

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 103: Enduring Questions: The Committed Life

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
<p>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 <u>enduring questions about human experience</u>.</p>	<p>In this introductory course, students will acquire some fundamental concepts, theories, and methodologies of Philosophy by studying an identifiable set of problems found in many cultures throughout history and across the globe. To wit: <i>how are humans connected with their fellows through social and political participation, and through a joint commitment to individual and/or common causes? Are such commitments merely local and parochial, or can they involve larger wholes or collectivities? How do we organize and rank our respective loyalties or obligations to different human associations? What are the most effective or appropriate forms of such organization?</i> In this general process, students will learn to apply the tools and practices of the arts and humanities in general, but especially those of philosophy (see #1), to interpret, understand, and evaluate various cultures' and traditions' ways of thinking about the nature of community, authority, legitimacy, rights, obligations, liberty, loyalty, and belonging (i.e., some of the most fundamental and enduring concerns of human experience).</p>
<p>Specifically, students will demonstrate the ability to:</p>	
<p>1. Utilize basic <u>formal elements</u>, techniques, <u>concepts</u> and <u>vocabulary</u> of specific disciplines within the Arts and Humanities.</p>	<p>Students will utilize basic elements, methods, concepts, and languages of philosophy (including: problem identification, textual analysis, theory construction, argumentation skills, fallacy detection, marshaling of appropriate evidence, identifying hidden assumptions, using the principle of charity, weighing evidence for and against different interpretations, challenging one's own positions, adjusting theses and arguments to make them more adequate, searching for common ground, etc.). Thereby, they will become more adept at translating and navigating among different philosophical idioms and</p>

	forms of expression, and also at articulating personal concerns for which they may have lacked adequate concepts and terms.
2. Distinguish between various kinds of <u>evidence</u> by identifying reliable <u>sources</u> and valid <u>arguments</u> .	In its focus on philosophical argument about social and political conceptions broadly construed, the course involves a careful study of both texts (historical and contemporary), contexts (including religious ideals and social goals), as well as more abstract conceptual analysis, synthesis of ideas and active philosophical assessment of positions, whether personally held or encountered in others. It not only presents but also performatively demonstrates the comparative use of primary and secondary sources, the historicity of all such materials, and the challenges of interpretation and evaluation that burden those who utilize and rely on them.
3. Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts <u>influence</u> creative <u>expression</u> in the arts and humanities.	Students will learn that philosophical reflection on questions of social and political life has evolved over time, and how it has been concretely situated within particular philosophers' own historical and cultural circumstances. Thus, the ancient world of polis and empire (itself highly diverse), the medieval synthesis of this heritage (and its Jewish and Islamic adaptations) with Christianity and the Church, the modern, science-based challenges to the different authorities claimed or presumed by these, and the contemporary meta-perspectives on each previous stage, as well as the reflective undertaking as a whole, will make students aware of the ongoing, participatory nature of thought, and of the deep contexts of various social and political perspectives that still structure their daily lives and motivate our collective ideals.
4. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in <u>shaping</u> larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.	Students will learn to appreciate particular human expressions and experiences by studying how these have affected specific philosophical theories about social and political life, and how the latter, in turn, have shaped the former : e.g., the distinctive ('Greek') flavor of Aristotle's and Plato's systems, and the latter's reappropriation by the medieval, Christian mind; Montaigne's and Descartes's formative role in the process of intellectual, social, and political 'modernization'; and Hobbes's and Mill's influence on contemporary rights cultures and notions of (world) citizenship.
5. Evaluate <u>enduring</u> and <u>contemporary</u> issues of human experience.	Finally, students will become equipped to evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience by being educated about fundamental theoretical options, the historical evolution of ideas, ideals, and arguments, and about the formative influence of past thinkers on current theory and practice. Moreover, they will begin to see themselves as inheritors, owners, or stakeholders of a tradition of social and political thought,

