

*Public District School Board Writing Partnership*

# Course Profile

## **Philosophy: The Big Questions**

Grade 11

Open

HZB30

• *for teachers by teachers*

This sample course of study was prepared for teachers to use in meeting local classroom needs, as appropriate. This is not a mandated approach to the teaching of the course. It may be used in its entirety, in part, or adapted.

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## Course Overview

### Philosophy: The Big Questions, Grade 11, Open, HZB30

#### Course Description

Philosophy: The Big Questions provides students with an opportunity to discuss some of the great questions of our age such as: What defines good music? What is art? Is beauty really in the eyes of the beholder? Should the Bicentennial man be considered a person? What makes your life meaningful? Students develop inquiry and critical analysis skills, enabling them to tackle these and many other questions. This course develops students' research and writing skills and assists them in becoming stronger logical thinkers. Philosophy: The Big Questions engages students' interest and challenges them to think about the world in a new light.

Philosophy: The Big Questions is to be comprised of three (or more) units selected from the six outlined in this profile. The course requires that students examine three (or more) of the following questions: 1) What is a person?; 2) What is a meaningful life?; 3) What are good and evil?; 4) What is a just society?; 5) What is human knowledge?; 6) How do we know what is beautiful in art, music, and literature? Unlike other courses it is neither the strands nor the grouping of expectations that defines the units of study. Rather, the six questions define the units. Question one, "What is a person?" is central to all of the remaining questions and is consequently the focus of the first unit. Aside from addressing the question "What is a person?" Unit 1 provides students with a sound introduction to the study of philosophy, laying the foundations for philosophical inquiry. The remaining units are selected from units built around the remaining five questions. A unique feature of this course is that all of the overall and specific expectations are addressed in each of the units. Regardless of the fact that all expectations are addressed in each unit, it is necessary that a minimum of three units be covered so as to address three of six questions outlined.

#### Units: Titles and Times\*\*

* Unit 1	What is a Person: An Introduction to the Study of Philosophy	35.5 hours
Unit 2	On Living A Meaningful Life	27 hours
Unit 3	On Being A Moral Person: Exploring Good and Evil	27 hours
Unit 4	In Search of a Just Society	27 hours
Unit 5	Understanding Human Knowledge	27 hours
Unit 6	The Search for Beauty	27 hours
Culminating Activity	A Philosophical Self-Portrait	20.5 hours

\* This unit is fully developed in this Course Profile.

\*\* Select two units from Units 2-6 (2 units x 27 hours = 54 hours).

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## Course Notes

### Challenges of the Course

Philosophy: The Big Questions is of considerable relevance to all students regardless of ethnic or religious background, academic capabilities, or career goals because it applies creative and critical-thinking tools to fundamental questions about human nature; personal and social responsibilities; good and evil; the nature of human knowledge; social justice; how science, art, and religion are related; and other such issues. Philosophy trains students in critical and logical thinking, writing, and oral communication and acquaints them with principles underlying their own values and beliefs as well as those of others. Because of its relationship to fundamental issues affecting us all, philosophy has the potential to engage and enthrall all learners. For all students, philosophy can be a fun and worthwhile course for the following reasons.

- Students are able to apply metacognitive skills to explore their own beliefs and values.
- Students are able to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, applying their dominant intelligences to creatively explore meaning.
- Students develop critical and logical thinking skills in reading, writing, and oral communication, allowing them to challenge existing ideas and integrate personally meaningful ideas into their own experiences.

Grade 11 Philosophy lays important foundations for students wishing to pursue Grade 12 Philosophy. The skills focus in Grade 11 is on classifying ideas (compare, contrast, strengths, weaknesses), with an emphasis on summarizing information and only a limited amount of higher order thinking, such as evaluating and defending ideas. This serves the needs of all students as it assists them in developing the skills needed to read for meaning, define terms, and classify ideas. Whether heading into the workplace after Grade 12 or to college or university, students will find these skills useful.

Philosophy: The Big Questions poses two significant yet potentially rewarding challenges to teachers. The first is that of introducing students to the often abstract study of philosophy. For most students, the study of philosophy is unlike anything else they have ever studied. Most often, by the time students reach Grade 11 they have grown accustomed to responding to questions for which they believe there are correct and incorrect answers. Seldom have they been encouraged to raise questions that have no easy answers or challenge the answers of others. Thus philosophy opens new doors and introduces new challenges. Among these challenges are the abilities to develop coherent, logical arguments and to critique the answers of others rather than to blindly accept someone else's point of view. In part, this challenge is made easier by teenagers' natural search for a personal identity and their subsequent desire to challenge authority and stake out and test their own values and beliefs. Teachers can take advantage of this blossoming intellectual curiosity by tapping into issues relevant to the lives of students. The six questions which drive this course can easily provide a connection to students' lives and the study of philosophy. The second and perhaps more difficult challenge posed by this course is the range of student that it could potentially draw. Essentially, the course needs to serve two distinct functions: prepare some students for future studies in philosophy while providing other students with a worthwhile introduction to philosophy in which they can experience success and derive some significant life-long learning.

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## **Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment**

For students to be engaged in what they are learning they must see a relevance to their lives and see themselves represented in the material presented. In the diverse classrooms of today, it is crucial that every effort be made to draw on readings, visual sources, and other learning aids that reflect a balance in gender, as well as religion, race, and regions of the world. Where possible, students should explore answers to the big questions of philosophy by examining the works of women as well as men, philosophies from the east and the west, and philosophies from diverse religious vantage points. As well, interdisciplinary considerations must be made to meet the expectations and to ensure optimal interest for students. Students should be encouraged to explore many of the questions raised through a variety of mediums including contemporary music, film, literature, and art.

## **Addressing Course Expectations**

With just twenty-two specific expectations, all of which are general in nature, each unit addresses the majority of expectations as they relate to the pertinent question. A few of the specific expectations relate to students “doing” philosophy and are therefore inherent in the activities students complete. These expectations are explicitly addressed in Unit 1, as students learn about the nature of philosophy and the skills needed to be an effective philosopher. In the remaining units, the application of these skills is implicit in the evaluation activities but is not directly taught. Instead, these expectations are reflected in rubrics, which are used to assess and evaluate students’ ability to respond philosophically to fundamental questions. The expectations explicitly addressed in Unit 1 and implicitly applied throughout the course are:

- identify examples of fallacies in reasoning and writings from other subjects (OS1.03);
- correctly use the terminology of philosophical argumentation (IS1.01);
- illustrate common fallacies in reasoning (IS1.04).

## **Unit Overviews**

### **Unit 1: What is a Person: An Introduction to the Study of Philosophy**

#### **Unit Description**

Philosophy has been called wisdom without answers. Its traditional role has been to shine the light of analysis on questions that mathematics and science cannot address, questions that centre on the nature of personhood and the relationship of that person with the world. That role is no less important today. Secondary school students reflect on these profound questions daily and need a vehicle for their intellectual journey. The course is designed to give their contemplations a focus, a vocabulary, and a context.

This unit addresses the central question of the course, What is a Person? Because the concept of personhood deals with our nature and how we interact with the world, this unit necessarily provides direct links to the other big questions of the course and thus serves as an introduction to the remainder of the course content. The inevitable overlapping of content complements and reinforces student understanding and provides a clear awareness of the interconnectedness of all the subject disciplines in his/her curriculum. In this way, the teacher and student are able to make informed choices when selecting remaining units of the course, planning projects, and selecting areas of interest for further study.

Unit 1 also introduces the tools of inquiry that students use throughout the course; tools include:

- careful reading of texts (ISV.04);
- dialogue and Socratic questioning (ISV.05);
- the uses of language - clearly written and oral explanations (IS3.02);
- the use of specialized vocabulary (IS1.01);
- the abuses of language - illustrate common fallacies in reasoning (IS1.04);
- dichotomies - conceptual opposites (PQ1.03);
- the topoi, the classical method of analysis using increasingly divergent questions.

