

Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Explorations Category

1. What course does the department plan to offer in Explorations? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Arts and Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Natural and Physical Sciences)

PHIL 102: Enduring Questions: The Good and the Beautiful

Subcategory: Arts and Humanities

2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory. Please address **all** of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.

Learning Outcomes	How the Course Meets Them
Students analyze concepts, theories, methodologies, and practices from the arts and humanities in order to interpret the human experience through literary, visual, and performing arts. Courses offer opportunities for students to explore cultural expressions and enduring questions about human experience.	In this course students learn the fundamental concepts, theories and methodologies of philosophy through the study of a set of key philosophical problems raised by cultures throughout history and across the globe. Thereby students learn to apply the tools and practices of the arts and humanities in general and philosophy in particular (textual analysis, argumentation, marshaling evidence) to interpret, evaluate and understand various cultures' and traditions' engagement with philosophical questions about the nature of ethics and aesthetics (some of the most fundamental and enduring questions about human experience).
Specifically, students will demonstrate the ability to:	
1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of specific disciplines within the Arts and Humanities.	Students learn to utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of Philosophy in general and Value Theory in particular. For example, Philosophy 102 introduces students to the technical disciplines within Ethics as well as the historical evolution of ideas, theories, and debates within Ethics. Students learn the terminology necessary to clearly distinguish between distinct ethical concerns, principles, and theories. In addition, Philosophy 102 also addresses the terminology, historical evolution, and debates within Aesthetic theory. Students learn how to philosophically evaluate perceptions and judgments of aesthetic objects and concepts beyond mere gut feelings and unreflective intuitions.
2. Distinguish between various kinds of evidence by identifying reliable sources and valid arguments.	Philosophy 102 helps students to distinguish between different kinds of value based on the sources of value. For example, students are taught to distinguish cultural,

	<p>theological, temporal, and natural reasons for determining value. Students are taught basic critical thinking and argumentation skills to evaluate and advance arguments for a given position about some value. Students are exposed to both primary and secondary sources of literature, and are expected to reflect on both kinds of sources in written assignments of various kinds.</p>
<p>3. Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the arts and humanities.</p>	<p>In Philosophy 102, students discuss how one's social, cultural, and historical context can influence the values one holds in high esteem. Students learn, for example, how the Ancient Greek culture influenced the aesthetic and ethical commitments of Plato and Aristotle. For instance, students consider how Plato's endorsement of a regimented moral education and the censoring of art in <i>Republic</i> books II and X may have been influenced by historical events, such as the treason committed by some of Plato's contemporaries who were also students of Socrates. Socrates was later found guilty of "corrupting the youth" and was sentenced to death by a democratic jury. Another example is how Aristotle places great emphasis on the virtues such as courage and magnificence in book IV of <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>. Students consider whether the military culture of the day as well as Aristotle's role as instructor to prominent youths such as Alexander the great may have inspired him to say more about courage than other virtues. Magnificence, or the ability to be generous yet tactful in hosting large social events, is an aesthetic virtue discussed as culturally and economically specific. We evaluate the legitimacy of such influences as well as their necessity.</p>
<p>4. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.</p>	<p>Students will recognize how human expression through art and the human experience of moral conflicts affect both individuals as well as groups. For example students might discuss political art, such as Picasso's <i>Guernica</i>, or controversial art, such as Duchamp's <i>Fountain</i>. In such instances, the individual aesthetic experience challenges the preconceived notions of value of the observer. In essence, Philosophy 102 examines the recursive influence that individuals and their societies have on one another in propagating, endorsing, and critiquing standards of value.</p>
<p>5. Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.</p>	<p>In PHIL 102, students ask questions like: <i>What is good? Are humans inherently good or bad? What is beauty? How are we to compare and negotiate different kinds of value?</i> These questions are enduring and endemic to the human condition. In contemplating these questions, students engage in classroom discussions and assignments where they apply various answers to these questions to contemporary issues. In turn, students are encouraged to extrapolate theories of value based on their evaluation of</p>

	contemporary issues, which range from controversial issues such as abortion, torture, animal rights, and artistic license to particular court cases, objects of media attention, tragedies, and conflicts.
--	--

3. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section's syllabus.

Learning Outcomes	Syllabus Statement
Students analyze concepts, theories, methodologies, and practices from the arts and humanities in order to interpret the human experience through literary, visual, and performing arts. Courses offer opportunities for students to explore cultural expressions and enduring questions about human experience.	Students will learn the difficult task of reading and interpreting philosophical texts and arguments. Students will also learn to critically evaluate philosophical positions and arguments, both in oral discussion as well as in analytical, academic writing. Students will develop their abilities to read, write, think, and discuss critically, as well as develop and demonstrate their intellectual independence. Students will also learn to interpret the worldviews (ethical and aesthetic) of a variety of cultures and time periods different from contemporary America.
Specifically, students will demonstrate the ability to:	
1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of specific disciplines within the Arts and Humanities.	1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of philosophy, including the concepts and techniques of argumentation, formal properties, philosophical theories (e.g., phenomenology), and core techniques and concepts of the interpretation of philosophical texts.
2. Distinguish between various kinds of evidence by identifying reliable sources and valid arguments.	2. Analyze and evaluate philosophical arguments; identify reliable sources; and distinguish between different types of philosophical evidence.
3. Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the arts and humanities.	3. Students discuss how one's social, cultural, and historical context can influence the values one holds in high esteem. We evaluate the legitimacy of such influences as well as their necessity.
4. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.	4. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural and historical contexts, in particular how philosophical theories about ethics and aesthetics have shaped and impacted larger social, cultural, and historical contexts

