



UNYP 7120 **Introduction to Philosophy** (6 ECTS)

Semester: Summer

Prerequisites: None

Instructor: Dr. Charles Webel

Contact: cwebel@faculty.unyp.cz

Consultation hours: To be announced: via Zoom or email

1. Catalogue Description

The course is a survey of relevant fields of Western philosophy, introducing students to major questions discussed in the Western philosophical tradition. The course focuses on questions related to metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, ontology, existence, and the philosophies of language, science, mind, and religion. Lectures and readings will serve as ground for discussions. Theoretical surveys and practical issues will be offered in a complementary perspective. Some main problems concerning human beings and their place in the universe as discussed in a selection of classic philosophical texts from Greek antiquity through the modern period.

2. Course Purposes

The course aims to invite students to critical and philosophical thinking. Emphasis will be placed on discussing philosophical problems, based on classical and thought-provoking texts, also in contemporary contexts. Students will finally be graded upon their overall activities taking into account their qualitative improvement in understanding philosophical topics. Specifically, the course will endeavor:

- To provide students with an overview of the nature and history of Western philosophy, both theoretical and applied, focusing on metaphysical, ontological, ethical, epistemological, existential, and analytic themes and issues.
- To acquaint students with the foundations, frameworks, theories, and applications of philosophical reasoning and argumentation.
- To investigate some major historical and contemporary philosophical dilemmas and challenges that present difficult and sometimes conflicting choices.

- To challenge students to come to terms with the philosophical choices they face, and will face, in their professional, social, and personal lives.

3. Required Readings: The primary text for the course is noted below (Readings may also be assigned from current periodical literature, recommended books, the Web, and other sources). *Students will be expected to do all the required reading, and, accordingly, are strongly urged to acquire the book. They will also be required to see certain films.*

Melchert, Norman and Morrow, David (2019). *The Great Conversation A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 8th Edition. Oxford University Press.

4. Additional Readings:

Adler, Mortimer. (2005). *The Great Ideas*. Open Court

Blackburn, Simon. (2003). *Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Chatfield, Tom (2018). *Critical Thinking*. SAGE Publications.

Copleston, Frederick. (1967) *A History of Philosophy*. 9 Volumes. Doubleday Image.

Kenny, Anthony. (2012). *A New History of Western Philosophy*. Oxford University Press.

Melchert, Norman (2002). *The Great Conversation A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. McGraw Hill.

Weber, Charles (2014). *The Politics of Rationality: Reason through Occidental History*. Routledge.

Weston, Anthony (2017). *A Rulebook for Arguments*. Fifth Edition. Hackett Publishing.

Online Resources: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (plato.stanford.edu); Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP: <https://iep.utm.edu>).

5. Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students:

1. Will have become acquainted with the foundations, frameworks, theories, and applications of philosophical reasoning and the historical development of Western philosophy;
2. Will be able to define the major Western philosophical theories and traditions;
3. Will have investigated some major historical philosophical issues and contemporary philosophical dilemmas, including an examination of their different functions and evolving roles;
4. Can identify relevant philosophical factors in contemporary everyday situations;
5. Can view critically real-life situations that present difficult and sometimes conflicting philosophical choices.

Students should also be able to:

1. Identify and provide reasoned and thoughtful responses to philosophical issues that may arise in their lives and in the world around them.
2. Analyze with knowledge and compassion contemporary problems and challenges that raise philosophical issues.
3. Be acquainted with different major philosophical traditions and philosophers from the history of Western philosophy.
4. Be able to apply what they've learned from philosophical theories and arguments to their own situations, lives, and societies.

Course Schedule (Subject to Change, With Prior Notice)

Note: All “Required Readings” are to be read by the day on which they are listed

Class 1

Introduction to the Course: Philosophy, Its Nature, Purpose, Themes, and Dimensions. Western Mythology and Philosophy before Socrates

Required Reading: Melchert and Morrow (abbreviated MM): “A Word to Students,” “Before Philosophy,” and “Philosophy before Socrates.”

Chs. 1-2: pp. XV-34.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 2

Rhetoric, Relativism, and the Search for Truth: The Sophists and Socrates

Reading: MM Chs. 4, 6-7; 55-74 and 91-147.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 3

Knowing the Real and the Good: Plato

Reading: MM, Ch. 8; 148-181.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 4

The Reality of the World: Aristotle

Reading: MM, Ch. 9; 182-217.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 5

Epicureans, Stoics, and Augustine

Reading: MM, Ch. 11 and Ch. 13, 235-252, and 261-291.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 6

God & the Soul: Anselm, Aquinas and the Transition to the Modern World

Reading: MM, Chs. 15-16, 311-359.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 7 **MIDTERM EXAM.** Details to be announced.

Class 8

The Dawn of Modern Philosophy and Philosophical Rationalism: Descartes

Reading: MM, Ch. 17, 360-403.

Group Presentation 1: Ch. 3: Appearance and Reality in Ancient India.

Optional Readings: MM: 35-54.

Film(s) to be announced

Class 9

What and How We Know and Don't Know: The British Empiricists—

Hobbes, Locke, and Hume only (other sections optional)

Reading: MM, Chs. 18-19, 404-407, 417-427, and 438-462.

Group Presentations 2 and 3: Chs. 5 and 10: Reason, Relativism, and Virtue in China.

