

## Course Outline

<b>Course number</b>	<b>RBE206</b>					
Course title	Philosophy					
Credit points	3 ECTS (2 CP)					
Total hours	30					
Lecture hours	16					
Seminar and other hours	14					
Course level	Bachelor					
Prerequisites	None					
Category	Mandatory		<b>Restricted elective</b>	<b>X</b>	Free elective	

### COURSE RESPONSIBLE

<i>Name</i>	<i>Academic degree</i>	<i>Academic position</i>
Signe Mežinska	Dr.sc.soc. MPhil., MSc (Bioethics)	Visiting Professor

### COURSE ABSTRACT

The course is an introduction to the problems and methods of philosophy. It starts with some general considerations on the nature and methods of philosophy. Further, the course will examine some of the most influential philosophical problems in the areas of epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, political philosophy and ethics, such as: What is knowledge? Do we have free will? Are any of our actions within our control? Are we responsible for our actions? What is the relationship between the mind and the body? When are our actions right or wrong? What is justice?

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

The aim of the course is to provide an introduction to fundamental problems of Western philosophy.

Objectives of the course are:

- 1) to introduce students to the major areas of philosophy: epistemology, philosophy of mind, metaphysics, moral philosophy and political philosophy;
- 2) to introduce students to some of the major thinkers and traditions in the history of philosophy;
- 3) to explore some of the fundamental philosophical problems discussed in classic and contemporary literature;
- 4) to enhance students' skills to analyse and interpret philosophical texts and formulate original criticisms;
- 5) to enhance students' abilities to recognize and construct logical arguments, as well as evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical arguments.

## GRADING CRITERIA

Criteria	Weighting
Exam	40%
Two written assignments (1000 words each)	40%
Class participation (participation involves both attendance and sharing arguments with classmates).	20%

## COURSE PLAN – MAIN SUBJECTS

No.	Main subjects	Planned hours
1	Introduction. What is philosophy?	2
2	Epistemology	4
3	Philosophy of mind. The mind/body problem	4
4	The problem of free will	4
5	The problem of the self	4
6	Moral philosophy	4
7	Political philosophy	4
8	Justice	4

## COURSE PLAN – SESSIONS

Session	Session subjects and readings	Lecture/seminar
1	<b>Course introduction and overview.</b> What is philosophy? Overview of the major areas of philosophy.	Lecture
2	<b>Epistemology.</b> Theories of knowledge. Knowledge of the external world. Scientific knowledge. Theories of truth.	Lecture
3	What is philosophy? Epistemology. <i>Readings: Blackburn, Introduction and Chapter 1</i>	Seminar
4	<b>Philosophy of mind.</b> Overview of philosophy of mind. The mind/body problem. Dualism and physicalism (behaviourism, identity theory, functionalism).	Lecture
5	The mind/body problem <i>Readings: Blackburn, Chapter 2</i>	Seminar
6	<b>The problem of free will.</b> Freedom of the will and determinism. Free will and moral responsibility.	Lecture
7	The problem of free will. <i>Readings: Blackburn, Chapter 3</i>	Seminar
8	<b>The self.</b> The problem of personal identity. Theories of personal identity.	Lecture
9	The self <i>Readings: Blackburn, Chapter 4</i>	Seminar
10	<b>Moral philosophy.</b> Normative ethical theories: virtue ethics, deontological ethics, consequentialism. Applied ethics.	Lecture
11	Moral philosophy <i>Readings: 1. Singer, Voluntary Euthanasia: A Utilitarian Perspective 2. Thomson, A Defence of Abortion</i>	Seminar

<b>Session</b>	<b>Session subjects and readings</b>	<b>Lecture/seminar</b>
12	<b>Political philosophy.</b> Political institutions and obligations. Justification of the state and anarchist alternatives. Liberalism and its critics.	Lecture
13	Political philosophy <i>Readings: Wolff, Chapter 4</i>	Seminar
14	<b>Justice.</b> Theories of retributive justice. Theories of distributive justice. Rawls's theory of justice as fairness.	Lecture
15	Justice <i>Readings: Wolff, Chapter 5</i>	Seminar

#### **COURSE LITERATURE**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Author, title, publisher</b>
1	Blackburn S. <i>Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy</i> . Oxford University Press, 2001.
2	Wolff J. <i>An Introduction to Political Philosophy</i> . Oxford University Press, 2006.
3	Singer, P. (2003) Voluntary Euthanasia: A Utilitarian Perspective. <i>Bioethics</i> 17(5-6):526-41.
4	Thomson, J. (1971) A Defence of Abortion. <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> 1 (1):47