Throughout this unit, students are involved in activities that they will add to their Philosopher's Journal. This journal is one of the course culminating activities.

**Unit Culminating Activity: A Philosophical Self-Portrait**

For the culminating activity, each student is required to construct a philosophical self-portrait in a variety of media in which they are comfortable and present it to the class. This document/object is a snapshot of the student's sense of self at the end of this unit and is used again for comparative purposes at the end of the course to show areas of growth and change, and may be included as part of the Philosopher's Journal.

**Unit Overview Chart**

Activity	Expectations	Assessment	Focus
1	PQV.01, ISV.01 PQV.02, PQ1.05, EL1.03, OS1.01, IS1.02, ELV.02, ISV.02, ISV.03, OSV.01, IS3.01, IS2.01, IS2.02, IS3.02	Thinking/Inquiry	What are the component parts of a person?
2	ISV.03, IS3.01	Application	What is a self?
3	PQV.01, PQ1.02, ISV.03, IS1.01	Knowledge/Understanding	Are the mind and the body the same thing or are they separate and distinct?
4	PQV.02, PQ1.05, PTV.02, PT1.03, OSV.02, OS1.03	Communication	Is there a soul and, if so, what is it? Can a soul exist after the body has died?
5	PQV.02, PQ1.02, ISV.02, IS1.04	Application	Is a person a part of or separate from their environment?
6	PTV.01, PT1.01	Knowledge/Understanding	Can machines and animals be persons?
7	ISV.05, IS3.01, ISV.02, IS2.01	Communication	How do non-Western traditions address these questions?
8	PQV.02, PQ1.03, ELV.01, EL1.01, ELV.02, EL1.02, ISV.01, IS1.03, ISV.04, IS3.02, ISV.01, IS2.02	Thinking/Inquiry Application Knowledge/Understanding Communication	Unit Culminating Activity: A Philosophical Self-Portrait

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## Unit 2: On Living a Meaningful Life

### Unit Description

In this unit students explore what makes a life meaningful by studying various philosophical theories and reflecting on their own values and beliefs. The unit begins with a discussion based on Socrates' quotation "The unexamined life is not worth living." This quotation provides justification for examining our own lives and the lives of those whom we admire. Individually and in groups, students define and redefine their characterization of a meaningful life throughout the unit. Students also explore freewill versus determinism in order to explore the question, "Do we have the ability to alter our lives to make them meaningful?" Students should examine a variety of multicultural secondary sources in order to improve their research and inquiry skills. The unit culminating activity is a visual essay that provides a personal response to the question, "What is a meaningful life?" Throughout this unit, students are involved in activities that they will add to their Philosopher's Journal.

### Unit Culminating Activity: Visual Essay

The culminating activity for the unit is a visual essay that is captured on videotape. Students create their own explanation for the unit question, "What is a meaningful life?" Their results are then recorded in various ways, such as skits, interviews, poetry readings, or a performance of a short story. Groups of three or four students record their ideas on videotape and play the tape for the class. Each group should be comprised of students with strengths in different multiple intelligence areas. Each student should be responsible for one particular facet of the visual essay in order to ensure accountability. If video cameras are not available in the school, this activity may be adapted by using an audio tape recording.

### Unit Overview Chart

Activity	Expectations	Assessment	Focus
1	ISV.05, IS3.01, ISV.02, IS2.01, IS1.02	Communication	Why should we examine our lives?
2	ISV.03, IS3.01	Application	Who do you admire? What does this reveal about your perception of a meaningful life?
3	PTV.01, PT1.01, ELV.02, EL1.03, OSV.01, OS1.01	Thinking/Inquiry	What are the conditions for our lives to reach ultimate success?
4	PTV.01, PT1.01, ISV.03, IS1.04	Knowledge/Understanding	What is happiness and how can it be attained?
5	PQV.02, PQ1.02, ISV.02, IS1.04	Application	Can a life of self-indulgence be meaningful?
6	PTV.02, PT1.03, OSV.02, OS1.03	Communication	Do we have an obligation to help others?
7	PQV.02, PQ1.04, OSV.02, OS1.03	Knowledge/Understanding	Are our lives predetermined?
8	PQV.02, PQ1.05	Thinking/Inquiry	Do we create our own meaning?
Unit Culminating Activity	PQV.02, PQ1.03, ELV.01, EL1.01, ELV.02, EL1.02, ISV.05, IS1.03, ISV.04, IS3.02, ISV.01, IS2.02	Knowledge/Understanding Thinking/Inquiry Communication Application	Visual Essay: What is a meaningful life?

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### Unit 3: On Being a Moral Person: Exploring Good and Evil

#### Unit Description

What are good and evil? In this unit, students explore the terms good and evil and are challenged with various ethical dilemmas. Students analyse various methods of determining right from wrong (religion, the legal system, utilitarianism, and the categorical imperative – (Activities 5 and 6) in order to challenge or justify their own response. Ethical relativism and ethical scepticism are also studied (Activities 7 and 8). Whenever possible, the application of theories to current issues should occur. Throughout the unit, students are involved in activities that they will add to their multiple intelligence folder (Philosopher’s Journal course culminating activity). The unit culminating activity challenges students to apply the knowledge learned in this unit to a contemporary ethical dilemma and present their findings in a bulletin board display with visuals and written information.

#### Unit Culminating Activity: Bulletin Board Display

The culminating activity for this unit involves students applying various philosophical theories to contemporary ethical dilemmas. In groups of three, students create a large bulletin board display, with text and visuals that clearly illustrates the ethical dilemma. The bulletin board should be divided into three panels. Each student is responsible for the overall design and for one panel. Each student should explain his/her own panel in a short presentation to the class, ensuring that each member is contributing an equal amount to the group effort. All of the terms and theories learned in this unit should be used to create a detailed analysis of the issue. A five-minute presentation accompanies the board.

#### Unit Overview Chart

Activity	Expectations	Assessment	Focus
1	ISV.05, IS3.01, ISV.02, IS2.01, IS1.02	Communication	Can we define good and evil or are they defined by our religious beliefs?
2	PTV.01, PT1.01, ISV.03, IS1.01	Knowledge/ Understanding	What is human nature?
3	ISV.03, IS3.01	Application	Moral dilemmas: What would you do in a particular situation?
4	PTV.02, PT1.02, ELV.02, EL1.03, OSV.01, OS1.01	Thinking/Inquiry	Is the individual the only legitimate judge of ethics?
5	PTV.02, PT1.03, OSV.02, OS1.02	Communication	Does religion or the legal system provide acceptable standards for right and wrong?
6	PQV.02, PQ1.04, OSV.02, OS1.03	Knowledge/ Understanding	Should we determine the ethical character of an action based on the act itself or the results of the action?
7	PQV.02, PQ1.05	Thinking/Inquiry	Are morals relative to an individual culture?
8	PQV.02, PQ1.02, ISV.02, IS1.04	Application	Are there any acts that are definitively right or wrong?
Unit Culminating Activity	PQV.02, PQ1.03, ELV.01, EL1.01, ELV.02, EL1.02, ISV.05, IS1.03, ISV.04, IS3.02, ISV.01, IS2.02	Knowledge/ Understanding Thinking/Inquiry Communication Application	Bulletin Board: Applying Philosophy to Contemporary Ethical Issues

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## Unit 4: In Search of a Just Society

### Unit Description

In this unit, students explore and question past and existing types of governments in order to develop a personal response to the question, “What is a just society?” Students may have previous knowledge of ideas presented within this unit from their Grade 10 Civics course. The unit begins with a study of the need for government and moves to uncovering the various forms of government and the philosophies behind them. Secondary sources should be used to uncover the ideas expressed by such philosophers as Karl Marx, Thomas Hobbes, Plato, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Students then apply their knowledge to pursue questions that deal with their rights and responsibilities within a society (e.g., What obligations do we have to address racial or gender inequalities?). Whenever possible, links to current issues should be made. The unit culminating activity is a debate on a contemporary issue that deals with the question, “How can we reconcile the rights of the individual with the rights of the collective?” A suitable topic would be the rights of an individual to smoke versus the collective rights of others to breathe clean air. In this activity, students are given the opportunity to practise and apply their research and inquiry skills. Throughout this unit, students are involved in activities that they will add to their Philosopher’s Journal.

