暨南大學 JINAN UNIVERSITY

2026

0101P115
Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: TBA

Email: TBA

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact Hours: 60 (50 minutes each)

Credits: 4

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the core questions of philosophy examined within the context of their historical development. Within the course readings, we will analytically study present and historical alternative perspectives on a wide range of issues concerning metaphysics (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), and ethics (the nature of value). The purpose of philosophy is to encourage every person to think for themselves.

Course Goals

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Define philosophy and describe its central subdisciplines.
- Survey the evolution of Western philosophy from ancient Greek thought to contemporary schools.
- Explore core philosophical themes including metaphysics, epistemology, free will versus determinism, the problem of evil and the existence of God, personal identity,

ethics, and political philosophy.

- Examine a variety of philosophical traditions, such as those from Eastern and postcolonial perspectives.

Required Textbook(s)

All readings can be found online, links and/or copies of the assigned text will be provided.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites

Course Outline

Please note that the outline is meant to give an overview of the major concepts in this course. Changes may occur as needed to aid in the student`s development.

Module 1

- Plato "The Republic" (Selected Excerpts)
- Rene' Descartes "Meditations I and II" (1641)
- John Locke "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (Selected Excerpts) (1689)
- George Berkeley "Principles of Human Knowledge" (Selected Excerpts)
- **Quiz 1: Assessment of knowledge acquisition from module 1**

Module 2

- David Hume "A Treatise of Human Nature" Book I, Part IV, Section VI (1739 - 1740)
- John Locke "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (Selected Excerpts)

- Marya Schechtman "Personal Identity and the Past" (Selected Excerpts)
- Ifeanyi Menkiti "African Personhood"
- **Quiz 2**

Module 3

- Plato "Crito" & "The Republic" (Selected Excerpts)
- Aristotle "Nicomachean Ethics"
- Nietzsche "Genealogy of Morals"
- Immanuel Kant "Critique of Pure Reason" (Selected Excerpts or an overview) (1781)
- **Reflection Paper 1**
- **Lifeboat/Bunker Philosophical Thinking Exercise**

Module 4

- Jeremy Bentham "An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation"
- John Stuart Mill "Utilitarianism"
- John Leslie (J.L) Mackie "Problem of Evil"
- Blaise Pascal "The Wager"
- James and Stuart Rachels "Critique of Cultural Relativism"
- **Quiz 3**

Module 5

- Thomas Hobbes "Leviathan" (Selected Excerpts) (1651)
- John Locke "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (Selected Excerpts)
- John Rawls "A theory of Justice" (Selected Excerpts)
- **Reflection Paper 2**

Module 6

- Garrett Hardin “Lifeboat” (No reading - lecture discussion only)
- Richard Rorty “Justice as Loyalty”
- Martin Luther King, Jr., from "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
- Baron d’holbach “Systems of Nature”
- W. T. Stace “The Problem of Free Will”
- **Quiz 4**

Module 7

- Judith Jarvis on Abortion
- David Benetar on Anti-natalism
- Michael Sandel “What’s Wrong With Enhancements?”
- Roger Wertheimer “Are Police Necessary”
- **Quiz 5**

Module 8

- Final Exam Review
- **Final Exam**

Grading Policy

Evaluation	**Percentage**
Written reflection (2 x 15pts)	30%
Quizzes (5 x 10pts)	50%
Final Exam (1 x 20pts)	20%
Total = 100 % /100points	

Quizzes

Quizzes consist of 5 questions, assessing knowledge acquisition from modules.

Written reflection

There are written reflection in Module 3 and Module 5. Students should follow the detailed instruction in the assignment.

Final Exam: The course will conclude with a final exam. The final exam will be proctored online.

Grading Scale

The instructor will use the grading system as applied by JNU:

Definition	Letter Grade	Score
Excellent	A	90~100
Good	B	80~89
Satisfactory	C	70~79
Poor	D	60~69
Failed	E	Below 60

Academic Integrity

As members of the Jinan University academic community, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic coursework and activities. Academic dishonesty, includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, i.e., misrepresenting as one's own work any work done by another; submitting the same paper, or a substantially similar paper, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of the instructors concerned; or sabotaging other students` work within these general definitions. Instructors, however, determine what constitutes academic misconduct in the courses they teach. Students found guilty of academic misconduct in any portion of the academic work face penalties that range from the lowering of their course grade to awarding a grade of E for the entire course.