

Scheme of Work

Philosophy 'A' level AEB
0661

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Philosophy 'A' level: Units of Work
Tutor: Roger Jones

General remarks

With the exception of the introductory, study skills and revision units the course is mainly structured around the AEB 0661 Philosophy 'A' level syllabus. This comprises of two papers. Units 4-7 deal with paper 1 and units 8-10 with paper 2.

The course is scheduled for 30 weeks. Units 4-7 take 16 weeks, and 8-10 take nine. The introductory lecture also takes 1 week. There are therefore, four "free" weeks to allow for contingencies, revision and mock exams.

Methods

In the majority of units the methods are listed along the lines of: "Lectures; Small group discussions based on past paper questions; Marked essays; Class discussions; Videos." It is expected that in any one class a variety of methods will be used to encourage active learning. A typical session may involve 45 minutes of "lecture" which would include responding to students' questions and brief periods of class discussion. A video may be put on for another 30 or so minutes. After a break, students may discuss some relevant issue in small groups and report back at the end of the session. The results of this small group activity would form the basis for a marked homework essay.

Unit No 1: Introduction

This unit is intended for use at the beginning of the program.

Description

An introduction to the 'A' Level Philosophy Course.

Purposes

- To introduce Students to the 'A' level Philosophy syllabus, its content and expectations.
- To enable students to introduce themselves to each other, and to familiarise students with the Adult educational environment.
- To encourage students to participate in the learning process.

Methods

- Students will be given a handout containing the syllabus and book-list. The tutor will talk through this, responding to students' needs for more explanation and/or examples.

Emphasis will be placed on clarifying the exact content of the syllabus, methods of assessment, realistic homework needs and materials the student needs to acquire.

An ice breaking exercise will be used so those students can introduce themselves to each other, and the tutor. Typically students may be placed in pairs and asked to report back to the class on their "partner".

Tea break to encourage informal student interaction.

After a short explanation of the term "Philosophy", students will be asked to work in small groups of three or four in order to philosophically approach a broad general question, e.g. "What is Freedom?" The small groups report back to the class at the end of discussions. The tutor may "visit" the groups whilst they are working.

Students will given the task to do some preparatory reading for the next week's lecture.

Resources

- Handouts
- Overhead projector

Students' contribution expected

- To listen to other students.
- To participate in small groups discussions.
- To report back to the class.

How assessed

- By monitoring the contributions listed above.
-

Office use

Unit No 2: Study Skills

This unit is intended for concurrent use in the first few weeks of the course.

Description

Study Skills

Purpose

- To introduce students to appropriate methods of:
- Taking notes from lectures and books
- Using books and libraries
- Essay writing
- General planning and use of mind maps
- Examination Technique (usually presented half way through the course)

Methods

- Use of overheads to stress main points with examples of mind maps
- Students are given simple tasks to exercise the skills highlighted
- The tutor will respond to students questions and encourage students to make contributions from their own experience to the discussions

Resources

- Over head projector

Students' contribution expected

- Some students may be able to relate their previous experiences to the group

How assessed

- This section is not assessed separately, although study skills issues will be addressed throughout the course.

Office use

Unit No 3: Plato's *Republic*

This unit is intended for the start of the course, duration 4 weeks

Description

The Philosophical passages of Plato's *Republic*

Purpose

- To enable Students to gain an understanding of some of Plato's important philosophical ideas, their historical presentation and their contribution to present-day philosophical debate.
- To develop Students' capacity for analysis, critical reasoning and judgement and their ability to express themselves in these modes.

Topics covered include:

- Plato's concept of Philosophy & Philosophers
- Epistemology and Ontology: The theory of forms
- Political Philosophy
- Plato's Ethics
- Criticisms

Methods

- Lectures; Small group discussions based on past paper questions; Marked essays; Class discussions; Videos.
- Links will be made to the study skills unit, particularly concerning essay writing.

Resources

- Videos, handouts, overhead, library

Students' contribution expected

- To contribute to class discussions, to produce at least one and preferably two essays for this unit.

