

Curriculum Guide

Name of Course: Principles of Philosophy

Written/Revised: 2009

Course Number: 265.01

Number of Credits: 5

Level of Course: CP- A

Grade Level Offered: 11,12

Prerequisite: none

Course Description:

History of Philosophy has been designed as an elective Social Studies course. The course is available for students in grades 11 and 12; the course is available for the academic/ honors level. The course will examine and discuss the philosophical beliefs and ideas from the origins of human civilization to modern times; there will be an emphasis on western philosophy, beginning with the Greeks. The beginning of philosophy is the faculty of wonder; it is through this concept that the course will unfold. We will read and discuss the seminal works that address the major questions that have both fascinated and plagued humanity: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where did the world come from? Does God exist? Can we understand the world in which we live? What is the role of science and religion in the realm of philosophy? Do I have free will? Upon what do I base my morality? Is there morality? Logic and illogic, Etc.

Core Curriculum Content Standards Addressed:

Standard 6.1 (Social Studies Skills) All students will utilize historical thinking, problem solving, and research skills to maximize their understanding of Civics, History, Geography, and Economics.

Standard 6.2 (Civics) All students will know, understand and appreciate the values and principles of American Democracy and the rights, responsibilities, and roles of a citizen in the nation and the world.

Standard 6.3 (World History) all students will demonstrate knowledge of world history in order to understand life and events in the past and how they relate to the present and the future.

Course Outline/ Timeline:

Marking Period 1

Unit 1—Introduction to Philosophy, Logic and Wonder

Unit Goals

Goals include the following:

1) to examine the origins of philosophy; 2) to describe the effect of thought, philosophy and wonder on early civilization; 3) to describe the relationship between philosophy and science, art, religion and math; 4) to question the fundamentals we normally take for granted; 5) to examine the question of the existence of God and all requisite moral structures; 6) to consider the existence of ourselves, our world and our universe and the implications inherent in our beliefs.

Unit Objectives

OBJECTIVES

measured by: participation and quizzes

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the concept of wonder in philosophy.
2. Understand why one should study philosophy
3. Demonstrate an understanding of what philosophy is and why it originated.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural, religious and ethnic impact on philosophical thought.
5. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the various processes of assimilation and pluralism and their effect on the philosophy of civilizations.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of philosophy on history, today and the future.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic ideas of philosophy.

We will address the following questions: Who are you? Where did the world come from? Does God exist? Does morality exist? Upon what do we base ethics? Is there shared experience? Etc...

We will view the film ***Waking Life*** as a preliminary examination of the myriad philosophies which will be discussed throughout the year.

Unit 2—The Greeks and their World

- * Before Socrates
- * Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
- * The Cynics, Sceptics, Epicureans and Stoics

We will view the film ***The Matrix*** as a direct corollary to Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*.

Unit Goals

Goals include the following:

1) to examine the impact of the early Greeks on all subsequent philosophical schools of thought; 2) to understand the impact of both Plato and Aristotle; 3) to differentiate between Plato's Rationalism and Aristotle's Empiricism; 4) to consider the various Greek philosophical arguments and discoveries; 5) to examine why the post-Aristotelian philosophical movement ends in relativism; 6) to consider the impact of the later-Hellenistic philosophical schools of thought.

Unit Objectives

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of ancient Greece in the origins of philosophy.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the philosophies of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle and their far-reaching influence.
3. Understand why the philosophies of the Hellenic world are replaced by the more cosmopolitan world-view of the Hellenistic world.
4. The students will differentiate between Rationalism and Empiricism.
5. The students will understand the impact of global intercourse on the relative aspects of philosophy.

Unit 3—Christianity and Philosophy

- * Saint Augustine
- * Medieval Philosophy

Unit Goals

Goals include the following:

- 1) To consider the role of Christianity as a monotheistic reaction to the Roman polytheism;
- 2) to examine how a small Jewish cult could overtake the mightiest empire on earth;
- 3) to consider the philosophical impact of the belief on Christianity on the early Medieval world;
- 4) to examine the role of the Church on Medieval thought and life;
- 5) to differentiate between the philosophies of Augustine and Aquinas.

Unit Objectives

1. The students will understand the role of Christianity in changing the philosophy of western civilization.
2. Students will examine the impact of the Church on Medieval thought.
3. Students will understand the basic concepts of medieval philosophy.
4. Students will examine the differences between the philosophies of Augustine and Aquinas.
5. Students will understand the impact of Dante on the modern notion of hell and purgatory.

