I. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisite: None
3 semester hours credit

Introduction to Philosophy is a historical survey of major Western thinkers beginning with the Ancient Greeks. The course looks at timeless questions concerning truth, beauty, reality, justice, logic, ethics, and the existence of God. This course will partially fulfill the humanities requirement for the Associate of Arts degree. (F,S)

II. GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

A. Demonstrate knowledge of central ideas of major western philosophers.

B. Explain important issues discussed by western philosophers regarding knowledge, being, God, ethics, politics, logic, and art.

C. Show awareness of the changing intellectual trends in western philosophy through the centuries.

D. Relate philosophical ideas to contemporary topics in society and issues in the student's own life.

III. COURSE OUTLINE (Course content will be drawn from this.)

A. The Ancient Period
   1. Socrates' predecessors
   2. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle

B. The Medieval Period
   1. Introduction to the medieval period
   2. St. Thomas Aquinas

C. The Modern Period
   1. The Renaissance
2. Rationalism and empiricism
3. Kant
4. Utilitarianism

D. The Contemporary Period
1. Pragmatism
2. Analytic philosophy
3. Existentialism

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

A. The Ancient Period
1. Describe the major concern of Greek philosophy at the time of Socrates' predecessors.
2. Discuss areas of disagreement between Socrates, the Sophists, and the Ionian Philosophers.
3. Show understanding of Plato's metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and political theory.
4. Identify and explain differences between Aristotle's philosophy and Plato's philosophy.

B. The Medieval Period
1. Discuss Plato's and Aristotle's influences on philosophers in the Middle Ages.
2. Understand major ideas in Aquinas' thought and identify connections between his philosophy and the philosophy of Aristotle.

C. The Modern Period
1. Contrast the Renaissance with the Middle Ages in their respective approaches to truth.
2. Trace rationalist thought from Descartes through Spinoza and Leibniz.
3. Discuss how rationalism was opposed by the empiricism of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.
4. Explain how Kant mediated between rationalism and empiricism.
5. Describe the utilitarian ethics of Bentham and Mill and contrast this approach with the ethics of Kant.

D. The Contemporary Period
1. Show knowledge of pragmatism as expressed by Peirce, James and Dewey.
2. Discuss analytic philosophy as found in the approach taken by the logical positivists.
3. Explain existentialism through the ideas of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre.

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

A. Lectures
B. Class discussions
C. Video presentations
D. Reading of textbook
E. Writing of short papers

VI. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK


VII. REQUIRED MATERIALS (STUDENT)

A. Textbook
B. Access to a typewriter/word processor

VIII. SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES

A. Library collection
B. Writing Center
C. Internet access

IX. METHODS OF EVALUATION

A. Tests and final exam
B. Short writing assignments
C. Class participation

D. Attendance

The grading scale is as follows:

90-100 = A
80-89  = B
70-79  = C
60-69  = D
Below 60 = F