Optional Reading: MM: 75-90, and 220-234.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 10

The Nature and Limits of Reason: Immanuel Kant

Reading: MM, Ch. 20, 463-495.

Group Presentation 4: Ch. 14, Philosophy in the Islamic World.

Optional Reading: MM 292-310.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 11

Reason, History, and Revolution: Hegel and Marx

Required Reading: MM, Selections from Chs. 21 and 22, 496-498, 504-520, and 537-544.

Group Presentation 5: Chs. 23 and 25, Moral and Political Reformers, and the Pragmatists.

Optional Reading: MM 545-61, and 596-616.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 12

The Value and Nature of Individual Existence: Kierkegaard and Nietzsche

Required Reading: MM, Selections from Chs. 22 and 24, 521-36, and 562-92.

Group Presentation 6: Chs. 28-29, De Beauvoir, Sartre, Derrida, and Foucault. (Not Rorty).

Optional Reading: MM 680-716.

Film(s) to be announced.

Papers Due.

Class 13

Meaning, Meaninglessness, and Being-in-the-World: Heidegger

Required Reading: MM, Ch. 27, 651-79.

Group Presentation 7: Ch. 30. Physical Realism and the Mind.

Optional Reading: MM 722-end.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 14

Meaning, Meaninglessness, and Language Games: Wittgenstein

Reading: MM, Ch. 26, 617-50.

Film(s) to be announced.

Class 15

Final Exam.

7. Course Requirements and Grading (subject to amendment by the instructor, with prior notice given to the students):

- Engagement and Short Assignments (20%) – Students should come to each class, whenever possible, having completed the assigned work and should be prepared to participate in the discussion topic for that class. Students will have short written assignments, may be called upon to answer questions from the assigned readings, and are expected to participate actively in class discussions, whenever possible.
- Midterm (20%) – Details to be announced. No make-up exams will be given.
- Debates/or Presentations (20%) – expectations and requirements will be announced early in the course.
- Paper (20%)-- Students will have a longer paper due by the end of the course. Expectations and requirements will be announced early in the course.
- Final Examination (20%)-- Details to be announced. No make-up exams will be given.

Grading Scale	95-100 A	90-94 A-	87-89 B+
	83-86 B	80-82 B-	77-79 C+
	73-76 C	70-72 C-	67-69 D+
	63-66 D	60-62 D-	0-59 F

8. Key UNYP Policies

Although the normal Attendance policy is not in effect for online summer courses, students should nonetheless be familiar with UNYP policies.

- It is your responsibility to show up to class on time. Normally, for onsite classes, the following policy applies: If you are late for any hour by more than a few minutes, you will be marked as absent for that hour. If you miss more than 12 (twelve) hours of class, for any reason, you will automatically fail the entire course. The class policy is standard UNYP policy. If you miss between 9 and 12 hours of class, you may be downgraded. Pay strict attention to this.

Despite the fact that attendance is not compulsory for online classes, participation will be graded for those attending the classes via Zoom, and there may also be offline activities that will contribute to the participation grade.

Academic Honesty

- The University's rules on academic dishonesty (e.g. cheating, plagiarism, submitting false information) will be strictly enforced. Please familiarize yourself with the STUDENT HONOR CODE or ask your instructor for clarification.
- For examinations: copying from your neighbor, speaking to another student, using a phone or anything similar may result in you failing the test or quiz. On written papers properly note your sources with academic citations. Cutting and pasting from the internet may be considered plagiarism. If you have questions about this, please consult the instructor.

9. General Requirements:

- Students are expected to attend each class session and participate in a positive way. **Please turn your cameras on during the online sessions, which will be recorded so they may be viewed at a later date.**
- Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss homework readings, projects or cases.
- Students are expected to turn in homework on the day they are due, unless special arrangements **have been made in advance with the instructor.**
- Students are expected to leave their mobile phones, beepers, pagers, and so forth **switched off.**
- Students may not use laptops or netbooks for any reason other than taking notes or finding **course-related** websites. **Do not** surf the Web during class time. If you do, you will lose the privilege to use a laptop or netbook during the online sessions

- All papers must follow appropriate format style, which means being word-processed and **with full bibliographies and notations**. Papers in which the used sources are not appropriately cited will not be acceptable.
- Students have to respect the deadlines that will be established for handing in the assessments. Failing to do so may result in an F.
- Students are expected to being familiar with accessing the online resources provided by UNYP and they will be expected to use them in their research papers.
- In the event of illness or emergency, contact your instructor **IN ADVANCE** to determine whether special arrangements are possible.

10. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS):

Students who complete the course will receive 6 ECTS credits or 3 American credits. One ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of work. For comparison, 1 American credit hour equals approximately 2 ECTS credits.

For this course, students are expected to spend time in the following course-related activities:

Class Lectures and exams	45 hours
Reading class-related materials	45 hours
Exam preparations	35 hours
Paper and journal preparation	30 hours
Debate/ presentation preparation	25 hours
TOTAL	180 hours

11. Technology Expectations: Assignments should be word-processed. Proofread all your work. Keep copies of all assignment and web sources cited. You should regularly use the vast resources of the World Wide Web and online library databases.

Revision Prepared: May 2021, Professor Charles P. Webel, Ph.D.