Marking Period 2

Unit 4—The Beginnings of Modern Science

- * Copernicus
- * Newton
- * Machiavelli
- * Francis Bacon
- * Hobbes

Unit Goals

Goals include the following:

- 1) to consider the role of science as a paradigm shift in the thinking of western man;
- 2) to discuss the worldview of science in relation to that of the Church;
- 3) to understand why science replaces mysticism and superstition to become the foundation for western man's answers to life's most fundamental questions;
- 4) to examine the different philosophies and impact of the following seminal scientific figures: Machiavelli, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton,

Bacon, Hobbes etc.; 5) to consider the beginning of political philosophy as manifest in the philosophies of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke.

Unit Objectives

1. The students will understand why science replaces the worldview of the church as the most compelling answer to philosophical questions.
2. The students will examine the philosophies of early scientific mavericks and their impact on the modern world.
3. Students will discuss, evaluate and consider the fundamental challenges that science poses to religious faith, philosophy and institutions.
4. Students will understand the differences in political philosophies between Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke.

Unit 5—The Great Rationalists

- * Descartes
- * Spinoza
- * Leibniz

Unit Goals

Goals include the following:

1) to explain the influence of Rene Descartes on the history of modern philosophy; 2) to consider the similarities between the three most prominent continental rationalist: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz; 3) to explain the concept of *Cogito ergo sum*; 4) to evaluate the concept of absolute truth and fundamental laws as the starting point for all epistemological knowledge.

Unit Objectives

1. The students will understand why the continental impact of Rationalism as a neo-modern response to Platonic philosophy.
2. The students will examine the philosophies of each of the great rationalists and evaluate their basic themes.
3. Students will discuss, evaluate and consider the concept foundational philosophies.
4. Students will understand how mathematics is a starting point for each of the continental rationalists.
5. The students will evaluate the major themes of rationalism.

Marking Period 3

Unit 6—The Great Empiricists

- * Locke
- * Berkeley
- * Hume
- * Burke

Unit Goals

Goals include the following:

1) To explain how neo-empiricists are the modern manifestation of the Aristotelian world view; 2) to consider the similarities between the four most prominent British empiricists: Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Burke; 3) to explain the concept of modern liberalism as espoused in the philosophy of John Locke; 4) to present the idea that all is relative to the observer as a concept; 5) to explain the differences between rationalism and empiricism.

Unit Objectives

1. The students will be able to differentiate the salient themes of Rationalism and Empiricism.
2. The students will define empiricism.
3. The students will understand the role of experience in the philosophy of the empiricists.
4. The students will evaluate the impact of empiricism on the political landscape of 18th century Europe, especially its role in the Enlightenment.

Unit 7—Revolutionary French Thinkers

- * Voltaire
- * Diderot
- * Rousseau

Unit Goals

Goals include the following:

1) To explain the salient themes of the Enlightenment; 2) to consider the concept of the Encyclopedia Century; 3) to consider the role of satire in the process of social and revolutionary change; 4) to differentiate between the philosophies of Voltaire and Rousseau; 5) to present the concepts of deism, liberalism, and neo-classicism in the age of reason.

Unit Objectives

1. The students will understand the impact of the Age of Reason as a paradigm shift in intellectual, social and political history.
2. The students will evaluate the role of art and literature as a manifestation of the *zeitgeist* of a certain era.
3. The students will understand the growing political, social and economic power of the middle class as manifest during the 18th century.
4. The students will be able to differentiate between the characteristics of Rococo, Neo-Classical and Romantic art and literature.
5. The students will understand and express the impact of science and the scientific revolution on the revolutionary philosophies of the Enlightenment.

Unit 8—A Golden Century of German Philosophy

- * Kant
- * Schopenhauer
- * Some comparisons of East and West
- * Fichte

- * Schelling
- * Hegel
- * Marx
- * Nietzsche

Unit Goals

Goals include the following:

1) To address the role of Immanuel Kant as the synthesizer of the rationalists and the empiricists; 2) to explain Kant's concept of the Categorical Imperative; 3) to explain Schopenhauer's philosophy as it relates to eastern religious philosophy; 4) Schopenhauer's legacy on the human condition; 5) to examine the role of man in nature and nature of man; 6) to consider the role of Hegelian philosophy as the progenitor of modern German nationalism and the role of the state in 20th century geo-politics; 7) to consider the monolithic impact of Nietzsche on modern philosophy and the age of anxiety: "God is Dead!"