### Unit Culminating Activity: Symposium – What is a just society?

The culminating activity for the unit is a debate on a contemporary issue that deals with controversial issues in our own society relating to the unit question, “What is a just society?” Students should be involved in determining the resolution for debates. Students should be in groups of eight (four affirmative and four opposing) for each issue. Several issues should be debated in order to maintain the interest level of the class. Ample time should be given to research for the debate. Before the debate, the rules of debating must be stressed (e.g., You should not speak while someone is talking). While the eight students are debating their specific issue, the rest of the class should listen to the arguments presented by both sides and prepare a suitable question for the debating panel. Student judges can be used to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the debating teams.

### Unit Overview Chart

Activity	Expectations	Assessment	Focus
1	ISV.05, IS3.01, ISV.02, IS2.01	Communication	Is there such a thing as a natural law?
2	PTV.02, PT1.02, ELV.02, EL1.03, OSV.01, OS1.01	Thinking/Inquiry	What is the justification for the existence of any form of government?
3	PTV.01, PT1.01, ISV.03, IS1.01	Knowledge/Understanding	What are the various forms of government?
4	ISV.03, IS3.01	Application	What are our rights and responsibilities to others and ourselves?
5	PQV.02, PQ1.05	Thinking/Inquiry	What constitutes equality or fairness?
6	PQV.02, PQ1.04, OSV.02, OS1.03	Knowledge/Understanding	How should goods and services produced in our society be distributed?
7	PQV.01, PQ1.02	Knowledge/Understanding	What should be the limits of government authority over its citizens?
8	PTV.02, PT1.03, OSV.02, OS1.02	Communication	What should be the limits of a citizen’s obligation to obey the government?
9	PQV.02, PQ1.02, ISV.02, IS1.04	Application	What obligations do we have to address racial or gender inequalities?

10	ELV.01, EL1.01	Application	What factors help determine whether a government is just?
Unit Culminating Activity	PQV.02, PQ1.01, ELV.01, ELV.02, EL1.02, OS1.02, ISV.01, ISV.03, ISV.05, IS1.02, IS1.04, IS2.01, IS3.01	Knowledge/ Understanding Thinking/ Inquiry Communication Application	Symposium: What is a just society?

## Unit 5: Understanding Human Knowledge

### Unit Description

Grade 11 students are increasingly confident about using their knowledge - their intellectual capital. In this unit, students investigate what knowledge is and where it comes from. There is no doubt that we learn through the experience of our five senses, but is there knowledge we acquire by reason alone? And if this is so, where does this knowledge and reason come from? This is the essence of the empiricism-rationalism debate. In medieval Europe, people sincerely believed that the Earth was flat. Does this mean that knowledge can be false? How do we test for truth? “What is human knowledge?”

Significant connections are made with other units in the course because this topic invites questions regarding personhood, ethics, and religion. How can we know, for instance, if our life is meaningful? Students are asked to consider their relationship as knowers with the world, the known. Throughout this unit, students are involved in activities that they can add to their Philosopher’s Journal (course culminating activity).

### Unit Culminating Activity: An Interview with Philosophers

This activity takes the form of a television or studio interview. In groups of four, students, in the roles of philosophers such as Hume and Kant (interviewer/moderator and videographer), prepare and present a twenty-minute interview for the class. Guided by the moderator, the philosopher must defend his/her own position and critique the other’s position on the dichotomy of empiricism and rationalism. The program is interrupted once by a commercial message created by the videographer. The subject of the spot is suitably philosophical in the area of theory of knowledge and is an opportunity for the use of humour and/or irony.

### Unit Overview Chart

Activity	Expectations	Assessment	Focus
1	ISV.05, IS1.02, IS3.01, ISV.02, IS2.01	Communication	What do we mean when we say we know something?
2	PQV.02, PT1.04, OSV.02, OS1.03	Knowledge/ Understanding	Is “justified, truth belief” an adequate definition of knowledge?
3	PTV.02, PT1.02, ELV.02, OSV.01	Thinking/ Inquiry	Is knowledge learned, innate, or both?
4	ISV.03, IS3.01	Application	How can we test the validity of knowledge?
5	PQV.02, PQ1.02, ISV.02, IS1.04	Application	How can true be tested?
6	PTV.01, PT1.01, ISV.03, IS1.04	Knowledge/ Understanding	Can knowledge be false?

7	PQV.02, PQ1.05, EL1.03, OS1.01	Thinking/Inquiry	How can we know that the world as we experience it, is the world as it is?
8	PTV.02, PT1.03, OSV.02, OS1.0S	Communication	Is there knowledge that humans cannot know?
Unit Culminating Activity	PQV.0S, PQ1.03, ELV.01, EL1.01, ELV.02, EL1.02, ISV.01, IS1.03, ISV.04, IS3.02, ISV.01, IS2.02	Knowledge/ Understanding Thinking/Inquiry Communication Application	Television interview with David Hume and Immanuel Kant

## Unit 6: The Search for Beauty

### Unit Description

“How do we know what is beautiful?” As any conversation among them will show, students have very strong opinions about the arts, especially music, television, fashion, and movies. This unit gives students the opportunity to explore the nature of beauty and art in a disciplined and thorough manner. It enables them to frame their ideas and articulate their likes and dislikes in more meaningful, unambiguous, analytic language. Key connections are made between aesthetics, ethics, and theory of knowledge. For instance, Tolstoy felt that for art to be great, it had to contain a moral dimension. In his view, music, from Beethoven to the Beatles, doesn’t qualify! Theorists and artists from Plato to Keats have argued that beauty is somehow related to truth and goodness. Other issues that are raised have to do with objectivity and subjectivity, and whether or not art has intrinsic value and meaning. Throughout this unit, students are involved in activities that they will add to their Philosopher’s Journal.

### Unit Culminating Activity: A Curated Art Show

The culminating activity for this unit is a titled, student-curated show of six artworks that is a personal statement of that student’s aesthetic. Six of these art forms must be represented: music, visual art, movies, dance, drama, and the written word (poetry and narrative). In a presentation of about thirty minutes, each student describes the significance of each selection in terms of an issue that has been raised during the unit. There must be a clearly stated underlying aesthetic theory, concept, or principle that unifies all of the works in the show. Original artworks, videos, slides, reproductions, recordings, short dramatic readings, recitations, movement, graffiti, etc., can be used. A written summary of the presentation is submitted. This activity lays the foundation for the second course culminating activity: The Philosophical Café.

### Unit Overview Chart

Activity	Expectations	Assessment	Focus
1	PTV.02, PT1.03, OSV.02, OS1.02, IS1.02	Communication	What is beauty?
2	PTV.02, PT1.02, EL1.03, OS1.01	Thinking/Inquiry	Is there an innate, absolute standard of beauty?
3	PQV.02, PQ1.02, ISV.02, IS1.04	Application	Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?
4	PTV.01, PT1.01, ISV.03, IS1.01	Knowledge/ Understanding	Is beauty a form of truth?
5	ISV.03, IS3.01	Application	Does beauty contain an ethical dimension?

