

**TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Larkspur, California**

**Course of Study**

**PHILOSOPHY**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This is a one-semester interdisciplinary elective course focusing on the role played by philosophy in the life of individuals and societies. It is intended to provide an introduction to the most important philosophers and their contributions to the intellectual development of the civilized world. This course shall provide intellectual tools to analyze and synthesize the major issues confronting contemporary society and background for interpreting literature.

The course directly applies to the TAM2000 Mission of “developing strong moral and ethical values.”

Philosophy will help students achieve the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- #1: Communicate articulately, effectively, and persuasively
- #2: Read and analyze material in a variety of disciplines
- #4: Demonstrate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of the individual in a democratic society
- #10: Analyze and propose solutions to contemporary issues using a variety of perspectives
- #14: Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and self-discipline necessary to achieve and maintain physical and emotional well-being.

**II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**A. Outcomes**

Students will:

1. Complete written assignments that demonstrate their understanding of how the major philosophers have dealt with such concepts as Faith, Truth, The Good Life, Wisdom, God, Knowledge, Immortality, Ethics, Religion, Justice, Beauty, Intuition, Reality, and Illusion.

2. In writing, compare, contrast and, ultimately, evaluate the various philosophers' points of view on the concepts listed in #1 above.
3. Categorize the major philosophers within such categories as Synoptics, Activists, Antinomians, Analytical Idealists, Realists, Mystics, Empiricists, Pragmatists, Existentialists, and Rationalists and provide justifications for the categorization.
4. Describe the Epistemology advocated by each of the major philosophers and compare, contrast, and evaluate these various concepts of Epistemology.
5. Describe the ethical principles advocated by the philosophers being studied and then, compare, contrast, and evaluate these ethical systems in light of their own knowledge of Ethics.
6. Analyze, in writing, one of the major issues confronting contemporary American society from a philosophical perspective. Issues such as wealth distribution, consumerism, pursuit of happiness, materialism, hedonism, marriage, sexuality, family, genetic experimentation, euthanasia, drugs, religion, television, violence, prisons, justice, education, relativism will be studied.
7. Write an essay applying the concepts of free will and determinism to human behavior.
8. Demonstrate, in writing, their understanding of the search for and contributions to human knowledge made by the universal family of mankind.
9. Demonstrate, in writing, an understanding of mankind's search for Universals.

**B. Course Content**

This course will cover the following areas:

1. Nature of Philosophy
  - a. Reason of Philosophy
  - b. History of Philosophical Development
  - c. Perceptions of Philosophy

2. Human Condition
  - a. Comparing different perceptions
3. Paths to Knowledge
  - a. Reason, senses, faith, and authority
4. Human Inner Knowledge
  - a. Mind and Body
  - b. Freedom and Determinism
  - c. Perception and Misperception
5. Human Integration with other people and the environment
  - a. Civilization
  - b. Law
  - c. Culture
  - d. Human Institutions
  - e. Ethics and Morals
6. Existential Concerns
  - a. Purpose and Direction
  - b. Mortality
  - c. Meaning and Existence

**C. Course Skills**

Students will develop the following skills:

1. Identify similarities and differences among two or more major philosophers.
2. Analyze and synthesize philosophical texts.
3. Utilize inductive and deductive logic.
4. Perceive fallacy in logic and recognize examples of “Cognitive Dissonance.”
5. Identify the various methods by which humankind has discovered “Truths.”
6. Make inferences, create hypotheses, speculate, and draw conclusions utilizing logical processes.

### III. ASSESSMENT

#### A. Student Assessment

Students will be assessed on their knowledge of the material and level of reflection/insight through portfolios or projects, written examinations and notebooks, oral presentations, and positive, active class participation.

The teacher will describe, in writing, his/her specific grading procedures and course expectations at the beginning of the semester.

#### B. Course Assessment

There will be formative course assessment using student feedback, teacher observation, and measures of student achievement including pre-posttests and students' evaluation at the end of the course.

### IV. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Students will experience a variety of teaching strategies that will enhance the curriculum, address critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and prepare students for post-secondary options. Such strategies will include lectures, discussions, student presentations (group and individual), text analysis, debates, guest speakers, cooperative groups, and on-line research. Since this course requires considerable reading and writing about abstract concepts, students will use the writing process and the reading log as developed in English courses.

#### Texts

*Philosophy*, ed. By David Papineau

*Philosophy, An Introduction to the Art of Wondering*, Christian, James L.

#### Supplementary Texts

*The Story of Philosophy*, Durant, Will

*The Pleasure of Philosophy*, Durant, Will

*Introducing Philosophy*, Solomon, Robert C.

*A New Introduction to Philosophy*, Cahn, Steven M.

*Understanding the Great Philosophers*, Thomas, Henry

In addition, primary source materials may be used.

Students will use on-line reference systems to collect information for this course. They will use word processors to prepare finished written work.

**V. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**A. Prerequisites**

Completion of World History I-II.

**B. Requirements Met**

This course is a 5-credit, one-semester elective offered by the Social Studies Department open to juniors and seniors. While the course does not satisfy a specific graduation subject requirement, credit may be used in partial fulfillment of the 220 units required for graduation.

This course is accepted as part of the University of California's "g" requirement.

Approved: 3/94  
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