

**PHIL 129 - Introduction to Epistemology and Metaphysics Course
Outline**

Distance Education Mode of Instruction

SECTION B

General Education Information:

SECTION C

Course Description

Repeatability May be repeated 0 times

Catalog Description Epistemology (the study of knowledge) and metaphysics (the study of reality) are two important branches in philosophy. Epistemology explores the themes of artificial intelligence versus human intelligence and the relationships between knowledge, beliefs, and evidence. Metaphysics examines our reality and everything in existence, including the acquisition of knowledge and the question of consciousness. This course emphasizes the historical and classical works that provide a foundation for the basic principles of good argumentation and critical analysis.

Schedule Description

SECTION D

Condition on Enrollment

1a. Prerequisite(s): *None*

1b. Corequisite(s): *None*

1c. Recommended

PHIL 120 with a minimum grade of C or better

1d. Limitation on Enrollment: *None*

SECTION E

Course Outline Information

1. Student Learning Outcomes:

- A. Examine and evaluate the major historical classical writings on epistemology and metaphysics.
- B. Critically analyze and assess any given epistemological or metaphysical question, applying both epistemological and metaphysical considerations to the given topic.

2. Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Define, identify and give examples of the major epistemological and metaphysical issues.
- B. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical development of epistemological and metaphysical thought.
- C. Read and interpret original philosophical writings on epistemological and metaphysical topics.
- D. Evaluate and appraise each major epistemological and metaphysical issue.
- E. Compare and contrast issues found in major epistemological and metaphysical theories which are amenable to a contrastive analysis.
- F. Develop her/his own judgments on the basis of a critical-thinking approach to the major historical epistemological and metaphysical issues.
- G. Create, identify and critique logical exposition using critical thinking skills presented in class.

H.

3. Course Content

- I. The Meaning of Life
 - A. The Meaning of Meaning
 - 1. The Meaning of Children
 - 2. God as Meaning
 - 3. Afterlife as Meaning
 - 4. No Meaning at All - Nihilism
 - B. The Meanings of Life
 - 1. Life as a Game
 - 2. Life as a Story
 - 3. Life as Tragedy
 - 4. Life as Comedy
 - 5. Life as a Mission
 - 6. Life as Art
- II. The Search for Truth
 - A. What Is True?
 - 1. Empirical Truth
 - 2. Necessary Truth
 - B. Rationalism and Empiricism
 - C. The Presuppositions of Knowledge
 - 1. Innate ideas
 - 2. Skepticism

2. The Argument from Design
3. The Ontological Argument
4. Rational Faith

A. Epistemological and Metaphysical Foundations of Other Cultures

1. South Asian
2. East Asian
3. Middle Eastern
4. Hispanic
5. Native American
6. African

B. Sexual Politics from an Epistemological and Metaphysical Viewpoint

1. The Rise of Feminist Philosophy
 - a.) Women and Nature
 - b.) Plato: Patriarch or Early Feminist?
 - c.) Reason vs. Passion in Ethics: The Ethics of Care
 - d.) Feminist Epistemology and Feminist Science

4. Methods of Instruction:

Activity: Films, podcasts, music.

Critique: Instructor will offer spontaneous critiques of student comments during class discussions as well as written critiques of assigned essays.

Discussion:

2. Who wrote the following? "Nietzsche declares that it is the philosopher who is the most likely to be wrong about the nature of knowledge, since he always thinks of it in the form of congruence, love, unity, and pacification. [But] if we truly wish to know knowledge, to know what it is, to apprehend it at its root, in its manufacture, we must look not to philosophers but to politicians - we need to understand the relations of struggle and power"

- a. Jurgen Habermas.
- b. Friedrich Nietzsche.
- c. Willard Quine.
- d. Michel Foucault.
- e. Soren Kierkegaard.

Examples of essay questions:

1. Describe Epictetus' encounter with the skeptic who categorically rejected the use of