	and institutions.
5. Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.	5. Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience, including both (i) how changing cultural and social factors influence current philosophical theory about ethics and aesthetics, and (ii) how to engage with current philosophical debates about ethical and aesthetic issues in students' own cultural traditions.

4. Brief description of how the department will assess the course for these learning objectives.

- A. The department will use several questions, added to the final assignment, in order to assess how well the course's learning objectives are being met. The questions will require students to
 - a. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of philosophy.
 - b. Analyze and evaluate a philosophical argument relating to the material of the course.
 - c. Demonstrate an understanding of how questions of ethics and aesthetics have evolved over time and have been connected to philosophers' historical and cultural circumstances.
 - d. Demonstrate an understanding of how philosophical theories about ethics and aesthetics have shaped and impacted larger social, cultural, and historical contexts and institutions.
 - e. Demonstrate an understanding of how changing cultural and social factors influence current philosophical theory about ethics and aesthetics.
- B. At the end of spring semester the answers of 30% of the students in each section of the course will be selected at random for assessment.
- C. At the beginning of the next semester a faculty member will assess each answer. The names of the students and of the instructors for the sections will be eliminated before the assessment takes place.
- D. Answers will be given one of four designations:
 - a. Excellent: The student has demonstrated proficiency in all outcomes.
 - b. Good: The student has demonstrated proficiency in most outcomes.
 - c. Fair: The student has demonstrated proficiency in some outcomes.
 - d. Poor: The student has demonstrated proficiency in no outcomes.
- E. The results will be tabulated and given to the Department Head.
- F. The Department Head will convene the relevant faculty to review the results and to determine what steps, if any, need to be taken in order to improve the instruction in the course.

5. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

One section per semester.

6. Please attach sample syllabus for the course.

See attachment.

Please send your proposal to: robert.dietle@wku.edu

Philosophy 102 *Enduring Questions: The Good and the Beautiful*
Western Kentucky University—May term 2013
Online Course

Instructor: Dr. Audrey L. Anton

Instructor's Office Phone and Voice Mail: 270-745-5757

Instructor's E-mail: audrey.anton@wku.edu

Course Meditation and Description:

If an evil and all-powerful genie told you that she was about to wipe a major figure in history out of existence, either Martin Luther King Jr. or Pablo Picasso, and you could choose which it would be, who would you pick? Why? Aren't they equally valuable? Aren't they equally good? What would be your justification for your choice? Would you pick Picasso for all of the beauty he has introduced to the world and his impact on Art? Or would you pick MLK since he helped and inspired so many oppressed people and effectively contributed to their social and political liberation? What's more important? Are they even important in the same way? Which do YOU value more, and why?

Value Theory is the part of philosophy that evaluates facts and principles in many spheres of human existence insofar as they contain standards of what is important. The majority of this course will be focused on one branch of value theory, moral philosophy, or *Ethics*. Ethics is the study of morality: its nature, origin, practice, principles, conflicts, justification, validity, and application. While the division is fuzzy and involves much overlap, Ethics is typically divided into three kinds: Applied, Normative, and Meta. Applied Ethics deals with instances of ethical dilemmas and concerns on a case-by-case basis. Normative Ethics searches for general theories that one can use and refer to when deliberating about how to live and act. Metaethics analyzes what we do when we do ethics; it asks questions like *What is goodness?* and *What are we doing when we make more judgments?*

Also part of Value Theory is Aesthetics, or the philosophy of art and beauty. In this course, we shall consider what it means to be beautiful and what it means to be art, whether these two are mutually inclusive, and whether there is a relationship or, perhaps even tension, between aesthetics and ethics. Specific questions might include: Is beauty in the eye of the beholder? Is something art because someone says so? Can there be something that is both art and ugly? Are all good things beautiful? Are all beautiful things good? What does it mean to value something as beautiful or to value it as good? Do we find ourselves choosing between satisfying our desires for beauty and our desires for the good? What is the right choice?

Throughout this course, we will be considering these questions and many more. Upon considering answers, we shall employ valid and sound argumentation techniques to determine which answers are most plausible and compelling. Most importantly, students will be encouraged to determine the plausibility of accounts for themselves as well as consider opposing views objectively and fairly.

