**Sample Course Outline**

Philosophy and Ethics

ATAR Year 11

**Copyright**

© School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014

This document – apart from any third party copyright material contained in it – may be freely copied, or communicated on an intranet, for non-commercial purposes in educational institutions, provided that the School Curriculum and Standards Authority is acknowledged as the copyright owner, and that the Authority’s moral rights are not infringed.

Copying or communication for any other purpose can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with prior written permission of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority. Copying or communication of any third party copyright material can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with permission of the copyright owners.

Any content in this document that has been derived from the Australian Curriculum may be used under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Australia licence](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/au/)

**Disclaimer**

Any resources such as texts, websites and so on that may be referred to in this document are provided as examples of resources that teachers can use to support their learning programs. Their inclusion does not imply that they are mandatory or that they are the only resources relevant to the course.

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 inquiryPremises, inferences and conclusionsArgument and analysisInductive and deductive argumentsModus ponens and modus tollensEmpirical evidence and rational proofTypes of inquiry: dialecticObservation and thought experimentsThe 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 autonomyEmpiricism/Rationalism – Locke and DescartesCausality and changeHume – Problem of inductionCausation and determinism – Hobbes, CompatibilismThought 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 materialismDescartes and HobbesThought experiments on the mind/body dichotomyLocke 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 justicePlato and justiceAristotle and justiceAgreement, mediation and cooperationFriendshipContractual 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 ethicsCare ethics – Milton Mayeroff, Carol GilliganDeontological and Consequentialist approaches to ethical decisionsGolden RuleUtilitarianismKant on EthicsThe 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 fallaciesInformal fallaciesMetaphor 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 cultureThe artistic concept of cultureSymbols and semiotics – signs, signification and representationWittgenstein 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 interpretationThe relationship between text and contextInterpretation and imaginationConstructing explanations from hypothesis, observations and theoryRealism 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 beautyParticipating in beautyBeauty and taste – Kant Interpreting paintings, literature and/or sculptureIndigenous 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 – LockeNatural rights and social rights/civil libertiesLimitations on natural rights by the community e.g. speechCensorship and creative expressionCCTV 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 culturesI-thou or self/other relationships in virtue ethics |
| 16 | **Task 10: Semester 2 examination** |