How assessed

- Formal assessment of essays based on past paper questions. Informal assessment via class and small group discussions

Office use

Unit No 4: Aristotle's *Ethics*

This unit is intended to follow unit 3, duration 4 weeks

Description

The main ideas of Aristotle's *Ethics*

Purpose

- To enable Students to gain an understanding of some of Aristotle's important philosophical ideas, their historical presentation and their contribution to present-day philosophical debate.
- To strengthen Students' capacity for analysis, reasoning and judgement and their ability to express themselves in these modes.

Topics covered include:

- Methods of Philosophy (Function & Endoxa)
- Moral Virtues and Phronesis (Including the "Doctrine of the mean")
- Moral Responsibility and choice
- The intellectual virtues and contemplation
- Criticisms

Methods

- Lectures; Small group discussions based on past paper questions; Marked essays; Class discussions; Videos.
- Links will be made to the study skills unit, particularly concerning essay writing.

Resources

- Videos, handouts, overhead, library

Students' contribution expected

- To contribute to class discussions, to produce at least one and preferably two essays for this unit.

How assessed

- Formal assessment of essays based on past paper questions. Informal assessment via class and small group discussions
-

Office use

Unit No 5: J S Mill *On Liberty*

This unit is intended to follow unit 4, duration 4 weeks

Description

The main ideas of J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*

Purpose

- To enable Students to gain an understanding of some of Mill's important philosophical ideas, their historical presentation and their contribution to present-day philosophical debate.
- To strengthen Students' capacity for analysis, critical reasoning and judgement and their ability to express themselves in these modes.

Topics covered include:

- Tyranny of the majority
- Liberty of Action: self regarding and other regarding actions
- Freedom of thought and discussion
- Utility
- Criticisms

Methods

- Lectures; Small group discussions based on past paper questions; Marked essays; Class discussions; Videos.
- Links will be made to the study skills unit, particularly concerning essay writing.

Resources

- Videos, handouts, overhead, library

Students' contribution expected

- To contribute to class discussions, to produce at least one and preferably two essays for this unit.

How assessed

- Formal assessment of essays based on past paper questions. Informal assessment via class and small group discussions.
-

Office use

Unit No 6: Marx & Engels *The German Ideology*

This unit is intended to follow unit 5, duration 4 weeks

Description

The main ideas of Marx & Engels *The German Ideology*

Purpose

- To enable Students to gain an understanding of some of Marx & Engels's important philosophical ideas, their historical presentation and their contribution to present-day philosophical debate.
- To strengthen Students' capacity for analysis, critical reasoning and judgement and their ability to express themselves in these modes.

Topics covered include:

- Feuerbach and Hegel
- Dialectical materialism: Production, history.
- Ideology, False consciousness
- Human nature and freedom
- Criticisms

Methods

- Lectures; Small group discussions based on past paper questions; Marked essays; Class discussions; Videos.
- Links will be made to the study skills unit, particularly concerning essay writing.

Resources

- Videos, handouts, overhead, library

Students' contribution expected

- To contribute to class discussions, to produce at least one and preferably two essays for this unit.

How assessed

- Formal assessment of essays based on past paper questions. Informal assessment via class and small group discussions.
-

Office use

Unit No 7: Faith and Existence of God

This unit is intended to follow unit 6, duration 3 weeks

Description

An introduction to the philosophical debate about the nature of God, and the rationality (or otherwise) of faith.

Purpose

- To enable Students to gain an understanding of, philosophical ideas, their historical presentation and their contribution to present-day philosophical debate with relation to faith in and the existence of God
- To strengthen Students' capacity for analysis, critical reasoning and judgement and their ability to express themselves in these modes.