Course Objectives:

Like PHIL 102's counterparts (PHIL 101 and PHIL 103) this course aims to teach students how to:

1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts, and vocabulary of philosophy, including the concepts and techniques of argumentation, philosophical theories, and core techniques and concepts of the interpretation of philosophical texts.

2. Analyze and evaluate philosophical arguments, (including a demonstrated ability to distinguish between valid and fallacious reasoning and to identify common logical fallacies); identify reliable sources; and distinguish between different types of philosophical evidence.
3. Express themselves logically and objectively in both analytic and argumentative writing.

In addition, specific goals of PHIL 102 include developing students' abilities to:

4. Analyze and ponder answers to questions concerning how ethical and aesthetic value have evolved over time and have been fundamentally connected to philosophers' historical and cultural circumstances.
5. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts, in particular how philosophical theories about ethics and aesthetics shape and impact larger social, cultural, and historical contexts and institutions.
6. Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience, including both (i) how changing cultural and social factors influence *current* philosophical debates about ethics and aesthetics and (ii) how to engage with *current* philosophical debates about ethics and aesthetics in students' own cultural traditions.
7. Effectively express beliefs, commitments, and practices related to ethical and aesthetic themes in speech and writing.
8. Recognize, understand, and appreciate reasoned expression of alternative ethical and aesthetic views (e.g., not the student's own) in speech and writing.

Required Texts:

--Many short readings provided electronically through the course Blackboard site.

Recommended Texts

--Articles found on the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (www.iep.utm.edu) or the Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/>).

Course Requirements

Participation and Proper Functioning	(includes discussions and 1 quiz)	20%
Paper 1		20%
Paper 2		20%
First Exam		20%
Final Exam		20%

Participation: Philosophy is done best in dialogue and exchanges between people. Some of the concepts and theories are difficult to grasp, and discussion often facilitates the philosophy students learning.

- STUDENTS WILL BE GRADED FOR EACH DISCUSSION PROMPT. STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE THOUGHTFULLY FOR EVERY THREAD POSTED BY THE INSTRUCTOR. STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO COMMENT AT LEAST ONCE ON EACH OF THE ASSIGNED READINGS WITHIN 3 DAYS OF THE READING BEING ASSIGNED.
- EXEMPLARY PARTICIPATION WILL INVOLVE BOTH ORIGINAL POSTINGS AND FREQUENT ATTENTION TO AND RESPONSE TO THE POSTS OF ONE'S CLASSMATES.

Proper functioning: as we shall see when we read Aristotle, many Ancient Greeks believed that the virtue of a thing is a direct result of its fulfilling its function according to its nature and role in the world. Likewise, your virtue shall be assessed similarly. Part of good participation involves being familiar with the course syllabus, assignments, policies, requirements, etc., and doing your very best to live up to these standards. Chronic unintentional failure to meet these standards or acute belligerent disregard for such

standards will result in a deduction of participation points awarded at the end of the semester. Examples of such non-virtuous behavior might include: frequently being unprepared to discuss material in a timely manner, being disruptive or rude in exchanges, having “no clue” of when things are due, ignorance of or disregard for basic parameters of assignments, protesting non-negotiable course policies (e.g., anything in the syllabus), etc. All such examples (and others like them not mentioned) are manifestations of a student’s failure to do his or her job as a student, and such manifestations shall result in grade penalties in the participation portion of the final grade.

Quiz: There will be ONE required quiz on the material in the first week, which covers philosophy, ethics, and aesthetic *in general*. Other short quizzes on several of the thinkers and readings as well as some lecture items throughout the semester are available for practice and can be taken as many times as a student likes. They do not count towards the student’s grade.

Exams: There will be two exams. These tests will be objective. Each involves T/F sections, fill-in answers, and, perhaps, short objective answers (i.e., not essays requiring the student’s own argument). The purpose of these tests is to assess your comprehension and retention of what will surely prove to be an extensive and quick study of many philosophers and views.

- Students are NOT permitted the use of any resources beyond their own memory and cognitive capacities. No notes, no texts, no help from friends, and definitely no web searches.

Papers: (2) The papers will have both: 1) an exegetical component—which is a specific objective question about the material that should be thoroughly explained based solely on the material and 2) a reflective component that involves analysis and defense of the student’s own life experiences and beliefs.

Graded Assignment Advice:

- Know deadlines and be prepared to meet them.
- Abide by rules of academic honesty at all times. Plagiarism is an offense punishable by an F for the entire course.
- Sharing study tips/information before an exam IS PERMITTED AND ENCOURAGED. No reliance on such materials during the exam is allowed.
- Be sure to review the “How to Write a Philosophy Paper” presentation. Grammar counts. Paragraph organization counts. Sentences should relate to surrounding sentences. A thesis is often (though not always) required.
- Discussion Board Posts should be cordial. However, we are engaged in critical dialogue. Practice “pushing the issues” without pushing anyone’s emotional buttons.

Finally...*Enjoy the class!* ☺