

Module Title:	Introduction to Philosophy
Level:	4
Module Code:	401 PINP
Credit Rating:	20
Duration:	200 hours
Teaching Hours:	40
Academic Responsibility:	Séamus Mulholland OFM, PhD

Module Aims:

This module seeks to introduce students to the 'idea' and 'ideas' of Philosophy by asking some basic questions: what is Philosophy? What purpose, function or use does it have? What or who is a Philosopher and what criteria do we use to determine this? What is the relationship between philosophy and common sense? What do we mean by the perennial philosophy? The module will aim to demonstrate that the moment one asks such questions one is already philosophising. The module will also aim to introduce students to the main areas of philosophical thought e.g. Metaphysics, Epistemology, Logic, etc and to introduce students to the great thinkers of the Western philosophical tradition. It will also seek to provide student with the 'language' used in philosophy e.g. 'being', 'substance', 'form' 'genus' 'species', 'accident' and provide definitions of key terms in Greek e.g. 'meta', 'ontos', and so on.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this module students should be able to :

1. Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the principle aspects of philosophy and be able to offer a coherent appreciation of philosophy and major philosophers.
2. Think and work creatively and intellectually and be stimulated in their search for useful knowledge and insight into the endeavours of philosophy and its practical applications.
3. Critically reflect, assess and offer problem solving solutions to aspects of their work both in this area of study and others by adopting a systematic philosophical approach.

Indicative Module Content:

The module will begin by asking students what they think philosophy is and what it does. Using the answers the module will examine the innate 'curiosity' about things and the nature of things as they are that has always been present in the human project. The

Presocratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Middle Platonists, Neoplatonism will all be discussed and this will allow the main areas to be introduced, metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, ethics etc. The module will then move to the impact the Scolastics through to the advent of rationalism [especially Descartes] and arrive at 20th century philosophy especially Existentialism.

Learning and Teaching Strategies:

The module will be taught through a variety of teaching methods: delivered lectures, question/discussion, power point presentation, philosophical text, response and discussion, problem setting and possible solutions from students, presentations by students (with feedback from peers), at least one of the presentations will involve the students working in groups.

Assessment:

The module will be assessed through a variety of means ranging from essays, seminar, powerpoint presentation of topic by students, taped oral examination. It is also possible to combine these assessment methods e.g. 2500 essay + PPP+ oral exam or 2500 essay + 1 hour seminar by student or two 2500 word essays.

Indicative Essay Titles

1. If Philosophy means 'Love of Wisdom', what 'wisdom' do you think can be gained from the study of Philosophy?
2. 'Philosophy is no more than the intellectualisation of common sense' How far would you agree with this statement?
3. What, if any, relevance does philosophy and philosophical enquiry to ordinary, everyday life?
4. How might a philosophical background help in the study of theology?

Illustrative Bibliography

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Craig E, *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Washington 1998.

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Kahane, H., *Thinking about Basic Beliefs: An Introduction to Philosophy*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1983.

Nagel, T., *What Does it All Mean?: A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002.

Nuttall, J., *An Introduction to Philosophy*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2002.

Warburton N. *Philosophy: The Basics*, Routledge London, 2004.