

SEMESTER 1, ACADEMIC SESSION 2022-23
HFF 225: PHILOSOPHY AND CURRENT ISSUES
COURSE DESCRIPTION

Synopsis:

Topics to be covered in this course include the relation between philosophy and the National Education Philosophy and Rukun Negara. Philosophy is used as a tool to refine the culture of thought in life through the art and methods of thinking as well as through our understanding of the concept of the human person. Key branches in philosophy, namely epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics, are discussed in the context of current issues. Emphasis is given to philosophy as the basis for inter-cultural dialogue and for fostering common values. At the end of this course, students will be able to see the disciplines of study as a comprehensive and integrated body of knowledge.

Week (mon.–fri.)	Topic	Instructor
1st (18 Oct. 2022)	Introduction - What is philosophy? Malaysia's Rukun Negara; Malaysia's National Education Philosophy	Izzaty
2nd (25 Oct. 2022)	Philosophy and life	
3rd (1 Nov. 2022)	Methods of thinking (I)	
4th (8 Nov. 2022)	Methods of thinking (II)	
5th (15 Nov. 2022)	Psychology and sociology (I)	
6th (22 Nov. 2022)	Psychology and sociology (II)	
7th (29 Nov. 2022)	Metaphysics (I)	
8th (5-11 Dec. 2022)	MID-SEMESTER BREAK	
9th (13 Dec. 2022)	Metaphysics (II)	Peter
10th (20 Dec. 2022)	Epistemology (I)	
11th (27 Dec. 2022)	Epistemology (II)	
12th (3 Jan. 2023)	Some systems of philosophy (I)	
13th (10 Jan. 2023)	Some systems of philosophy (II)	
14th (17 Jan. 2023)	Selected case study – philosophy and current issues	
15th 24 Jan. 2023	Overall conclusion	

The lecture materials for the above topics will be uploaded to the e-learning portal according to the arranged weekly schedule. Kindly note that these materials are not to be shared with individuals who are not involved in this course.

Assessments:

Course work 100% -- distribution:

Test (30%)

[based on content of the lectures]

Quiz (10%)

[based on content of the lectures]

online assessments; individual work

Essay (30%) and Presentation (30%)—conducted in each school, and is assessed and given marks separately, one for the essay and another for the presentation (the highest marks for each of these components -- 30)—by the course lecturers who have each been assigned to supervise one group of around five students. However, it is understood and accepted that the number of students in a group will depend on the student–lecturer ratio in the school. Both local and international students will see their essay and presentation projects to completion in their respective schools. **Research on the topic selected by a group should yield an Essay** (typed-written paper of around 3,000 words, replete with citations) **and one oral Presentation** (material in the essay is to be presented by the group).

The work for the two assignment components above ought to be evenly divided among group members. Every group member will receive the same pair of marks, one for the essay and one for the presentation.

The lecturer assigned to supervise a group should convene meetings, either in-person or virtually, at his or her own discretion. The group presentation can be conducted with physical presence or through a synchronous online session.

Suggested marking rubric:

ESSAY

	Assessment criteria	Weightage (% of 30 marks)	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Maximum marks
			(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	
1.	Title – interesting and relevant	10	Uninteresting and too general	Interesting, but too general	Interesting and specific	Interesting, specific, unique, reflective of an impressive research	3
2.	Descriptive – sufficient and relevant data	30	Insufficient	Sufficient, but there are veracity issues	Sufficient data collected with no veracity	Sufficient, veridical, relevant, and	9

				with some data	issues	interconnected data	
3.	Organization of text	10	Chaotic	Organized, but too few sections	Organized and adequate number of sections	Organized structure with coherently connected sections.	3
4.	Scholarly level of analysis, reasonable and consistent arguments	30	Devoid of analysis; solely descriptive	Shallow analysis	Suitable and sufficient analysis	Profound analysis with sophisticated and balanced arguments.	9
5.	Citation format that is consistent and fitting.	10	Absolutely no citations	Has citations, but there are sources used without being cited	Good citation format, but the list is a bit thin	Good format, consistent and possessing adequate and suitable resources.	3
6	Accuracy of spelling and grammar	10	Many mistakes in spelling and grammar	Few mistakes in spelling and grammar.	Accuracy of spelling and grammar	No mistakes, with an impressive and scholarly writing style.	3
	Total	100					30marks

