



**DAVIS UNIVERSITY**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**SSC120: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY I**  
**SUMMER QUARTER 2025**

**QUARTER:** SUMMER QUARTER 2025

**COURSE SYLLABUS FOR:** SSC120 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY I

**CREDIT HOURS:** 5 CREDITS

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**INSTRUCTOR EMAIL:**

**INSTRUCTOR OFFICE HOURS:**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course studies the fundamental philosophical problems and concepts. Speculation about limits of human understanding, value judgments, foundations of morality and speculation about the existence of God in order to present students with the tools for constructing their own philosophy.

**TEXT:** No Text: All readings can be found online, links and/or copies of the assigned text will be provided.

**LATE WORK POLICY:** All students are expected to submit homework assignments electronically on the date specified on the syllabus. No late homework will be accepted and the student will receive a "0" (zero) for the homework assignment. Should the student refuse to complete the assigned work for the class, it could result in the student failing the class. All work assigned is expected to be completed on the date assigned. The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary. Please be sure to check your email/Moodle for any changes to the schedule.

**PLAGIARISM AND COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT POLICY:** Work that is found to be plagiarized receives a grade of zero and often causes a student to fail a class. Documentation of plagiarism is added to the student's academic file as a violation of accepted student conduct and is subject to disciplinary action. Plagiarism is the use of another person's exact words, or their ideas written in the student's words without giving the original author credit.

Plagiarism can result from any of the following:

- Quote material directly without using quotation marks.
- Paraphrase the original so that many of the phrases are the same as the original. A good rule is no more than 3 or 4 words in a row should be the same as the original.
- Copy the original sentence pattern, substitution synonyms for key words.
- Neglect to indicate the source of the original material.

## **ASSESSMENTS:**

### Content

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Written reflection	40%
Discussions	20%
Exams	40%
Total	100 %

**COURSE GRADE: A = 93%-100%**

**B = 85%-92%**

**C = 77%-84%**

**D = 70%-76%**

**F = below 70%**

## TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE:

(Subject to change)

Week: Date	Content Covered	Assignments & Assessment Due
Week 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Bertrand Russel</b> "The Value of Philosophy" (Selected Excerpt)</li> <li>➤ <b>Plato</b> "The Republic" (Selected Excerpts)</li> <li>➤ <b>Rene' Descartes</b> "Meditations I and II" (1641)</li> <li>➤ <b>John Locke</b> "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (Selected Excerpts) (1689)</li> <li>➤ <b>George Berkeley</b> "Principles of Human Knowledge" (Selected Excerpts)</li> </ul>	Discussion 1 - Thursday
Week 2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>David Hume</b> "A Treatise of Human Nature" Book I, Part IV, Section VI (1739 - 1740)</li> <li>➤ <b>John Locke</b> "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (Selected Excerpts)</li> <li>➤ <b>Marya Schechtman</b> "Personal Identity and the Past" (Selected Excerpts)</li> <li>➤ <b>Descartes</b> "Meditations" (Selected Excerpts)</li> <li>➤ <b>Daniel Dennett</b> "Where Am I?"</li> <li>➤ <b>Ifeanyi Menkiti</b> "African Personhood"</li> </ul>	Discussion 2 - Thursday
Week 3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Immanuel Kant</b> "Critique of Pure Reason" (Selected Excerpts or an overview) (1781)</li> <li>➤ <b>Jeremy Bentham</b> "An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation"</li> <li>➤ <b>John Stuart Mill</b> "Utilitarianism"</li> <li>➤ <b>Aristotle</b> "Nicomachean Ethics"</li> <li>➤ <b>Nietzsche</b> "Genealogy of Morals"</li> <li>➤ <b>John Leslie (J.L) Mackie</b> "Problem of Evil"</li> <li>➤ <b>Blaise Pascal</b> "The Wager"</li> <li>➤ <b>James and Stuart Rachels</b> "Critique of Cultural Relativism"</li> </ul>	Discussion 3 - Thursday Midterm Exam- Friday
Week 4:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Baron d'holbach</b> "Systems of Nature"</li> <li>➤ <b>Walter Terence Stace</b> "The Problem of Free Will"</li> <li>➤ <b>Thomas Hobbes</b> "Leviathan" (Selected Excerpts) (1651)</li> <li>➤ <b>John Locke</b> "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (Selected Excerpts)</li> <li>➤ <b>John Rawls</b> "A theory of Justice" (Selected Excerpts)</li> </ul>	Discussion 4 - Thursday

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Garrett Hardin</b> “Lifeboat Ethics”</li> <li>➤ <b>Richard Rorty</b> “Justice as Loyalty”</li> <li>➤ <b>Martin Luther King, Jr.</b>, from "Letter from Birmingham Jail"</li> <li>➤ <b>Malcolm X</b> Speech on civil rights/human rights</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Week 5:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Judith Jarvis</b> on Abortion and <b>David Benatar</b> on Anti-natalism (Personhood, ethics, existence, rights)</li> <li>➤ <b>Thought experiment</b> on theft of unclaimed items (ethics, ownership, socio- political)</li> <li>➤ <b>Wertheimer</b> on Societies without police and <b>Beccaria</b> on Criminal Justice and Capital Punishment</li> <li>➤ <b>Michael Sandel</b> on Human Enhancements</li> </ul>	<p>Discussion 5 - Thursday Final Exam - Friday</p>