Unit Objectives

1. The students will understand how Kant blends rationalism and empiricism into a new paradigm.
2. The students will be able to relate the German Romantic view of nature with that of the 19th century's philosophy.
3. The students will be able to compare the salient themes of science, history, the arts and the role of an ever increasing erudite middle class on the social landscape of the 19th century.
4. The students will address the impact of science and nature on 19th century German social and political philosophy.
5. The students will be able to define and explain the major philosophical concepts of the 19th century.

Marking Period 4

Unit 9—Democracy and Philosophy; 20th century philosophy

- * The Utilitarian's (Bentham, Mill)
- * The American Pragmatists
- * Frege and Modern Logic
- * Russell and Analytic Philosophy
- * Wittgenstein and Linguistic Philosophy
- * Existentialism
- * Bergson and Recent French Philosophy
- * Popper
- * The future of Philosophy

Unit Goals

Goals include the following:

1) We will address the impact of education and the middle class on the growth of liberal Utilitarianism; 2) to explain the role of empiricism on morality and politics as manifest in the

18th and 19th centuries; 3) to address the radical philosophy of the American William James and the growing influence of pragmatism on American political theory; 4) to explain Wittgenstein and the discursive turn; 5) to address the four theories of the Good Life; 6) to explain the world view of the existentialists as a reaction to the death of God and the post-modern malaise; 7) we will address modern moral questions as they relate to society today: medicine and the value of life; the nature of law; justice and just wars; what is moral?; aesthetics and the role of God in the post-modern.

Unit Objectives

1. The students will be able to explain the seminal role of education on modern social and political philosophy.
2. The students will understand the reason behind the Age of Anxiety and the concept of modernism as manifest in the arts and philosophy.
3. The students will understand the ideas of Wittgenstein as they relate to language as a form of communication.
4. The students will be able to compare the existential ideas of Sartre and Camus and define their philosophies on morality without absolutes.
5. The students will discuss and examine the modern concept of morality as it applies to law, justice, ethics etc.

There will be a strong emphasis on the historical setting within which each of these individuals and their philosophies take place.

Additional Assignments and Materials:

Readings: You will be assigned frequent readings that must be done prior to the class period for which they were assigned; you must read critically—make an earnest effort to understand what the author is saying, noting where you have questions, disagreements, confusions, etc. There may be short quizzes periodically to assure that you are keeping up with the readings.

Writing: There will be short writing assignments related to many of your readings and our discussions. Often the best way to understand something (e.g. a philosopher's ideas, your own ideas) is to try to clearly write it out in your own words. This will prepare you for class discussion, and allows you to demonstrate your understanding of the material and your ability to approach it critically

There is no textbook for the course, but there will be assigned readings that will be distributed to the students. We will be reading many on-line documents and many that I will create. We may view several films that bring clarity to some of the more esoteric philosophies within the curriculum. Films that may be shown include:

Waking Life (introduction to the various concepts which will be addressed)

The Matrix (modern adaptation to Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*)

What Dreams May Come (fosters discussion on concept of life after death)

The Butterfly Effect (examination of the complexities of the human mind)

A River Runs Through It (depicts the lifestyle of an existentialist)
Gattaca (expression of the human will as transcendent)
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (examination of the mind)
Groundhog Day (depicts Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence)
Minority Report (addresses concept of causality and role of fate)

Reference/Textbook:

There is no assigned textbook for this course, however, reading assignments will be taken from various books and websites.

Evaluation Tools:

Class Participation	25%
Reading Questions	25%
Writing Assignments	25%
Quarterly Research Assignment	25%

High Point Regional High School's curriculum and instruction are aligned to the State's Core Curriculum Content Standards and address the elimination of discrimination by narrowing the achievement gap, by providing equity in educational programs and by providing opportunities for students to interact positively with others regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status.

Additional Course Policies:

Class Participation: This is a student-centered class that will be mostly discussion. In order for that to occur you must be prepared for class and prepared to speak. You must understand that you will be required to speak in an open forum where ideas, opinions and beliefs are discussed on a daily basis. Much of the evaluation in this class will be your participation and your ability to articulate your evaluation, opinion and thoughts about the readings assigned for class. You must think critically; that means not just the expression of opinions, likes and dislikes. Anyone can say what he or she believes, or react to what another believes. In some cases you will have strong feelings about what we are reading or discussing. These strong reactions are good, but they are only the beginning. We want to do more than just express our reactions. Thinking critically requires: (1) clearly and accurately expressing the relevant claims, (2) examining and questioning (both the reasons for and consequences of) others' and (especially) one's own beliefs, (3) developing and being responsive to alternative views, (4) trying to support or reject such views on the basis of evidence and argument, and (5) being willing to accept the outcome of such inequity.