PRESENTATION

	Assessment criteria	Weightage (% of 30 marks)	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Maximum marks
			(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	
1	Title – interesting and relevant	10	Uninteresting and too general	Interesting, but too general	Interesting and specific	Interesting, specific, unique, reflective of an impressive research	3
2	Visual appeal and organization of material	20	No visual appeal at all	Sufficiently appealing but there are issues with organization of material	Interesting and appealing to the audience	High visual appeal with well ordered organization of material	6
3	Delivery skills	30	No visible interest in the work	Average delivery	Clear and coherent delivery	Clear and coherent delivery, able to sustain the audience's interest	9
4	Content – accurately reflective of research	20	Many irrelevant data	Fairly reflective of research output, but	Covered most of the information from the	Comprehensive, clear, and well-organized delivery of	6

	output			there are some unclear information presented	research output	information	
5	Group dynamics	20	No cooperation among members of the group	Every group member participates, but there are one or two who only read aloud from the text	Clearly visible that adequate preparations were put into this activity	Cooperative group work aimed at delivering their research in a well-organized and interesting manner	6
	Total	100					30marks

Proposed activity schedule for the assignment set (Essay and Presentation) at your respective Schools:

WEEK (mon.-fri.)	ACTIVITY
3 rd (31 Oct. - 4 Nov. 2022)	Appointment of supervisors for groups. Discussions among group members and supervisor to finalize an assignment topic.
4 th (7-11 Nov. 2022)	
5 th (14-18 Nov. 2022)	Research work, writing the essay
6 th (21-25 Nov. 2022)	
7 th (28 Nov. - 2 Dec. 2022)	
8 th (5-11 Dec. 2022)	MID-TERM BREAK
9 th (12-16 Dec. 2022)	Oral Presentation of research output (assessment marks given by supervisor - based solely on this presentation). Supervisor provides feedback to the group.
10 th (19-23 Dec. 2022)	Finalizing the written essay
11 th (26-30 Dec. 2022)	THE GROUP SUBMITS A SINGLE ESSAY TO THE SUPERVISOR.
12 th (2-6 Jan. 2023)	Supervisor evaluates and marks the essay
13 th (9-13 Jan. 2023)	Supervisor hands in the marks to his or her School. Two sets of marks – one for the presentation, and one for the essay. Plus the aggregate marks. Every student in the group receives the same

	pair of marks.
14 th (16-20 Jan. 2023)	After receiving students' marks for the test and quiz, and adding these marks to the essay and presentation marks, the overall GRADE (in alphabet form A, B+, B, B-, C, etc.) of every student is keyed into the system at the respective Schools.
15 th (23-27 Jan. 2023)	

Main objectives of this assignment:

- To encourage students to think deeply about a current issue that has some impact on human existence.
- To provide an opportunity for students to work collaboratively in projects aimed at building their knowledge and analytical skills revolving around the study of the above issue.

Suggested topics for the assignment:

- (1) An issue concerning education – main objectives; its relation to the provision of fair opportunities for citizens from different socio-economic strata.
- (2) Students' thoughts on the discipline of philosophy.
- (3) Appreciation of the arts – its significance to human flourishing.
- (4) The significance of critical thinking to the self and nation.
- (5) Is “meaning of life” something that is important and given serious thought by our university students?
- (6) Discuss a local political issue.
- (7) Religion and society.
- (8) Students' reflections on the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (9) A discussion on environmental ethics.
- (10) An examination of and discussion on artificial intelligence.
- (11) The fourth industrial revolution and its impact on society.
- (12) A contemporary issue that has reasonably broad and profound social consequences, which is proposed by the group of students intending to undertake its research, and approved by the lecturer.

Note: the research can entail an empirical data collection or one that is purely theoretical, requiring analyses of concepts and the building of arguments.

Selected main references:

- Collinson, D., K. Plant, R. Wilkinson. (2000). *Fifty Eastern thinkers*. London: Routledge.
- Haldane, J. (2009). *Practical philosophy: Ethics, society and culture*. Exeter: Imprint Academic.
- Kessler, G.E. (2015). *Voices of wisdom: A multicultural philosophy reader* (9th ed). Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Pigliucci, M., S.C. Cleary, and D.A. Kaufman (eds.). (2020). *How to Live a Good Life: A Guide to Choosing Your Personal Philosophy*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Pojman, L.P. (2006). *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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