	as well as active participants with both rights and responsibilities to evaluate, shape, and adapt it.
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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
<p>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.</p>	<p>In this introductory course, students will acquire some fundamental concepts, theories, and methodologies of Philosophy by studying an identifiable set of problems found in many cultures throughout history and across the globe. To wit: <i>how are humans connected with their fellows through social and political participation, and through a joint commitment to individual and/or common causes? Are such commitments merely local and parochial, or can they involve larger wholes or collectivities? How do we organize and rank our respective loyalties or obligations to different human associations? What are the most effective or appropriate forms of such organization?</i> In this general process, students will learn to apply the tools and practices of the arts and humanities in general, but especially those of philosophy (e.g., textual analysis and reconstruction, argumentation skills, fallacy detection, marshaling of evidence), to interpret, understand, and evaluate various cultures' and traditions' thinking about the nature of community, authority, legitimacy, rights, obligations, liberty, loyalty, and belonging (i.e., some of the most fundamental and enduring concerns of human experience).</p>
<p>Specifically, students will demonstrate the ability to:</p>	
<p>1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of specific disciplines within the Arts and Humanities.</p>	<p>Students will utilize basic elements, methods, concepts, and languages of philosophy (including: problem identification, textual analysis, theory construction, argumentation skills, fallacy detection, marshaling of appropriate evidence, identifying hidden assumptions, using the principle of charity, weighing evidence for and against different interpretations, challenging one's own positions, adjusting theses and arguments to make them more adequate, searching for common ground, etc.). Thereby, they will become more adept at translating and navigating among different philosophical idioms and forms of expression, and also at articulating personal concerns for which they may have lacked adequate concepts and terms.</p>
<p>2. Distinguish between various kinds of evidence by identifying reliable sources and valid arguments.</p>	<p>In its focus on philosophical argument about social and political conceptions broadly construed, the course involves a careful study of both texts (historical and contemporary), contexts (including religious ideals and social goals), as well as more abstract conceptual</p>

	analysis, synthesis of ideas and active philosophical assessment of positions, whether personally held or encountered in others. It not only presents but also performatively demonstrates the comparative use of primary and secondary sources, the historicity of all such materials, and the challenges of interpretation and evaluation that burden those who utilize and rely on them.
3. Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the arts and humanities.	Students will learn that philosophical reflection on questions of social and political life has evolved over time, and how it has been concretely situated within particular philosophers' own historical and cultural circumstances. Thus, the ancient world of polis and empire (itself highly diverse), the medieval synthesis of this heritage (and its Jewish and Islamic adaptations) with Christianity and the Church, the modern, science-based challenges to the different authorities claimed or presumed by these, and the contemporary meta-perspectives on each previous stage, as well as the reflective undertaking as a whole, will make students aware of the ongoing, participatory nature of thought, and of the deep contexts of various social and political perspectives that still structure their daily lives and motivate our collective ideals.
4. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.	Students will learn to appreciate particular human expressions and experiences by studying how these have affected specific philosophical theories about social and political life, and how the latter, in turn, have shaped the former : e.g., the distinctive ('Greek') flavor of Aristotle's and Plato's systems, and the latter's reappropriation by the medieval, Christian mind; Montaigne's and Descartes's formative role in the process of intellectual, social, and political 'modernization'; and Hobbes's and Mill's influence on contemporary rights cultures and notions of (world) citizenship.
5. Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.	Finally, students will become equipped to evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience by being educated about fundamental theoretical options, the historical evolution of ideas, ideals, and arguments, and about the formative influence of past thinkers on current theory and practice. Moreover, they will begin to see themselves as inheritors, owners, or stakeholders of a tradition of social and political thought, as well as active participants with both rights and responsibilities to evaluate, shape, and adapt it.

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

- A. The department will add several questions to the final assignment for the course 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 truth, reality and knowledge have evolved over time and have been connected to philosophers' historical and cultural circumstances.
 - d. Demonstrate an understanding of how philosophical theories about truth and reality 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 truth and reality.
- 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?

1-2 sections per semester.

6. Please attach sample syllabus for the course.

See attachment.

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

Philosophy 103
Enduring Questions: The Committed Life
Date: Fall 2179

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Professor: Dr. M. J. Seidler [et al.] / Office: CH 322
Phone : 745-5756 / E-mail: michael.seidler@wku.edu
Office Hours : xxx, and by arrangement

OVERVIEW: The title of the course refers to moral, social, and especially political relations among persons, as they pursue their individual and collective goals in the context of an organized society that grants rights and imposes obligations. Its thematic thus includes applied or practical (vs. theoretical) ethics, social thought, and political philosophy. These areas are covered by examining major political philosophers and texts, basic theoretical approaches or options, and the natural, social, or moral foundations thereof. Our study will involve not only conceptual comparisons but also attention to contemporary practical problems and issues whose solution rests on one or more conceptual stances. That is, Phil 103 not only studies the ideas of classic thinkers but also develops students' ability to articulate, evaluate, and support their own philosophical views, both orally and in writing. It makes students more adept participants in their own social and intellectual cultures.

PREREQUISITES: none

TEXTS: (1) Andrew Bailey et al., eds., *The Broadview Anthology of Social and Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2008), pbk. // (2) Jonathan Wolff, *Ethics and Public Policy. A Philosophical Inquiry* (Routledge, 2011), pbk.

GRADES & ASSIGNMENTS: There are five class activities for which you will be graded:

1. two short (2 pp.) response papers : 10% each (= 20%)
2. a five-page essay on a philosopher: 25%
3. an individual project: 25%
4. theory application exercise: 20%
5. class participation : 10%

ATTENDANCE : Students are allowed four (4) unexcused absences; any additional absences may affect your final grade. Note that class attendance and participation are not the same: the former signifies your physical presence in class, the latter your active involvement (asking and answering questions, bringing up examples, contributing to discussions, responding to prompts, etc.).

