

Department of History and Philosophy  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY

*Course code and course Title:*

**PHI 101: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

*Course Teacher:*

**Professor Dr. Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan**

Telephone/Mobile: 01789982282

*E-mail: [kamrul.ahsan@northsouth.edu](mailto:kamrul.ahsan@northsouth.edu); [kamrul1353@gmail.com](mailto:kamrul1353@gmail.com); [kamrul@juniv.edu](mailto:kamrul@juniv.edu)*

**FALL SEMESTER 2015**

SECTION: **9 & 10**

**Lecture Hours for Section 9:** (ST, 09:40am – 11:10 am)

**Lecture Hours for Section 10:** (ST, 02:40pm – 04:10 pm)

**Room #** SAC512

**Office Hours:** 11.20 am - 02.20 pm (ST)

**Room#** NAC 1040

Students are encouraged to drop by my office to talk about the course, especially if they have difficulties with the course. If students are unable to come to my office during my office hour, they are advised to email me. I will check email during the week and possibly during the weekend; if students have an emergency, it is better to give a phone call.

**TEXT RECOMMENDED:**

1. John Cottingham (ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, Second edition, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2008
2. Matin, Abdul, *An Outline of Philosophy*, Dhaka: Adhuna Prokashan, 2011

**AIMS OF THE COURSE** (Aims define the broad purpose of the course):

Key aims of the course are to allow students:

- To explore some key philosophical concepts, theories and method of reasoning.
- To recognize the relevance of those concepts and theories to the understanding and critical assessment of the nature of life and the universe.
- To appreciate what philosophy is and the way in which it is relevant to practical issues.

- To develop critical thinking skills.
- To write more organized and argumentative assignments/essays.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES** (learning outcomes are statements of what a typical student is expected to know, understand and be able to do)

On completion of the course a student should be able to demonstrate:

**A. Knowledge and Understanding**

- Knowledge and understanding of the contributions of some key thinkers to major philosophical concepts, problems and methods of reasoning;
- Sufficient knowledge and understanding to develop a reasoned and consistent position of her or his own about these problems.

**(B) Skills**

- The ability to appraise and assess arguments;
- The ability to reach conclusions about the strengths and weakness of arguments and to justify these conclusions with sound reasoning;
- The ability to form a constant position of her or his own about questions raised in the course.

**(C) Presentation**

- The ability to communicate the above concepts and arguments clearly and accurately in written work;
- The ability to employ a vocabulary suited to these concepts and arguments;
- The ability to present written work that has a logical structure.

**COURSE INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY AND EXPECTATION:**

**COURSE INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY:** Philosophy is a difficult but rewarding discipline. Like life, which at times can be frustrating and hard to figure out (e.g., what should I do with my life, what happens when I die, is there a God, etc.) but which at times can also be exhilarating and fun, philosophizing can have these qualities. The only way to get better at living or philosophizing is to actively deal with the relevant issues and put an honest effort into attempting to understand them. I look at philosophy as a skill that one cannot learn without actively participating. I do not want you to memorize names and dates and definitions and leave the class forgetting what material we covered. In an attempt to engage you in the class, I will require that you present a problem to the class. I will be available to help you, and you are free to search the Internet to see if someone else has written something on the same problem you're reading, etc. I want us to create an atmosphere where we are a team (even though I might know more about philosophy, I do not know everything), trying to sort out what the best view on these issues is, and where you're an essential part of the team. We need open and honest dialogue that includes respect (i.e., no name calling, accusations, verbal attacks, keeping the discussion and comments on the topic and not on the individual), keeping in mind that it is okay to disagree with each other.

**EXPECTATIONS (WHAT I EXPECT YOU TO DO):** I expect you to (1) Do the work (e.g., the reading, summaries, and papers) honestly and promptly, (2) Come to class, (3) Be on time, (4) Participate actively, (5) Ask a question whenever something is confusing or unclear, (6) Respect each other, (7) Support/share with each other, and (8) Learn a lot.

**METHOD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:**

Teaching will be through lectures. Students will be expected to have read brief, selected topics from the authors prior to lectures, and be able to take part in discussion.

**CLASS POLICIES:**

- : Attendance in the class is compulsory for the students and is strongly recommended.
- : No make-up/retake examination/ assignment will be allowed. Any missed presentations/ examinations /assignments will be considered as zero.

**MARKS DISTRIBUTION:**

<b>First Midterm Exam</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Second Midterm Exam</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**EXAMINATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

The **first midterm exam** will be held on the day of Lecture-7 and the **second midterm exam** will be held on the day of Lecture- 15. The **test by means of presentation** will be taken on the day of Lecture-18. The printed copy of the only coursework **assignment** of 1500 words must be handed in to the course teacher by the day of Lecture-21. Assignments submitted after the day specified, without good cause, may not be marked. The date of **final examination** will be announced by the university authority in due course.