6	ISV.05, IS3.01, ISV.02, IS2.01	Communication	What is art?
7	PQV.02, PQ1.04, OSV.02, OS1.03	Knowledge/ Understanding	Does art have a purpose?
8	PQV.02, PQ1.05, ELV.02, OSV.01	Thinking/Inquiry	Does art mean anything?
Unit Culminating Activity	PVQ.02, PQ1.03, ELV.01, EL1.01, ELV.02, EL1.02, ISV.01, IS1.03, ISV.04, IS3.02, ISV.01, IS2.02	Knowledge/ Understanding Thinking/Inquiry Communication Application	A Curated Art Show

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

Critical to the success of the Grade 11 Philosophy course is the use of a variety of teaching/learning strategies, which address a variety of learning styles and intelligences. This is an ideal course for teachers to draw on music, poetry, works of art, literature, cartoons, and movies to capture students' interest in the subject matter. By using a variety of mediums, students are engaged and challenged at some point in the course. Furthermore, the nature of philosophy demands that teachers surrender much of the exploration of ideas to students. Although students are exposed to the ideas of a variety of philosophers, these ideas must act as a springboard for students to explore their own beliefs and values as opposed to being the correct answers to philosophical questions. It is recommended that students read about the ideas of some of the great philosophers rather than attempt to read primary sources. To be truly engaged in their learning and ultimately successful in the study of philosophy, students should interact with the material rather than be receptacles for information passed on by the teacher. Students need to actively discuss, debate, and challenge ideas; have an opportunity to record their thoughts; and have a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning. This entails allowing students to demonstrate their learning through drawings, poetry, cartoons, oral debates, discussions, etc.

Some of the planning considerations for the course are:

- While this course does not require students to read difficult primary sources, it does require that they understand what some of the major philosophers and/or philosophical movements have said on selected topics.
- Students need to develop the skills to critically analyse and assess arguments, compare philosophical approaches, and succinctly summarize arguments.
- Students must be able to make interdisciplinary connections (i.e., science, art, and literature) and identify fallacies in reasoning in writings from various subjects.

### Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement

Grade 11 Philosophy: The Big Questions is designed around the use of learning portfolios to monitor and support student progress. For each unit, students are required to complete a number of activities, which are designed to demonstrate their success at meeting the course expectations. Each activity is supported by a lesson, which introduces key concepts to students and provides the necessary scaffolding to help ensure optimum success for all students. As students complete each activity, they receive formative assessment from peers, parents, and/or the teacher, which assists them in addressing areas of weaknesses and polishing their work. Students place each completed activity in a portfolio. Each of these activities is linked to a specific area of the Achievement Chart to ensure that all four areas are assessed and evaluated. Towards the end of each unit, students submit a selection of their best work representing each area of the Achievement Chart. By allowing students to submit selections of their work, they are

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encouraged to take risks without fear of failure. To ensure that students successfully meet all the course expectations, they should be required to complete each of the activities in the unit before being allowed to select their best work. Students who do not complete all activities should be required to submit all their work and have their grade based on all unit activities. This encourages students to attempt all activities and not selectively ignore activities.

Seventy per cent of the grade will be based on assessments and evaluations conducted throughout the course. Thirty per cent of the grade will be based on a final evaluation in the form of an examination, performance, essay, and/or other method of evaluation.

### **Culminating Activities**

In addition to the series of activities completed in each unit, students are required to complete a unit culminating activity, which demonstrates their success at meeting the expectations. These culminating activities draw on the work completed during the unit and are assessed and evaluated in all four areas of the Achievement Chart. Suggested culminating activities for each of the units:

Unit 1 - A Philosophical Self-Portrait

Unit 2 - Visual Essay

Unit 3 - Bulletin Board Display

Unit 4 - Symposium – What is a just society?

Unit 5 - An Interview with David Hume and Immanuel Kant

Unit 6 - A Curated Art Show

**Note:** Each of the Culminating Activities listed above work well with several of the Units. Teachers can build a course around the units as outlined or interchange culminating activities and units to tailor the course for their class.

### **The Final Evaluation**

For the purpose of a final evaluation, the following two activities are suggested. Both of the final evaluation activities (Philosophical Café and Philosopher’s Journal) should be clearly explained to students at the outset of the course and they should be encouraged and provided opportunities throughout the course to work towards completing the final evaluations.

#### **1. Hosting a Philosophical Café (student handout)**

##### **Description of the Task**

During the European Enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, those who made public issues matters of private concern came to be known as intellectuals. Gathering in cafés and salons, these men and women discussed wide-ranging topics in which they applied reason and logic in the pursuit of truth, justice, and ultimately, the perfect society. As the new millennium begins and we are faced with an increasingly fast-paced society in which individuals are feeling isolated and disempowered, there has been a rebirth of this phenomena.

In this performance task, students, in groups of five or six, design and create a table display in which one medium per student is used to generate discussion of a philosophical nature. The focus of this discussion must be based on a central philosophical theme. The primary purpose of this performance task is to test the student’s ability to philosophize in a logical manner. This performance task is open to the community, as guests are invited to participate in the symposium and to offer their evaluation of students’ work. As this is a café, student groups may provide refreshments to visitors typical of a café setting and consistent with the philosophical focus. Groups can either provide the refreshments free or charge a nominal fee to cover their costs.

To prepare for and complete this task, each group must:

- select a philosophical theme on which to base the cafe (see list below);
- generate a list of 8-10 second order questions that could be addressed at their café;
- assign individual responsibility for a specific medium for each student;
- prepare and host the café, paying attention to the following:

Layout:

- comfortable and inviting providing for ease of discussion
- central theme highlighted through the effective use of the various medium
- one second-order question must be highlighted and displayed alongside each of the mediums
- aesthetically appealing

Refreshments

- reflective of central theme
- served in an appealing manner
- allow for discussion while partaking in refreshments

Coordination of Discussion

- maintain focus on central theme
- thought-provoking questions raised through use of mediums
- able to engage visitors in philosophical discourse

Organization

- careful planning allows for smooth running of all facets of the café, including food service, discussion, and explanations of mediums
- prepare a user-friendly evaluation form for assessment of the philosophical café. This evaluation must be completed by a minimum of ten people.

To prepare for and complete this task each individual must:

- select a specific medium to present/display at the philosophical café (see list below);
- prepare and submit a description of the medium selected, which includes an explanation of philosophical relevance of the selection. The description/explanation is to be a minimum of one-page and a maximum of two-pages in length;
- prepare and submit six to eight second-order questions which specifically relate to their selection;
- actively participate in the hosting of the café as outlined above;
- prepare and submit a personal reflection on the experience of planning and hosting a philosophical café. The reflection should comment on the following:
  - the highs and lows of working cooperatively with classmates;
  - the café preparation as an effective/ineffective application of learning;
  - the degree of success of the café;
  - suggestions for personal growth;
  - suggestions which could help to improve the performance task for future classes.

Possible Themes for Cafés	Mediums for Display
What it Means to Be A Person	Painting/Prints/ Sculpture
Morality/Ethics/Good and Evil	Music/Poetry
Happiness/A Meaningful Life	Movie Clips
Justice	Puzzles
Aesthetics/Beauty	Quotations (from works of or non-fiction)
Symbols (e.g., yin-yang)	Video (created by students)

## Evaluation

Sub-task	Group/Individual	Due Date
Second-order Questions Related to Theme	Group	
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i> Description/Explanation of Medium Selected	Individual	
<i>Thinking/Inquiry</i> Second-order Questions Related to Medium Selected	Individual	
<i>Application</i> Evaluation form	Group	
<i>Application/Knowledge and Understanding/Communication</i> Hosting of Café	Group	
<i>Communication</i> Personal Reflection	Individual	

**Note:** Crucial to the success of any group project is individual accountability. In the case of the Philosophical Café, students are required to select and describe a medium and prepare questions. Individuals who do not complete these two steps could be removed from the group and given an individual assignment to replace the café. For example, students could be required to write an essay for the final evaluation rather than participating in the café.

## 2. The Philosopher's Journal - A Multiple Intelligences Inquiry into Metacognition (student handout)

**Metacognition Defined:** Technically speaking, metacognition is “the study of the mental processes by which knowledge and understanding is achieved.” In other words, it is learning about how we learn.

**The Importance of Metacognition:** Over the past couple of decades, there has been an explosion in research into how our brains work. The more we come to understand about the intricate workings of the brain the better equipped we are to become effective teachers and learners. It is, therefore, somewhat ironic that so little time is spent in the classroom having students explore and develop an understanding of their own learning processes. By being more informed about our own learning, we are better able to make wise choices in our educational planning, are able to channel our energies in more successful endeavours, and are able to identify and target our weaknesses. All people have some capability to learn. Often, failure in school is attributable to a failure to *demonstrate* what has been learned rather than the failure to learn. Perhaps if students were given a variety of means to demonstrate their learning, more students would enjoy more success. But then this would require that students know their strengths, and this brings us back to metacognition.

