**Sample Course Outline**

Philosophy and Ethics

ATAR Year 11

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Sample course outline

Philosophy and Ethics – ATAR Year 11

Unit 1 and Unit 2

Semester 1 –Reason and persons

| **Week** | **Key teaching points** |
| --- | --- |
| 1–3 | **Content**  recognising and evaluating an argument written in natural language in terms of its premises, inferences and conclusions  recognising statements in a variety of texts as either argumentative, descriptive, narrative or explanatory   * the distinction between empirical evidence and rational proof * inductive and deductive arguments * understanding modus ponens and modus tollens * distinction between perception, rational reflection and various sources of imagination * types of inquiry: dialectic * the relationship between reason and imagination * observation and thought experiment   **Task 1: Critical reasoning**  **Key teaching points**  Critical reasoning and methods of inquiry  Premises, inferences and conclusions  Argument and analysis  Inductive and deductive arguments  Modus ponens and modus tollens  Empirical evidence and rational proof  Types of inquiry: dialectic  Observation and thought experiments  The community of inquiry (See rationale page 1 of the syllabus) |
| 4–6 | **Content**   * different ideas of human nature * concepts of action, intention, will, motives and reasons * science as a way of classifying the world and constructing our understanding of what is real in human nature * the idea of free will * the concepts of change and causation * conceptual difficulties with free will, determinism and agency (human action)   **Task 2: Philosophical analysis and evaluation (article/extract)**  **Key teaching points**  Freedom, authenticity and autonomy  Empiricism/Rationalism – Locke and Descartes  Causality and change  Hume – Problem of induction  Causation and determinism – Hobbes, Compatibilism  Thought experiments on human agency, determinism and free will |

| **Week** | **Key teaching points** |
| --- | --- |
| 7–9 | **Content**   * the concepts of mind, body and personhood * the ideas of personal identity, gender, race, class and ethnicity * the concept of being ‘an individual’ * the relationship between individuals and societies   **Task 3: Construction of argument**  **Key teaching points**  Dualism and materialism  Descartes and Hobbes  Thought experiments on the mind/body dichotomy  Locke and Hume on identity |
| 10–12 | **Content**   * the social element in individual identity * the ideas of justice, fairness and power relations, including race, gender and class * the distinction between contractual and non-contractual relationships   **Key teaching points**  Individuality and justice  Plato and justice  Aristotle and justice  Agreement, mediation and cooperation  Friendship  Contractual and non-contractual relationships |
| 13–15 | **Content**   * the concept of care * the role of principled decisions in ethics, including the Golden Rule, the greatest happiness principle, and the categorical imperative * the nature of virtues and vices and their relationship to the development of character and ethical action   **Task 4: Philosophical analysis and evaluation**  **(community of inquiry dialogue)**  **Key teaching points**  Virtue ethics  Care ethics – Milton Mayeroff, Carol Gilligan  Deontological and Consequentialist approaches to ethical decisions  Golden Rule  Utilitarianism  Kant on Ethics  The community of inquiry |
| 16 | **Task 5: Semester 1 examination** |

Semester 2 – Reason and culture

| **Week** | **Key teaching points** |
| --- | --- |
| 1–2 | **Content**   * distinguishing between strong and weak arguments, written in natural language, in terms of inferential strength and the concept of cogency * identifying the formal fallacies of denying the antecedent and affirming the consequent * the role of metaphor and analogy in inquiry * identifying some of the major informal fallacies, including the genetic fallacy, ad hominem   arguments, hasty generalisation, argument from irrelevant authority, argument from ignorance and equivocation  **Task 6: Critical reasoning**  **Key teaching points**  Strong and weak arguments (cogency)  Formal fallacies  Informal fallacies  Metaphor and analogy |
| 3–5 | **Content**   * the concept of culture, including shared values and social values * the concept of self-expression and its relation to culture * use of symbols, signs and signification (semiosis) to understand the world * use of symbols and concepts to understand the way things are   **Key teaching points**  The anthropological concept of culture  The artistic concept of culture  Symbols and semiotics – signs, signification and representation  Wittgenstein and language games – meaning as use, family resemblances, rule following and conventions, culture/custom |
| 6–7 | **Content**   * the concept of interpretation * criteria for good interpretations, including coherence, consistency, comprehensiveness and consilience * types of inquiry: hermeneutics * imagination as a necessary element in interpretation * the use of observation, hypotheses and theories in constructing explanations * the question of objectivity and subjectivity * disputes about realism and the limits of interpretation, including modernism and postmodernism   **Task 7: Philosophical analysis and evaluation (article/extract)**  **Key teaching points**  The concept of good interpretation  The relationship between text and context  Interpretation and imagination  Constructing explanations from hypothesis, observations and theory  Realism and Antirealism – Correspondence, Coherence and Pragmatic theories of truth |

| **Week** | **Key teaching points** |
| --- | --- |
| 8–9 | **Content**   * how works of art and literature help the understanding of human nature and identity * the process of interpreting works of art and literature * ideas of truth, representation and reality, and their interrelationship * aesthetic concepts, including beauty, taste and judgement * perception and aesthetic appreciation   **Task 8: Construction of argument**  **Key teaching points**  Aesthetics and the concept of beauty  Participating in beauty  Beauty and taste – Kant  Interpreting paintings, literature and/or sculpture  Indigenous beauty and truth |
| 10–13 | **Content**   * the concept of rights * freedom of expression and its limits * privacy and its limits * government interference and surveillance   **Task 9: Philosophical analysis and evaluation (community of inquiry dialogue)**  **Key teaching points**  The natural pursuit of rights – Locke  Natural rights and social rights/civil liberties  Limitations on natural rights by the community e.g. speech  Censorship and creative expression  CCTV in public spaces as security or invasion of privacy? |
| 14–15 | **Content**   * interrelationships between personhood, emotion and reason * the I-thou relationship as a fundamental element of ethics * the concept of friendship   **Key teaching points**  Types of Friendship - Aristotle and Eudemonia (Human Flourishing/Good Spirit)  Ethical Theories (Consequentialism, Deontological and Virtue Ethics – Unit 1) and the natural pursuit of eudemonia within cultures  I-thou or self/other relationships in virtue ethics |
| 16 | **Task 10: Semester 2 examination** |