**GRADING SCALE/METHOD:**

Numerical Scores	Letter Grade	Grade Points Per Credit	Numerical Scores	Letter Grade	Grade Points Per Credit
93 and above	A Excellent	4.0	90 - 92	A-	3.7
87 - 89	B+	3.3	83 - 86	B Good	3.0
80 - 82	B-	2.7	77 - 79	C+	2.3
73 - 76	C Average	2.0	70 - 72	C-	1.7
67 - 69	D+	1.3	60 - 66	D Poor	1.0
Below 60	F* Failure	0.0	Incomplete	I	0.0
Withdrawal	W	0.0	Retaken	R	0.0

**PLAGIARISM:**

Do not attempt to plagiarize in writing your assignments. **Plagiarism means taking any idea or writing that is not your own and including it in your assignment without citing your source.** For example, if you go to a website and take information or sentences from that website and do not cite that website in your assignment, you are plagiarizing. You cannot have a friend write your assignment. You also cannot just cite a website and then turn in a whole assignment from a website that is not your work. The assignment has to be an original work of your own. This also includes using our own textbook, quoting it, or describing a philosopher's view and not citing the page from which you took the information. I will assume that you now realize what plagiarism is. If you plagiarize in your assignment, your assignment may result in obtaining F grade.

## **Lecture Programme for Spring Semester-2016**

**I. Introduction****(08 September, 2015)**

**Lecture 1:** Introduction to philosophy with special reference to its nature and importance.

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(13 September, 2015)**

**Lecture 2:** Philosophy and other pursuits

## **II. Methods of Philosophical Inquiry and Types of Philosophical Reasoning**

**(15 September, 2015)**

**Lecture 3:** Key types of philosophical inquiry

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**20 September, 2015**

**Lecture 4:** Some types of philosophical reasoning

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

## **III. God and Religion**

**(22 September, 2015)**

**Lecture-5:** Religious and philosophical conceptions of God

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(29 September, 2015)**

**Lecture-6:** VI.1 St. Anselm of Canterbury, "The Existence of God," *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, John Cottingham, ed. Second edition, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2008, pp. 345-347.

**(04 October, 2015)**

**Lecture-7:** VI.4 Blaise Pascal, "The Wager," *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, John Cottingham, ed. Second edition, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2008, pp. 356-359.

## **IV. Sources of Knowledge:**

**(06 October, 2015)**

**Lecture-8:** Authoritarianism and Rationalism

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(11 October, 2015)**

**Lecture-9:** Empiricism and The critical theory of Kant

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(13 October, 2015)**

**Lecture 10:** I.4 Rene Descartes, "New Foundations for Knowledge," *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, John Cottingham, ed. Second edition, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2008, pp. 21-25.

## **V. The Nature and Object of Knowledge**

**(18 October, 2015)**

**Lecture-11: Idealism and Realism**

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(20 October, 2015)**

**Lecture 12: Skepticism and Solipsism**

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(25 October, 2015)**

**Lecture 13:** II.1 Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave," *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, John Cottingham, ed. Second edition, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2008, pp. 69-75.

**VI. Theories of Truth**

**(27 October, 2015)**

**Lecture-14:** Formal truth and material truth; Self-evidence theory and Coherence theory of truth.

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(01 November, 2015)**

**Lecture-15:** Correspondence theory and Pragmatic theory of truth

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**VII. Mind and Body**

**(03 November, 2015)**

**Lecture-16:** (i) Classification of theories concerning the relationship between Body and Mind;

(ii) Arguments for and against Interactionism.

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(08 November, 2015)**

**Lecture-17:** Arguments for and against Occasionalism and Parallelism.

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

## **VIII. Freedom of the Will**

**(10 November, 2015)**

**Lecture-18:** (i) Theories concerning the concept of freedom of the will: Fatalism, and Indeterminism .

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(15 November, 2015)**

**Lecture-19:** (ii) Theories concerning the concept of freedom of the will: Determinism and self-determinism.

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

## **IX. Types of Ontological theories**

**(17 November, 2015)**

**Lecture-20:** Classification of ontological theories: Monism, Dualism and Pluralism.

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

## **X. Immortality:**

**(22 November, 2015)**

**Lecture-21:** The meaning of immortality; Grounds for belief in immortality; Is immortality desirable?

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

## **XI. Value-theory and the Good Life**

**(24 November, 2015)**

**Lecture-22:** Pleasure, happiness and flourishing; Moral standing, value and intrinsic.

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(29 November, 2015)**

**Lecture-23:** The good life needs virtue and morality.

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**(1 December, 2015)**

**Lecture 24:** Introducing classical ethical theories: Virtue theory, Consequentialism and Deontology.

Reading(s): (lecture handout and other necessary readings will be supplied in the class)

**Final Examination:** To be announced in due course.