

BREAKDOWN OF CLASS SESSIONS

Unit 1: Introduction to the Nature of Philosophy and Human Nature

Topics Discussed:

What is Philosophy? Why study Philosophy?

Why Study Human Nature?

The Relationship between mind and body

Independent and Self-Sufficient Individuals

Suggested Readings from: Plato, Aristotle, and Confucius

Unit 2: Metaphysics

Topics Discussed: Reality and Being

What is Real?

Reality and Pragmatism

Encountering Reality: Phenomenology and Existentialism

Is Freedom Real?

Is Time Real?

Suggested Readings from Hobbes and Berkeley

Topics Discussed: Philosophy and God

What is Religion?

Does God Exist?

Atheism, Agnosticism, and the Problem of Evil

Traditional Religious Belief and Experience

Nontraditional Religious Experience

Suggested Readings from St. Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Conway, Himes

Unit 3: Epistemology

Topics Discussed: The Sources of Knowledge

Why is Knowledge a Problem?

In reason the source of our knowledge?

Empiricism – Senses Accounting for Knowledge

Kant: Does the Knowing Mind Shape the World?

Science and Knowledge

Suggested Readings from Descartes, Hume, Sir Francis Bacon

Topics Discussed: Truth

Belief, Knowledge, and Truth

What is Truth?

Does Science Give us Truth?

Can Interpretations be True?

Suggested Readings from Kant

Unit 4: Values

Topics Discussed: Values

What is Ethics?

Is Ethics Relative?

Do Consequences make an action right?

Do rules define morality?

Is Ethics based on character?

Can Ethics resolve moral quandaries?

Ethics and Moral Responsibility?

Utilitarianism vs. The Categorical Imperative

Suggested Readings from Bentham, Mill, and Kant

Topics Discussed: Social Philosophy

What is social philosophy?

What justifies the state?

What is justice?

Limits on the State

Suggested Readings from Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Marx, and Rawls

Assessments:

Reflections: This course is assessed through written reflections which are assigned on a consistent basis. These reflections will be used as a spring board to spark class discussion. A scoring rubric for the reflection is attached.

Class Participation: Graded discussions will encourage classroom participation

Individual and Group Presentations: Occasionally, students will be asked to conduct a class presentation based on a particular philosophical topic, philosophical movement, or individual philosopher.