**The MI Journal:** Throughout this course, each student is required to maintain a multiple intelligences journal. Unlike traditional journals, which ask students to reflect through writing, this journal encourages students to express their reactions to a variety of issues or to summarize their impressions of events or ideas through a variety of means. You are encouraged to:

- write reflective journal entries which describe your feelings/reactions;
- write poetry to express your feelings/reactions;
- draw pictures to depict your feelings/reactions;
- prepare questions you might ask a famous philosopher regarding a particular issue/idea;
- write or adapt a song with lyrics to reflect your opinion about an issue/event;
- create and describe a dance, which reflects your feelings about an issue/event.

Your journal will reflect, in a very personal way, your views and reactions to issues addressed in this course. All students who make a sincere effort will enjoy much success in this aspect of the course. Take ownership over the journal; it reflects your view and your means of communicating your learning!

The Philosopher's Journal - A Multiple Intelligences Inquiry into Metacognition is evaluated as follows:

**Knowledge and Understanding**

Reflects the degree to which students demonstrate an awareness and understanding of important philosophers, concepts, and ideas relating to the questions addressed in the course and in the general study of philosophy.

**Thinking/Inquiry**

Reflects the degree to which students are able to critique philosophical ideas, raise pertinent questions, and conduct research into relevant philosophical questions.

**Application**

Reflects the level of success students demonstrate in being able to take philosophical concepts and apply them to their lives, other subject matters, and contemporary society in general.

**Communication**

Reflects the level of effectiveness by which students have expressed their views using a variety of mediums, including visual and written. Clarity and conciseness are important as is proper use of the English language in both spoken and written work.

**Learning Skills**

As with all courses under OSS, learning skills, including effort, punctuality, and absences, are recorded and reported on, but do not affect the student's percentage grade. This issue is of particular significance in a course such as philosophy in which class discussion is an integral part of the course. Although students cannot be penalized for lates, skipping, etc., evaluation activities can be designed to take place during class that require students' verbal input into discussions. As long as students have clearly been told that they will be evaluated on their participation in a particular debate, and have been shown how they will be evaluated, in-class discussions can be a part of a teacher's evaluation practices. Although, to be fair to all types of learners, this approach to evaluation must be used in moderation. Teachers are encouraged to clearly explain the consequences for students of poor learning skills and the relationship between final grades and developing good learning skills. Below is a sample of how a debate/discussion checklist can be used to evaluate student participation. **Note:** Students should have ample opportunity to prepare and practise for any discussion that will be evaluated. They should be provided with the questions in advance and a copy of the checklist so that there are no surprises. Be sure to stress with students that they must be able to demonstrate an understanding of ideas, critique these ideas, and apply them to other areas to earn full marks. Teachers may wish to add a fourth column to evaluate Communication (the proper use of English).

Student Name	<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b> # of correct and relevant references to philosophers/theories Maximum of five statements (5 x 2 = 10 marks)	<b>Thinking/Inquiry</b> # of insightful critiques and/or assessments of relevant philosophical theories Maximum of five critiques (5 x 3 = 15 marks)	<b>Application</b> # of relevant applications of theories to personal point of view or contemporary issues Maximum of five applications of ideas (5 x 3 = 15 marks)	<b>Total Marks</b> (40 possible marks)
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## Accommodations

The course has been carefully crafted to meet the needs of a diversity of learners considering learning styles, multiple intelligences, and various religious and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, specific accommodations for students with exceptional learning needs have been suggested with each activity. Individual Education Plans for exceptional students provide teachers with specific learning strategies that work best with individual students. As well, the proficiency levels outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12, English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 1999* provide teachers and school administrators with a guide to receiving and accommodating these learners in the regular classroom.

There are a variety of strategies that can be used for students with special needs. Philosophy teachers are encouraged to work with the Special Education teacher to review students' IEPs (Individual Education Plans) to decide the best course of action to assist them in meeting the expectations of the Grade 11 Philosophy course. The variety of learning strategies and student performance tasks provide teachers with some guidance, but each individual student's program will require appropriate accommodations based on the assessment and suggestions included in the IEP.

Accommodations teachers should consider for students with learning disabilities are:

- assess student reading comprehension level as early as possible to ensure proper accommodations are made;
- allow for extra time to complete assignments;
- provide visual cues;
- provide ample scaffolding to assist students in generating and organizing ideas before completing tasks;
- provide a glossary of terms for reference;
- provide a vocabulary list to assist in the reading of assigned materials;
- model skills for students when they are expected to draw inferences, make conclusions, or assess the implications of case study material;
- make appropriate adjustments to performance tasks for students with visual impairments or with significant motor dysfunctions.

There are many enrichment opportunities for students who wish to explore interdisciplinary connections, issues, and philosophical thought in greater detail.

To ensure all students are able to be successful at meeting the expectations of the Philosophy course, it is strongly recommended that teachers use secondary sources to introduce and explain the ideas of philosophers. Generally, primary readings intimidate and overwhelm most students at the Grade 11 level. Gifted students may want to tackle some of the primary readings relating to issues be addressed in the course. Also, students need to be encouraged to respond to issues, ideas, and philosophies in a variety of ways, including written work, music, visual art, oral debate, and discussion. The use of the Multiple Intelligence-based Philosopher's Journal is designed to help facilitate this. Teachers should use judicious and professional judgement when determining student success at meeting expectations. For instance, a student who demonstrates, through visual arts and discussion, a sound understanding of the issues, but is unable to express this understanding in written form, should be deemed to have met the expectations. Obviously, a balance of written and non-written work will need to be maintained but this balance does not have to be identical for all students, as long as they are meeting the expectations. Finally, in addition to the use of secondary sources, it is strongly recommended that teachers make use of popular media, such as music, movies, games, magazines, and newspapers, as vehicles into issues. By drawing on popular media, teachers can tap into the student's world and explore profound and timeless issues grounded in student experiences.

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## OSS Considerations

This open course is outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12, Social Sciences and Humanities, 2000*. There is no pre-requisite as a requirement to taking the course. There are many opportunities for students to develop research and communication skills directly related to career exploration and the student exit plan outlined in *Choices Into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy For Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999*. This course also reflects the role of technology in learning. This course reflects the guidelines developed for assessment, evaluation, and reporting prescribed in *Program Planning and Assessment*. Students may use this course as an optional credit or an additional compulsory credit to meet diploma requirements.

## Resources

**Note:** The URLs for the websites have been verified by the writers prior to publication. Given the frequency with which these designations change, teachers should always verify the websites prior to assigning them for student use.

### Websites

[www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/)

### Books

Presbey, Gail, et al. *The Philosophical Quest: A Cultural Reader*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000. ISBN 0-07-289867-4

Rosen, Stanley, ed. *The Examined Life: A Tour of Western Philosophy*. New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 2000. ISBN 0-965-00902-5

Blackburn, S. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. New York: The Oxford University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-19-211694-0

Blackburn, S. *Think*. New York: The Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN 0-965-025331

Hanley, Richard. *The Metaphysics of Star Trek*. New York: Basic, 1997. ISBN 0-465-04548-0

Hoff, Benjamin. *The Dao of Pooh*.

