

Philosophy

Course

Students will learn about philosophy as a discipline and as a means of understanding the world and their place in it. Emphasis will be placed on philosophical questions as they relate to real world issues.

Philosophy emphasizes subjecting even the most intimate beliefs to critical analysis. Students will be asked to think critically and systematically about even their most cherished beliefs. Be prepared to be challenged and to learn how to strengthen your thinking and your ability to present your ideas in a systematic, rational and empirical manner.

Themes

The course is divided up by the following themes:

- Theme 1 Epistemology: The Philosophy of Science
- Theme 2 Axiology: The Philosophy of Values
- Theme 3 Metaphysics: The Philosophy of Reality
- Theme 4 My Philosophy: On Becoming Your Own Philosopher

Textbooks

Go to mrandosciasclassroom.net for texts and information. There is not assigned text.

Expectations

This course has four themes, but is really divided up into two sections. Themes 1-3 will introduce students to the foundations of philosophical thinking and argumentation. Theme 4 will be student centered and will give students the chance to present their own philosophical conclusions and submit their thoughts to critical evaluation. This second component will require students to present a proposition, defend that proposition and to have the courage to modify their proposition in the event that it does not stand up to challenge.

There will not be many formal assignments in this class. The class will be mostly interactive, discussion/debate based and reflective. Grades will be determined based on the following criteria:

First, students will be expected to keep a “**Reflection Notebook.**” Just about every class students will be given a proposition for which they will write in their notebook their initial thoughts. As we conduct class, students will take note of any arguments or premises offered that might affirm, contradict or qualify the proposition. At the end of class, students will have time to write a reflection piece in their notebooks in which they use the arguments offered in class and their own background to draw conclusions about the proposition. Periodically, Reflection Notebooks will be graded 50% for completion and 50% for the

strength of argument on one randomly selected proposition and conclusion. Notebooks will also include some scenarios that will be assigned.

Secondly, students will be responsible for completing **two philosophical biographies** every quarter. Options and requirements for biographies will be presented at the beginning of the semesters. Students can choose any philosophers given to complete the biography. A student may also select a philosopher who is not on the list, but must get permission from me first.

Thirdly, students will be given **four assessments**, one for each theme. These assessments are open ended and students can use whatever sources they may have or find at their disposal. Assessments will be graded on the strength of the arguments offered. A rubric for judging strength can be found on the website and on Classroom.

Fourth, there may be some in-class projects that will also be added to the grade book, again based on the strength of the argument.

Time will be given in class to complete all written work. However, there will be some observational assignments that students will be expected to complete on their own time. Students may want to take notes on their observations. These notes and observations will not be graded in and of themselves, only the final reflection piece will be graded.

Consequently, it's very important for students to attend class. Missing class means missing explanations and discussions about some often complicated and confusing issues. It also means missing out on practice for presenting ideas in ways that many of us have little practice with. Understanding philosophy can improve the quality of one's thinking and ability to understand the world in constructive and meaningful ways. It's one of the strongest tools for cultivating independent thinking skills. Like all such disciplines, however, it requires practice. That practice is best done in class. North Fort Myers High attendance policy will be strictly adhered to.

In the event of a field trip, the student is expected to check the Google Classroom for any missed work. All assignments and materials can be found on Google Classroom. The student is required to turn in the work on time.

Theme 1: Epistemology

January 12: Opening Day Procedures: Why Philosophy? Introduction to Philosophy

January 14: Socratic Questioning, Logic and Thought Experiments

January 19: Inductive and Deductive Thinking: Rationalism, Empiricism, and Skepticism

January 21: Positivism: On Frankenstein's Monster

January 25: Fallacies and Fake News: What's Wrong with Social Media Arguments

January 27: Are People, by nature, warlike?

January 31: What does it mean to be free?

February 2: Who am I? Social Construction of Self or Social Construction of Reality

February 4: "Inherit the Wind"

February 8: Test Day

Theme 2: Axiology or Value Theory

February 10: How do you know you are right? The nature of values

February 14: Manichaeism: Good vs. Evil

February 16: What is a just society? John Rawls Theory on Justice

February 22: Where do Values come from?

February 24: Doing Bad Things for a Good Outcome? The Rule of Good Intentions (Killing Hitler)

February 28: Values in a multicultural world

March 2: The needs of the many: Utilitarianism

March 4: Pragmatism

March 8: What's important vs. What's necessary—The Ideal vs. The Real

March 10: When is it right to be disobedient?

March 14: Are you beautiful?

March 16: Test day

Theme 3: Metaphysics

March 28: How do I know it's real?

March 30 The Meaning of Life

April 1: What does it mean to be human? Who do you want to be?

April 5: The Life of Falcor: Is it practical?

April 7: Metaphysical Music

April 11: Mortality and Immortality

April 13: The Mind/Body Problem

April 19 Transcendentalism/Romanticism

April 21: Nothing really matters...Existentialism

April 25: On Politics: What are your political beliefs?

April 27-29: On religion: The opiate of the people?

May 3: Test Day

Theme 4: My Philosophy...

May 5-May 27: Philosophy Presentations

Final Exam: May 31-June 2 TBA