ELECTRONICS RULE: As a rule (and aside from disability privileges), no laptops, no tablets, no cell phones. Exceptions must be specifically requested and preapproved by the instructor. Policy violators will be asked to leave class and counted absent for that session.

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

In compliance with university policy, students who require disability accommodations (academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course should first contact the Office for Student Disability Services, in DUC A-200 (ph: 270-745-5004; TTY: 270-745-3030).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

See the Undergraduate Catalog for the university policy on plagiarism:

<http://www.wku.edu/undergraduatedcatalog> . For additional information, see:

<http://www.wku.edu/~michael.seidler/plagiarism-faqs.htm> and/or

<http://people.wku.edu/jan.garrett/dptengpl.htm>

USEFUL LINKS:

- Class Website: <http://people.wku.edu/michael.seidler>
- Blackboard: <http://ecourses.wku.edu>
- Technology Help: http://people.wku.edu/michael.seidler/Mills_technology.docx
- Taking Essay Exams: <http://www.wku.edu/~michael.seidler/TestAdvice.htm>
- Philosophy Resources (links): <http://www.wku.edu/~michael.seidler/philinfo.htm>
- Publishing Student Work: http://people.wku.edu/michael.seidler/studpub_nku.htm
- WKU Style Sheet : http://www.wku.edu/library/dlps/infolit/reference_list_styles.pdf
- Student Support Services: <http://www.wku.edu/sss/index.php>
- The Learning Center, www.wku.edu/tlc
- The Writing Center: <https://www.wku.edu/writingcenter/>

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Students will utilize basic elements, methods, concepts, and languages of philosophy (including: problem identification, textual analysis, theory construction, argumentation skills, fallacy detection, marshalling of appropriate evidence, identifying hidden assumptions, using the principle of charity, weighing evidence for and against different interpretations, challenging one's own positions, adjusting theses and arguments to make them more adequate, searching for common ground, etc.). Thereby, they will become more adept at translating and navigating among different philosophical idioms and forms of expression, and also at articulating personal concerns for which they may have lacked adequate concepts and terms.

2. In its focus on philosophical argument about social and political conceptions broadly construed, the course involves a careful study of both texts (historical and contemporary), contexts (including religious ideals and social goals), as well as more abstract conceptual analysis, synthesis of ideas and active philosophical assessment of positions, whether personally held or encountered in others. It not only presents but also performatively demonstrates the comparative use of primary and secondary sources, the historicity of all such materials, and the challenges of interpretation and evaluation that burden those who utilize and rely on them.

3. Students will learn that philosophical reflection on questions of social and political life has evolved over time, and how it has been concretely situated within particular philosophers' own historical and cultural circumstances. Thus, the ancient world of polis and empire (itself highly diverse), the medieval synthesis of this heritage (and its Jewish and Islamic adaptations) with Christianity and the Church, the modern, science-based challenges to the different authorities claimed or presumed by these, and the contemporary meta-perspectives on each previous stage, as well as the reflective undertaking as a whole, will make students aware of the ongoing, participatory nature of thought, and of the deep contexts of various social and political perspectives that still structure their daily lives and motivate our collective ideals.

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5. Finally, students will become equipped to evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience by being educated about fundamental theoretical options, the historical evolution of ideas, ideals, and arguments, and about the formative influence of past thinkers on current theory and practice. Moreover, they will begin to see themselves as inheritors, owners, or stakeholders of a tradition of social and political thought, as well as active participants with both rights and responsibilities to evaluate, shape, and adapt it.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

- Week 1: Introduction / Socrates, *Apology* (all)
- Week 2: Plato, *Republic* (I & II)
- Week 3: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics & Politics* (sels)
- Week 4: Machiavelli, *The Prince* (sels)
- Week 5: Machiavelli, *Discourses* (sels)
- Week 6: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (sels)
- Week 7: Rousseau, *Second Discourse* (sels)
- Week 8: Rousseau, *Social Contract* (sels)
- Week 9: Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (all)
Harriet Taylor (and J.S. Mill), *The Subjection of Women* (all)
- Week 10: J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism* (sels), *On Liberty* (sels)
- Week 11: Marx (sels)
- Week 12: DuBois, "Souls of Black Folk" (sels), Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (sels)
M.L. King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (sels)
- Week 13: Rawls, *Theory of Justice* (sels)
Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and The Unencumbered Self" (all)
- Week 14: Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (sels), Okin, *Justice, Gender & the Family* (sels),
Young, *Justice & the Politics of Difference* (sels)