Course Overview: Philosophy

Would you be okay with being a passenger in a self-driving taxi, if it was proven to be safer than a taxi driven by a person? How about undergoing surgery by a robot surgeon? Is it okay to torture one person if there’s a chance you might save many?

In this course, students tackle these questions and practice articulating their own personal philosophies in class discussions, debates, and writings. Students also gain an understanding of some of the major philosophers and their points of view.

Units and Activities: What will we be learning about and doing in this course?

Unit 1 What is Philosophy? Developing a worldview.
   Activities: Student presentations about influential philosophers such as Socrates, Kant, Kierkegaard, and Marx. Discuss 10 great questions. Write an essay about your philosophy.

Unit 2 What’s the Right Thing to Do?
   Activities: Debate, discuss, and write about the most just choices involving complex moral issues including affirmative action, pregnancy for hire, the military draft, taxes, and white lies.

Unit 3 Philosophy and the Environment
   Activities: Debate, discuss, and write about animal rights, and how to process philosophical ideas.

Standards: What knowledge and skills will I gain by the end of this course?

This course will assess the knowledge and skills students build in key Anchor Standards and Content Standards.

Anchor Standards:

Sourcing: Who is giving me this information? Why does it matter?
Arguing and Explaining: How can I use what I know to inform and persuade others?
Taking Action: How can I use my ideas to impact the world around me?
Speaking and Listening: How can I share and grow my ideas through respectful dialogue?

Content Standards: This course builds student knowledge using the C3 standards. The content standards for Philosophy are:

D2.Civ.8.9-12. Evaluate social and political systems in different contexts, times, and places, that promote civic virtues and enact democratic principles.

D2.Civ.9.9-12. Use appropriate deliberative processes in multiple settings.
D2.Civ.10.9-12. Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

Assessment of Learning

Assessment Types:
Three types of assessments will be used to determine if you have gained the necessary knowledge and skills of this course: Formative assessments, Summative assessments, and Habits of Work for Learning. Each is briefly described below:

Formative Assessments: *Formative = Forming my knowledge and skills.* Formative Assessments receive a weight of .1 in the overall grade. Formative assessments are information for teachers, students, and parents on the progress students are making as they practice gaining knowledge and skills found in Anchor Standards. Teachers use the results of these assessments as data to understand individual student learning needs, adjust instructional pathways, and modify lessons to help students better meet course standards. Students use the results of these assessments to determine how they are progressing and to plan steps to ensure their success.

Summative Assessments: *Summative = Summation of my knowledge and skills.* Summative Assessments can receive three different weights: 1, 1.5, or 2 depending on the size of the assessment, and therefore have the greatest impact on the Overall Course Mastery Grade. Summative assessments are used as a measure of independent student achievement in Anchor Standards. Throughout this course, summative assessments provide benchmark student achievement data. A summative assessment will always have clear scoring criteria (4-point scale) for students to understand how they are performing.

Habits of Work for Learning: Habits of Work for Learning (HOWLs) are skills and dispositions that are essential to the learning process but do not provide evidence of what a student knows or can do in relation to content. WUHSM teachers work to foster Habits of Work for Learning in three categories: preparation, participation, and perseverance.

Assessment Scoring:
Teachers will provide framing for summative assessment scores using proficiency level scoring criteria similar to the example below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anchor Standard: Writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Standards:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</td>
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</tbody>
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| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8 |
| • Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation. |

| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9 |
| • Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. |
A range of scores are available at each proficiency level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Possible Assessment Scores w/ Letter Grade Equivalency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>1.0 (Not Passing) 1.3 (Not Passing) 1.7 (C-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching</td>
<td>2 (C) 2.3 (C+) 2.7 (B-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>3 (B) 3.3 (B+) 3.7 (A-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished</td>
<td>4.0 (A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOWL Scoring:
HOWLs will be scored at least once per checkpoint, and will be based on the frequency with which students demonstrate each of the habits: preparation, participation, and perseverance.

How is my Overall Course Grade Determined?
Overall course grades will be reported as letter grades and will be comprised of:

- Formative & Summative Scores: 95%
- HOWLs: 5%

For more information, please see the WUHSMS student handbook.

Communication:
How Do I Know My Grades?
- On Summative Assessments, a teacher will provide both a 4-point grade and a letter grade.
- You can monitor your progress in the following ways:
  - By reading feedback and scoring returned to students on summative assessments
  - By monitoring the scores and Overall Course Mastery Grade in the Parent/Student portal on JumpRope
  - By monitoring the grades sent home quarterly through report cards

Where Can I Find This Syllabus during the School Year?
This syllabus will be available on the school website in each subject’s department tab once the school year is up and running.

**How Do I See What’s Due?**
- Summative assessment due dates and handouts are posted to the blue “Upcoming Assessment” section of the JumpRope Parent/Student Portal on or before the day they are assigned to students.

**How Do I See What’s Past Due?**
- If a student is missing an assessment, it will be listed in the red “Missing Assessment” section of the JumpRope Parent/Student Portal along with any attachments.

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**Materials:**
I will provide a copy of *Justice* by Michael Sandel.

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**Schoolwide Procedures:**

**Due Dates and Deadlines:** This class will follow the procedures outlined in the student handbook.

**Extra Credit/Retaking Assessments:** This class will follow the procedures outlined in the student handbook.

**Personal Mobile Devices:** This class will follow the procedures outlined in the student handbook.

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**Classroom Expectations:**

**Vibe:** Students should arrive ready to engage and help lead the learning. As with much in life, you will get out of this class what you put into it.

**Respect:** Topics in class can be sensitive, and generate strong emotions. I ask students to work especially hard to listen, respect, and consider points of view that are different from their own.

**Due dates:** Submit work on time. In some classes, the majority of homework will consist of preparing presentations. Be mindful of your date to present, which will usually be posted on the board.

**Phones:** Phones should be set in the charger, or in backpacks.

**Laptops:** If you have a laptop, please bring it to class. I have one spare laptop; otherwise you will have to borrow a laptop from the technology center.

**Plagiarism:** We will have a class discussion on this topic. A first offense results, in a minimum, with a zero on the assignment and a note to the Dean of Students and parents.
Pencils: If you have a writing utensil, please bring it to class. I will have extra pencils, but if you borrow one, I ask that you leave it in the jar at the end of class.