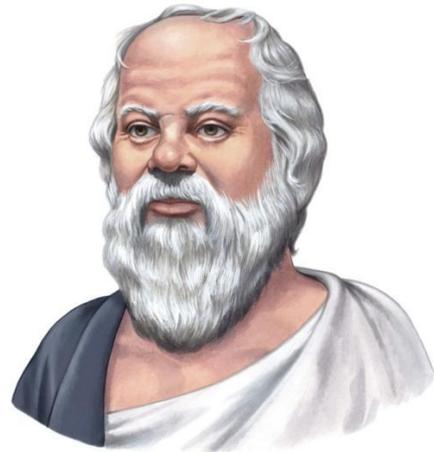


AQA Philosophy – Course Introduction

2020-2022

“The unexamined life is not worth living.” Socrates

Welcome to A-Level Philosophy! The first thing to know about Philosophy is that you cannot just come in and be a philosopher straight away. Philosophy requires you to develop basic skills before applying them to different branches of the subject. As Aristotle says, you need to develop the skills through practice and hard work. The course is designed to equip you with the skills of writing, evaluating and critiquing arguments before looking at some of the most significant areas of Philosophy. In other words, this is a course in arguing!



Course Outline

The course is split into four units. We will cover two of these each year, one with Mr. Cooper and one with Miss Welton. Although they are all separate areas of Philosophy, some key concepts, philosophers and key skills crossover.

Year 1

Moral Philosophy

- *Normative Ethics – Utilitarianism, Kantian Ethics, Aristotelean Virtue Ethics*
- *Applied Ethics – telling lies, stealing, simulated killing, eating animals*
- *Metaethics – ethical language*



Epistemology – Philosophy of Knowledge

- *What is knowledge?*
- *Perception as a source of knowledge*
- *Reason as a source of knowledge*



Year 2

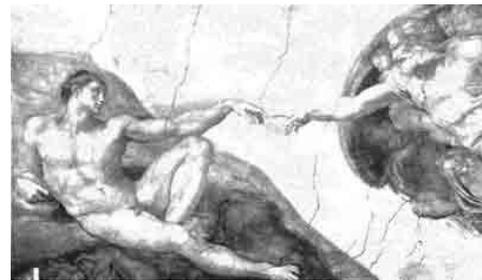
Metaphysics of Mind

- *What do we mean by mind?*
- *Dualism – mind and body are separate*
- *Physicalism – mind and body are one*
- *Functionalism*



Metaphysics of God

- *Concept and nature of God*
- *Arguments for and against the existence of God*
- *Religious language*



How will it be examined?

Paper 1: Epistemology and Moral Philosophy

How it's assessed

- Written exam: 3 hours
- 50% of A-level

Questions

- Section A: Five questions on epistemology
- Section B: Five questions on moral philosophy

Paper 2: The metaphysics of God and the metaphysics of mind

How it's assessed

- Written exam: 3 hours
- 50% of A-level

Questions

- Section A: Five questions on the metaphysics of God
- Section B: Five questions on the metaphysics of mind

Expectations

Make no mistake, this is a challenging and academic course and we expect a lot of you and you have the right to have high expectations of us too.

Expectations of you

- Be present and active in lessons
- Come to all lessons fully prepared with folders and equipment
- Complete all home learning and regular independent study tasks

- Use your textbook to confirm understanding of a topic after a lesson
- Hand in all work on time and to the best of your ability
- Ask for our help! Communication is key to your progress

Expectations of us

- Plan interesting and engaging lessons
- Provide accessible resources to allow you to succeed and thrive
- Model how to answer exam questions, provide clear guidance and feedback and actively work with you on how to improve
- Be there to answer questions outside of lessons and be regularly available via email or Teams

Home Learning and Independent Study

Home Learning will be set regularly and time guidance will be given. There is also an expectation that you complete a minimum of three pieces of Independent Study per half term. We will give you options and ideas for independent study as well as provide you with a reading list to work from. The Philosophy section in the library is also a good port of call.

How will I learn?

Philosophy lessons centre around discussion and dialogue. Socrates believed that the most significant learning comes through debate, and so do we. The quality of these debates and discussions relies on you having a good knowledge and understanding of the course. This will come through a combination of challenging home learning tasks, independent study and lesson powerpoints. Most lessons will be printed off for you and will be immediately available via our gcs_pre page on wakelet.com. If you want to see what some of the lessons look like, sign up to Wakelet and search for our gcs_pre.

We also want you to succeed in your exam and so there will be a significant emphasis throughout the year on exam questions and essay writing, with us providing guidance, live modelling and exemplars, you writing answers and then working actively on our feedback.

Finally, it is essential that you have organised folders! You will need a day-to-day folder, which will contain your most recent topic of study and two large home folders per year, with sub-dividers, which will contain all of your work. Your folders will also have essay feedback, independent study and wider reading tracking sheets.

Resources

Primary Textbooks and Resources

Lacewing, M. – AQA Philosophy (Year 1) – Routledge

Hayward – AQA Philosophy (Year 1) – Hodder Education

www.wakelet.com – GCS_PRE

Dimmock, M. and Fisher, A. – Ethics for A-Level (free ebook)

<https://books.openedition.org/obp/4401?lang=en>

Extra Websites

The Guardian – Philosophy (philosophy in the news)

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (introductory)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (advanced)

Podcasts

'Philosophy Bitesize' Nigel Warburton

'In Our Time – Philosophy' BBC Radio 4

Further Reading

General:-

Warburton, N. [*Philosophy: the Basics*](#) (5th ed.), Routledge 2012: the most popular and enduring introduction of them all

- [Baggini, J. Philosophy: Key Themes, Palgrave MacMillan 2002](#): written for the A Level
- Vardy, P 'The Puzzle of Ethics' and The Puzzle of God'

Epistemology:-

- Carruthers, P. *Human Knowledge and Human Nature*, OUP 1992: on the origin of concepts and nature of knowledge
- [Cole, P. *The Theory of Knowledge*, Hodder & Stoughton 2002: very accessible, but a little thin](#)
- [Dancy, J. & Sosa, E. *A Companion to Epistemology*, Blackwell 1997](#): an excellent encyclopaedic reference work with an astonishing amount of useful material about different aspects of the subject in one volume

Moral Philosophy:-

- [Singer, P. \(ed.\) *A Companion to Ethics*, Blackwell 1991: an irreplaceable resource](#). Each essay, written for the beginner, is an excellent survey of a single topic.

We are excited to see you in September!

All the best,

Miss Welton and Mr Cooper