate in sustaining a civil society and democracy
- Reflect on how contemporary thinkers interrupt, engage and further philosophical thought, particularly in feminist and critical philosophical interjections on race.

Major Topics to be Included

What is philosophy?

- Define philosophy and explain the discipline.
- Distinguish philosophy from other methods such as myth, religion and science.

- Define and distinguish the difference between the branches of philosophy.
- Determine how concepts can be systematically clarified through philosophical analysis.
- Distinguish between rhetoric and reason.
- Examine and explain the key concepts which could include the Platonic dialogues.

Ethics

- Summarize and analyze some of the views of historically important moral philosophers.
- Analyze and apply concepts and theories of ethics such as metaethics, normative ethical theory, and applied ethics, which could include exploring egoism, altruism, rights, duties, utilitarianism, Kantianism, virtue ethics.
- Apply moral concepts and theories to case studies and contemporary moral issues.
- Describe various logical fallacies and provide examples of them.
- Present effectively in writing a supported argument on a topic of ethical importance.

Logic

- Define logic and distinguish between logically consistent and inconsistent statements.
- Examine the role of specific definitions in logic and distinguish between sufficient and necessary conditions.
- Distinguish between deductive and inductive arguments
- Analyze and assess the validity and soundness of deductive arguments
- Identify common valid forms of deductive arguments.
- Distinguish between formal and informal fallacies.

Epistemology

- Distinguish the difference between knowledge and belief. Define knowledge as justified true belief.
- Distinguish the difference between skepticism, rationalism, and empiricism as foundation for justification.
- Discuss famous thinkers and their ideas in Epistemology

The Mind and Body Problem and Personal Identity

- Distinguish and analyze the main theories such as dualism, idealism, and physicalism/materialism.
- Explain the importance of identity and the problem of illusion.
- Distinguish and examine the major theories of personal identity
- Examine the counter arguments to major theories.

Free Will and Determinism

- Explore the importance of free will and the role of responsibility in ethics.
- Distinguish and examine the major theories of free will and determinism.
- Identify counter arguments to each theory.

Philosophy and Theology

- Explore the role of religion in past and contemporary society.
- Distinguish between the different ideas of God or gods.
- Distinguish between the terms theism, atheism, and agnosticism.
- Analyze and assess arguments concerning the existence of God
- Explore the role of faith and reason