

Department: Philosophy

Course No: 103

Credits: 3

Title: Philosophical Classics

Contact: Donald Baxter

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Catalog Copy: 103. Philosophical Classics

Either semester. Three credits. No student may receive more than 6 credits for PHIL 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 1xx.

Discussion of selections from such philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Hume.

Course Information: a. The course introduces students to some of the great thinkers and great issues of western philosophy by means of primary sources, including some full-length works. The course also emphasizes that the sort of discussion taught in philosophy classes is an essential way of inquiring into matters of value, and so is important for coming to wise decisions on the personal, political, moral, religious, social, etc. issues faced by everyone in their lives.

b. Students write weekly in-class one-page position papers, participate in class discussion, write two five-page essays in which they present a philosopher's position as plausibly as possible and then raise some objections to it, and take two objective examinations which test their abilities to keep straight the details of philosophical positions.

c. Topics include truth vs. expediency, universals, Stoic and Epicurean and Skeptical views of happiness, proofs of God's existence, skepticism, certainty, the mind/body problem, the problem of evil, idealism, rationalism, empiricism, pragmatism, the problem of induction, miracles, free will, faith, freedom of thought and speech.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: The course meets goal 1 by assigning writing and discussion, goal 2 by helping students to appreciate the diverse positions of great philosophers, goal 3 by emphasizing objections and replies as well as encouraging thinking from different viewpoints, goal 4 by reading in moral theory, goals 5 and 6 by contrasting views of different eras, and goal 7 by learning how to read carefully, think critically, and write persuasively. The course emphasizes that the sort of discussion taught in philosophy classes is an essential way of inquiring into matters of value, and so is important for coming to wise decisions on the personal, political, moral, religious, social, etc. issues faced by everyone in their lives.

CA1 Criteria: The course meets the first two criteria for Arts and Humanities courses. In part the course does some intellectual history of responses of different eras to questions concerning knowledge and the

best way to live. At all times it is an enquiry into philosophical theories, not only as an attempt to understand them but also as an attempt to criticize and improve on them.