Honderich, Ted, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. New York: The Oxford University Press, 1995. ISBN 0-19-866132-0

Kessler, Gary. *Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Reader*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2000. ISBN 0-534-53572-0

Leiber, Justin. *Can Machines and Animals Be Persons? A Dialogue*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985. ISBN 0-87220-002-7

Miller, E. *Questions That Matter: An Invitation to Philosophy*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996. ISBN 0-07-042836-0

Mitchell, Helen B. *The Roots of Wisdom: A Multicultural Reader*, 2nd ed. Belmont, WA: Wadsworth, 1999. ISBN 0-534-54347-2

Popkin, R. and A. Stroll. *Philosophy Made Simple*. New York: Doubleday, 1993. ISBN 0-385-42533-3

Rachels, J. *The Right Thing To Do*. New York: Random House, 1989. ISBN 0-394-35831-7

Thompson, Mel. *Teach Yourself Philosophy*. Chicago: NTC Publishing Group, 1995. ISBN 0-8442-3683-7

White, Thomas. *Discovering Philosophy: Brief Edition*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1996. ISBN 0-13-508003-7

Wolff, R. *About Philosophy*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1995. ISBN 0-13-059155-6

### Magazines

*Philosophy Now*. ISSN 0961-5970 – [www.philosophynow.demon.co.uk](http://www.philosophynow.demon.co.uk)

*SKEPTIC*. ISSN 1063-9330 – [www.skeptic.com](http://www.skeptic.com)

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## Coded Expectations, Philosophy: The Big Questions, Grade 11, Open, HZB30

### Philosophical Questions

#### Overall Expectations

**PQV.01** · describe precisely and clearly three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy;

**PQV.02** · summarize their own or others' answers to these questions, and give reasons in support of the answers.

#### Specific Expectations

**PQ1.01** – compare two or more answers to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy;

**PQ1.02** – give appropriate reasons for their own or others' answers to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy (e.g., What is happiness? Can a life of self-indulgence be meaningful?);

**PQ1.03** – summarize some arguments for and against answers to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy (e.g., arguments for and against the claim that morality is objective);

**PQ1.04** – describe the strengths and weaknesses of the main arguments used to defend answers to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy (e.g., arguments for and against the claim that science is the best way to know what really is);

**PQ1.05** – compare philosophical approaches to some of the big questions with non-philosophical approaches (e.g., philosophy and religion regarding the question “Does God exist?”, philosophy and social sciences regarding the question “What is human nature?”).

### Philosophical Theories

#### Overall Expectations

**PTV.01** · summarize the ideas of some famous philosophers with respect to one or more of the big questions of philosophy;

**PTV.02** · describe the strengths and weaknesses of the responses to some of the big questions of philosophy defended by some major philosophers or schools of philosophy.

#### Specific Expectations

**PT1.01** – compare answers to some of the big questions by different philosophers (e.g., Mill and Kant about good and evil, Descartes and de Beauvoir about human nature);

**PT1.02** – describe the differences in approach to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy by some major philosophical schools (e.g., Thomism and existentialism regarding the meaning of life, rationalism and empiricism about human knowledge, feminism and libertarianism about social justice);

**PT1.03** – describe important similarities and differences among some of the world's philosophical traditions with regard to three (or more) of the big questions (e.g., Confucianism, Platonism, Buddhism, materialism).

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## Philosophy and Everyday Life

### Overall Expectations

- ELV.01** · relate the big questions of philosophy to their own experience, reports in the news media, and their society;
- ELV.02** · demonstrate the application of philosophical theories and skills to jobs, occupations, and everyday life.

### Specific Expectations

- EL1.01** – describe what difference the answers people accept to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy should make to their values, behaviour, and life plans;
- EL1.02** – describe the strengths and weaknesses of alternative responses to questions of applied philosophy (e.g., What decisions, if any, should medical practitioners make for patients without the patients' consent? What obligations, if any, do humans living in the present have to future generations and to the natural environment? What obligations, if any, do humans living in the present have to redress racial or gender inequalities inherited from the past?);
- EL1.03** – apply philosophical skills such as precise writing and critical analysis to solve problems that arise in jobs and occupations (e.g., What obligations do employees have to the public, to their employers, and to themselves? When resources are scarce, how should decisions be made about their allocation?).

## Applications of Philosophy to Other Subjects

### Overall Expectations

- OSV.01** · identify philosophical theories and presuppositions in natural science, history, art, social science and humanities, and other subjects;
- OSV.02** · demonstrate how philosophical skills that are used to address the big questions of philosophy can be used effectively in other subjects.

### Specific Expectations

- OS1.01** – identify philosophical positions presupposed in some other disciplines (e.g., theories of knowledge in natural science, theories of the person in social science);
- OS1.02** – contrast alternative philosophical viewpoints in controversies discussed in other subjects (e.g., over what is just in politics or society, what is a meaningful life in works of literature, what is beautiful in fashion or art);
- OS1.03** – identify examples of fallacies in reasoning in writings from other subjects (e.g., sociology, psychology, political science).

## Research and Inquiry Skills

### Overall Expectations

- ISV.01** · apply research and inquiry skills related to philosophy appropriately and effectively;
- ISV.02** · evaluate some main philosophical arguments;
- ISV.03** · formulate and defend a response of their own to one or more of the big questions of philosophy;
- ISV.04** · effectively use a variety of print and electronic sources and telecommunications tools in research related to the big questions of philosophy;
- ISV.05** · effectively communicate the results of their inquiries.

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## Specific Expectations

### Using Reasoning Skills

**IS1.01** – correctly use the terminology of philosophical argumentation (e.g., *logical validity, begging the question, vagueness, argument from authority*);

**IS1.02** – define terms central to philosophical discussions of each of the big questions (e.g., *personal identity, nihilism, moral realism, utilitarianism, scepticism, aesthetic subjectivism*);

**IS1.03** – identify the main conclusions of some philosophical positions regarding one or more of the big questions, and the arguments used to support them;

**IS1.04** – illustrate common fallacies in reasoning (e.g., using ambiguous language to reach a conclusion, dismissing an argument because of who advanced it instead of evaluating its intrinsic merits).

### Using Research Skills

**IS2.01** – find overviews of a variety of philosophical concepts and theories by accessing such sources as encyclopaedias and surveys, and report on their findings;

**IS2.02** – compile information related to the big questions of philosophy, using the Internet.

### Using Communication Skills

**IS3.01** – discuss their own views in philosophical exchanges in class with others;

**IS3.02** – clearly explain their views and display their use of philosophical reasoning skills in short written papers, using accepted forms of documentation as required.

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## Unit 1: What is a Person: An Introduction to the Study of Philosophy

**Time:** 35.5 hours

### Unit Description

Philosophy has been called wisdom without answers. Its traditional role has been to shine the light of analysis on questions that mathematics and science cannot address, questions that centre on the nature of personhood and the relationship of that person with the world. That role is no less important today. Secondary school students reflect on these profound questions daily and need a vehicle for their intellectual journey. The course is designed to give their contemplations a focus, a vocabulary, and a context.

This unit addresses the central question of the course, What is a Person? Because the concept of personhood deals with our nature and how we interact with the world, this unit necessarily provides direct links to the other big questions of the course and thus serves as an introduction to the remainder of the course content. The inevitable overlapping of content complements and reinforces student understanding and provides a clear awareness of the interconnectedness of all the subject disciplines in his/her curriculum. In this way, the teacher and student are able to make informed choices when selecting remaining units of the course, planning projects, and selecting areas of interest for further study.

