

COURSE OUTLINE

FOUNDATIONS OF PHILOSOPHY

This course aims to introduce students to the main concepts and ideas of the key thinkers in the history of Western philosophy. Using extracts from core texts, students will develop an awareness of the important philosophical issues and the responses they have generated. Central philosophical themes are explored, and the problems raised are studied in relation to these thinkers and ideas. Themes include: Metaphysics, The Existence of God, Existentialism, Empiricism, Rationalism, and Humanism. The writings of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard, amongst others, will be examined. Students are not expected to read key texts in their entirety.

- Week One** **Classical Greek Philosophy: Metaphysics** – Abstract thinking in Platonic dualism and the theory of 'forms'. Materialism and Aristotle's 'Four Causes'. Plato and Aristotle on purpose, virtue and the soul. Extracts are drawn from Plato's 'Republic' Bks. VII and X and Aristotle's 'Metaphysics' Bks. Zeta and Theta.
- Week Two** **Modern Philosophy: Rationalism vs. Empiricism** - The debate concerning whether knowledge is derived from reason or experience. The origins of the debate in Plato and Aristotle. Descartes on innate ideas and the limitation of the senses. Hume on causation and experience. Extracts are drawn from Descartes' 'Meditations' and Hume's 'An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding'.
- Week Three** **Existentialism, Subjectivity and the Self** – The origins of existentialism in German Idealism: Kant, Fichte and Schelling. Kierkegaard's response to Hegelian philosophy. Faith and truth as subjective modes. Self-deception and authenticity in Sartre and Heidegger. Nietzsche and the will to power. Philosophy and war. The self and others. Extracts will be taken from the works of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre and Nietzsche.
- Week Four** **Contemporary Philosophical Theology** - Post-war perspectives on religion including suffering theology, the 'death' of God, personalism and protest theology. The self and its relation to others. Jewish and Christian responses to the Holocaust. Extracts selected from C.S. Lewis' 'A Grief Observed', Buber's 'I and Thou', Wiesel's 'Night', Roth's 'A Theodicy of Protest' and the works of Levinas.

Suggested core texts

<i>The Great Philosophers</i>	Stangroom & Garvey	Arcturus Press 2005	ISBN: 1848370180
<i>Philosophy: The Basics</i>	Warburton	Routledge 2004	ISBN: 0415327733
<i>Philosophy: The Classics</i>	Warburton	Routledge 2006	ISBN: 0415356296

If you are unable to obtain books locally, they may be ordered from

<http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk>

or

www.amazon.co.uk