Topics covered include:

- Arguments for the existence of God: Cosmological, teleological and ontological arguments
- The nature of religious experience
- The nature and properties of God
- The coherence of God: The Problem of Evil, Miracles, Moral Agency
- Faith, Reason and Belief
- Religious language: Language games, verification and falsification
- Critical and modern perspectives: Marx, Nietzsche, and Jung

Methods

- Lectures; Small group discussions based on past paper questions; Marked essays; Class discussions.
- Links will be made to the study skills unit, and to the work in units 3-7 (Paper 1)

Resources

- Videos, handouts, overhead, articles

Students' contribution expected

- To contribute to class discussions, to produce at least one and preferably two essays for this unit.

How assessed

- Formal assessment of essays based on past paper questions. Informal assessment via class and small group discussions

Office use

Unit No 8: Philosophy of Scientific Method

This unit is intended to follow unit 7, duration 3 weeks

Description

An introduction to the Philosophy of Scientific Method

Purpose

- To enable Students to gain an understanding of philosophical ideas , their historical presentation and their contribution to present-day philosophical debate with relation to the Philosophy of Scientific Method
 - To strengthen Students' capacity for analysis, critical reasoning and judgement and their ability to express themselves in these modes.
- Topics covered include:
 - The relationship between theory and observation
 - The role of experiment
 - Induction and it's problems
 - Falsifiability
 - Are there fundamental differences between the natural and social sciences?

Methods

- Lectures; Small group discussions based on past paper questions; Marked essays; Class discussions; Videos.
- Links will be made to the study skills unit, and to the work in units 3-7 (Paper 1).

Resources

- Videos, handouts, overhead, library

Students' contribution expected

- To contribute to class discussions, to produce at least one and preferably two essays for this unit.

How assessed

- Formal assessment of essays based on past paper questions. Informal assessment via class and small group discussions.

Office use

Unit No 9: Mind and Body

This unit is intended to follow unit 8, duration 3 weeks

Description

An introduction to the philosophical debate about the nature of mind and the mind/body relationship

Purpose

- To enable Students to gain an understanding of philosophical ideas, their historical presentation and their contribution to present-day philosophical debate with relation to philosophical debate about the nature of mind and the mind/body relationship.
- To strengthen Students' capacity for analysis, critical reasoning and judgement and their ability to express themselves in these modes.

Topics covered include:

- Dualism: from Descartes to the present day
- Identity Theory
- Behaviourism
- The possibility of unconscious mental states
- Knowledge of other minds
- The possibility of the survival of disembodied consciousness

Methods

- Lectures; Small group discussions based on past paper questions; Marked essays; Class discussions; Videos.
- Links will be made to the study skills unit, and to the work in units 3-7 (Paper 1).

Resources

- Videos, handouts, overhead, library

Students' contribution expected

- To contribute to class discussions, to produce at least one and preferably two essays for this unit.

How assessed

- Formal assessment of essays based on past paper questions. Informal assessment via class and small group discussions.

Office use

Unit No 10: Revision and examination preparation

This unit is intended to be used in the latter half of the course.

Description

This unit will introduce students to examination conditions, and will encourage them to develop strategies for effective examination performance.

Purpose

- To ensure that students are aware of the assessment patterns and objectives for AEB 0661 'A' level philosophy.
- To give students the opportunity to experience timed essay writing in mock examination conditions.
- To encourage students to use knowledge and understanding that they have gained from the whole course, and to apply it to various individual topics.
- To encourage students to review their planning and time management.

Methods

- General revision would usually entail approaching a topic through representative past paper examination essays. This may be done in small groups, or by the class as a whole, and the students may nominate areas of their choice.
- Strong links will be made to the study skills components, particularly those on planning and examination technique.
- Preparations for a timed class essay could, e.g. include small group discussions in the previous regarding a particular examination topic. Students would be expected to produce a timed class essay the following week.
- At some stage a longer period may be set aside for a longer period of timed class essay.
- Links will be made to the study skills unit, and to the work in units 3-7 (Paper 1)

Resources

- Handouts, overhead, sample examination questions

Students' contribution expected

- To contribute to class and small group discussions.
- To produce timed essays

How assessed

- Formal assessment of essays timed essays. Informal assessment via class and small group discussions
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Office use