### Unit Synopsis Chart

Activity	Time	Expectations	A	Tasks
1.1: Laying the Foundations for the Study of Philosophy - What are the component parts of a person?	7.5 hours	PQV.01, PQV.02, ISV.01, ISV.02, ISV.03, ELV.02, OSV.01, PQ1.05, EL1.03, OS1.01, IS1.02, IS2.01, IS2.02, IS3.01, IS3.02	T/I	Topoi on “Personhood”
1.2: What is a self? or What is a personal identity?	2.5 hours	ISV.03, IS3.01	A	Collage self-portrait
1.3: Are the mind and the body the same thing or are they separate and distinct?	3.75 hours	PQV.01, PQ1.02, ISV.03, IS1.01	K/U	Me a monist? A written explanation of my personal view of the mind-body dilemma
1.4: Is there a soul and, if so, what is it? Can a soul exist after the body has died?	6.25 hours	PTV.01, PTV.02, PT1.01, PT1.03, OSV.02, OS1.03, ISV.03, IS2.02, PQV.02, PQ1.05, PTV.02, PT1.03, OSV.02, OS1.03	C	Visual Representation of the Soul
1.5: Is a person a part of or separate from their environment?	3.75 hours	PQV.02, PQ1.02, ISV.02, IS1.04	A	News article analysis

1.6: Can machines and animals be persons?	3.75 hours	PTV.01, PT1.01	K/U	Reflection paper that analyses if animals or machines are candidates for personhood
1.7: How do non-Western traditions address these Questions?	3.75 hours	ISV.05, IS3.01, ISV.02, IS2.01	C	Poem or short story that illustrates the Buddhist theories of the self
1.8: Unit Culminating Activity: A Philosophical Self-Portrait	5 hours	PQV.02, PQ1.03, ELV.01, EL1.01, ELV.02, EL1.02, ISV.01, IS1.03, ISV.04, IS3.02, ISV.01, IS2.02	K/U T/I A C	Philosophical Self-Portrait

As the title suggests, Unit 1 is designed to introduce Grade 11 students of mixed ability to the study of philosophy. As such, a large block of time has been allocated to the first activity, in which students are introduced to philosophical thought and some of the tools required to be successful at philosophy. The unit attempts to weave together introductory exercises with the question, “What is a Person”, so that students have an opportunity to practise and apply philosophical skills to one of the central questions of the course. During the unit, students complete eight pieces of work, ranging from written reflections to visual collages. Each of these activities has targeted one area of the Achievement Chart for evaluation purposes. Students are expected to complete each of the activities; they receive formative assessment on each piece as it is completed. Once each piece of work is completed, students place the work in a portfolio. At the end of the unit, students should select what they consider to be their best four pieces of work, ensuring that all four areas of the Achievement Chart are represented in their selection. This collection of work serves as a demonstration of students’ most consistent work. Teachers may want to allow a day at the end of the unit for students to polish and refine the pieces of work before they are submitted. As well, throughout the unit students are encouraged to record their thoughts and feelings about various issues in their Philosopher’s Journal. This journal should include a variety of types of writing as well as drawings.

### **Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement**

Throughout the unit, students complete seven activities, each directly linked to an area of the Achievement Chart. For each of the activities, students should receive peer- and/or teacher assessment and an opportunity to revise and polish their work. Once each activity is revised and polished it should be placed in the student’s Learning Portfolio. At the end of the unit, students should be given an opportunity to select their best pieces of work to be submitted for evaluation. Students must submit a minimum of four pieces so that each area of the Achievement Chart is represented. Students should be required to complete all activities before being allowed to select their best practice.

Throughout the unit students are asked to complete reflections in a variety of ways to become part of their Philosopher’s Journal. The completed journal should constitute a part of the final evaluation. Be sure to allow time for these entries to be completed, assessed, and revised.

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## **Activity 1: Laying the Foundations for the Study of Philosophy – What are the component parts of a person?**

**Time:** 450 minutes

### **Description**

This first activity serves three crucial purposes; first, it is an introduction to philosophy designed to shed some of the myths about the subject and to lay the foundations students require to be successful in a discipline quite unlike any other they have encountered; second, this activity launches students into the search for the meaning of what it means to be a person; third, this activity introduces students to the culminating activity for the unit, to which all future activities relate. To assist students in beginning to consider what it means to be a person, they are introduced to the *topoi*, a classical Greek method of questioning. By the end of this activity, students complete a *topoi* on the issue of personhood, which weaves together the questions of what it means to be a person and several of the philosophical skills students need to develop to be successful in this course. Allowing students time to become comfortable in the philosophical arena and setting the focus of the unit and culminating activity require the first week of the class. Although this may seem like a substantial commitment of time, the pay-off in the end will be well worth the effort.

### **Strand(s) & Learning Expectations**

**Strand(s):** Philosophical Questions, Philosophy and Everyday Life, Applications of Philosophy to Other Subjects, Research and Inquiry Skills

#### **Overall Expectations**

ISV.01 - apply research and inquiry skills related to philosophy appropriately and effectively;

PQV.01 - describe precisely and clearly three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy;

PQV.02 - summarize their own or others' answers to these questions, and give reasons in support of the answers;

ELV.01 - relate the big questions of philosophy to their own experience, reports in the news media, and their society;

ELV.02 - demonstrate the application of philosophical theories and skills to jobs, occupations, and everyday life;

ISV.02 - evaluate some main philosophical arguments;

ISV.03 - formulate and defend a response of their own to one or more of the big questions of philosophy;

OSV.01 - identify philosophical theories and presuppositions in natural science, history, art, social science and humanities, and other subjects.

#### **Specific Expectations**

IS3.01 - discuss their own views in philosophical exchanges in class with others;

IS2.01 - find overviews of a variety of philosophical concepts and theories by accessing such sources as encyclopaedias and surveys, and report on their findings;

IS2.02 - compile information related to the big questions of philosophy using the Internet;

IS3.02 - clearly explain their views and display their use of philosophical reasoning skills in short written papers, using accepted forms of documentation as required;

PQ1.05 - compare philosophical approaches to some of the big questions with non-philosophical approaches;

EL1.03 - apply philosophical skills such as precise writing and critical analysis to solve problems that arise in jobs and occupations;

OS1.01 - identify philosophical positions presupposed in some other disciplines;

IS1.02 - define terms central to philosophical discussions of each of the big questions.

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## Prior Knowledge & Skills

While it is not expected that students will arrive in Philosophy aware of either the key tools or philosophies to be studied, the importance of purposeful and respectful dialogue and discussions should be stressed. For a Philosophy course to succeed, it needs to be stressed and reinforced with students that they need to be able to share and respect the opinions of others.

## Planning Notes

- Create a Diagnostic questionnaire which asks students to define central philosophical terms, to express their view on the value of studying philosophy, and to respond to the suggestion that philosophy course should be mandatory for all students.
- Acquire rubric, Topoi outline and model, and list of sample first- and second-order questions from website [www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil).
- Because the first week is a variety of beginning activities, the teacher should anticipate a variety of responses in many of the discussions. Impress upon students that they must explain their opinions as clearly as possible. It is never sufficient to simply state “that is how I feel” or “it’s just my opinion.” Allow time for students to rephrase answers and to query other members of the class as to their responses. If a student directly challenges another student in an insulting way (e.g., “What a stupid answer!”) introduce the ad hominem rule. Attack the theory in neutral language, but not the theorist.
- Collect back issues of glossy magazines to be used for collages.
- Be prepared to provide audio and visual playback equipment, if possible.

## Planning for the Culminating Activity

- a) Prepare rubric for culminating activity.
- b) Prepare draft schedule for student-teacher conferences.
- c) Allot time to work on the culminating activity throughout the unit.
- d) Gather materials such as paints and video cameras.
- e) Schedule time to research in the Library/Resource Centre.

## Teaching/Learning Strategies

### Step One

1. When students arrive to their first class in Philosophy, have them do a think/pair/share on the definition of philosophy. To do this, ask them to individually define the word philosophy. After allowing a few minutes for students to complete this task, students are to form groups of three to share definitions and try to arrive at a consensus. Once groups have had an opportunity to share and discuss their definitions, groups share the main ideas that emerged from their discussion. List these ideas on the board.
2. Compare student definitions with a variety of definitions, from dictionaries, textbooks, etc., to determine degree of consistency with the ideas. A variety can be found on the website [www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil).

### Step Two

1. Students complete a questionnaire, consisting of a wide range of general statements and questions of a philosophical nature.
2. Students write their answers on the handout. Allow 20 to 30 minutes of quiet time for this part. Then, use a three-step interview strategy to generate discussion and a sharing of ideas. Students form groups of three. One student conducts the interview (host), one student is interviewed (guest), and the third makes notes on interesting ideas and further questions that arise (observer). Allow a few minutes for students to generate a list of questions for the interview. The questions should relate to the ideas and issues raised in the Diagnostic Quiz. Students conduct the interview.

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After five minutes, students change roles. The observer becomes the host, the host becomes the guest, and the guest becomes the observer. The second interview should build on the first, so the new host needs to draw on the notes they made while observing. Repeat this process a third time so that all students play each role.

3. After the three-step interview, list some of the interesting ideas and questions on the board.
4. Assign the first entry in the Philosopher's Journal. This is a good place to discuss the nature of the Philosopher's Journal and its role in the final evaluation. (See course overview.) Students should depict, in a poem, a collage of questions, a drawing, or a reflective piece of writing, what they believe the study of Philosophy entails and what they are expecting this course to be about. Remind students that this is a personal view but must reflect ideas and definitions raised over the past few days.

### **Step Three**

1. Using the notes found on the website [www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil), further define the subject of philosophy by encouraging students to consider the relevance of philosophy and introducing them to the fields and areas of philosophy.
2. Students do a Concept Attainment exercise to understand first- and second-order questions. Provide a list of ten questions. Odd-numbered questions are first-order questions while even-numbered questions are second-order questions. Instruct students to individually read the questions and determine or speculate as to how the odd and even number questions differ. Once students have individually thought about the nature of the questions, they share their ideas with a partner.
3. Provide students with two additional questions to act as testers for their hypothesis as to how the odd and even questions differ.
4. Unveil the definitions for first- and second-order questions. Ask students whether the odd or even questions are first-order questions. Was their hypothesis correct?
5. Have students copy the definitions in their notes and stress the importance of asking second-order questions in Philosophy. Some guidance for this discussion can be found on the website.

### **Step Four**

1. Introduce students to the Topoi, the classic Greek questioning method. (Topoi is pronounced toe-PEE.) A topoi uses a series of common questions applied to the topic being considered. It encourages divergent and analytical thinking. An outline for the topoi can be found in Appendix 2.
2. This activity demonstrates to students that the topoi is a valuable analytical tool for any subject. But, particularly, it shows them that even highly abstract concepts, such as time or thought, are susceptible to rigorous analysis to the same extent as any other subject. (A sample topoi can be found on the website [www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/).)
3. Students copy the topoi questions from the overhead into their notes while the teacher explains them.
4. Show the overheads of the completed example topoi. Students read it but do not make notes, as it is for demonstration and clarification purposes.
5. Students work with a partner to complete a topoi on "love" as practice. As they respond to each of the questions, ask them to note, which were the most problematic. After 20-30 minutes, the class builds a topoi on "love" by adding responses to each of the questions on the board. If students are struggling, have the class brainstorm together to complete the topoi.
6. Now that students have seen a topoi and have completed their own, they complete a topoi on the issue of "What is a person?". Once completed, the topoi is assessed by the teacher, and students are given an opportunity to revise their topoi before placing it in their Portfolio. Allow students to work with a partner to generate ideas for their topoi. Allow them time in class to complete their topoi. To help them get started, time should be used for the pairs to brainstorm, with careful direction from the teacher, to determine what parts constitute a person.

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Through brainstorming and a brief Socratic discussion, students should garner these essential ideas regarding personhood: Being a person entails: 1) physical - what we do with our bodies, our bio-mechanical component, and what we look like; 2) emotional - how we respond to external stimuli, our behavioural or psychological component; 3) intellectual - our mind, our thinking component; and 4) spiritual - how we deal with questions about our soul, immortality, etc.

7. The teacher may wish to provide students with some brief articles from magazines and newspapers to assist them in preparing their topoi.

### **Step Five**

1. Assign the Culminating Activity: A Philosophical Self-Portrait (Appendix 1).
2. Go over the requirements of the culminating activity in detail to ensure all students understand what is expected from them. Review the rubric for this activity and discuss with students how to use a rubric to assist them in achieving their best possible performance.
3. Remind students that several of the activities completed throughout the unit can be used as a springboard or as a part of the self-portrait. For example, their ideas and the research they do to complete their topoi will be useful in preparing the culminating activity.
4. Allow time for students to begin generating ways in which they can illustrate their personal components by using images, musical selections, and/or selections of writing. This brainstorming is most effective when done in groups of two or three.
5. After students have had time to consider ideas for their culminating activity, bring them back to a whole class focus. Play a song such as, “Adrian” by Jewel (from *Pieces of You*) and ask students to do a think/pair/share on whether or not, according to their topoi and discussions they have had with other students, the individual in the song is a person. This is an interesting way of reversing the question whereby there is no doubt the individual is human but is he/she a person. This discussion could extend to the “Persons” case, 1929 (Where five Alberta women asked the Supreme Court of Canada to declare that women were persons under the meaning of the BNA Act and therefore eligible to be appointed to the Senate).
6. After students have had an opportunity to consider what it means to be a person both in the case of Adrian and the Alberta women have students consider how they would represent their ideas/reactions in the Philosophical Self-Portrait.
7. Students complete their examination of what it means to be a person by completing an entry in their Philosopher’s Journal in response to the song “Adrian” or the “Persons” case. In either a written or a visual depiction, students reflect their philosophical views on the right to be considered a person. As with all journal entries, students should receive feedback and the opportunity to improve their entry before submitting it as part of the final evaluation.

### **Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement**

- The activities carried out during the first few days of this course are intended to serve as useful diagnostic tools. Through observation of student performance the teacher can determine literacy levels, including handwriting, spelling, and reading abilities. During the think/pair/share, the teacher circulates among the students and begins to get a sense of their verbal proficiency.
- Once the foundations for philosophical study are laid, students are assigned a topoi based on “What does it mean to be a person?”. The topoi is revised based on peer and teacher assessment and then set aside in a portfolio. It may be submitted at the end of the unit as part of the work to be evaluated.

### **Accommodations**

- Begin the course with students expressing opinions with a partner and then a small group.
- Encourage students to make brief notes and sketch out a plan for their topoi.
- Review steps and provide additional support as required.

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## Resources

### Print

Saturday editions of *The Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, *The National Post*, and local newspapers.

Wiley's Non Sequitur

Watterson's Calvin and Hobbes

*The UTNE Reader*

### Audio

Jewel. "Adrian", *Pieces of You*, or other relevant song

### Websites

[www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/)

## Appendices

Appendix 1 – Unit 1 Culminating Activity: A Philosophical Self-Portrait

Appendix 2 – The Classic Topoi

## Activity 2: What is a self? or What is a personal identity?

**Time:** 150 minutes

### Description

The components of what it means to be a person in the previous activity are explored further to establish what a personal identity is. The nature of uniqueness and subjectivity is the focus of this activity. Each student produces a collage self-portrait. On completion, students make a short presentation of their artwork, including an explanation of how the collage reflects the student's image of his/herself. The end product provides additional material for the culminating activity.

### Strand(s) & Learning Expectations

**Strand(s):** Philosophical Questions, Research and Inquiry Skills

#### Overall Expectations

ISV.03 - formulate and defend a response of their own to one or more of the big questions of philosophy.

#### Specific Expectations

IS3.01 - discuss their own views in philosophical exchanges in class with others.

### Prior Knowledge & Skills

- Students review the information gathered in the previous activity.

### Planning Notes

- Collect back issues of glossy magazines of a variety of subject matter, especially fashion and sports, for students to use for collages.
- Supply scissors, glue sticks, and construction paper in a variety of colours and black.
- Develop rubric to guide students in creating their collage and to use as a framework for evaluation at the end of the unit.

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Students work with a partner to consider what we as persons have in common and how each of us is unique. Ask each pair of students to complete a Venn diagram in which each student is represented by one circle. The overlapping area represents what they have in common.

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2. Once students have completed their Venn diagram, ask them to consider the role of memories in defining our selves. Lead a Socratic discussion on memory and self.

Memories are common to us all, but each person’s memories are uniquely theirs. Over time, two people who shared a particular experience will have different recollections/memories of that experience. We are our memories. Memories are subjective mental constructs that are based on our experiences. Our memories are uniquely our own. We can share experiences inasmuch as we can experience an event with other people and even agree on certain details about it. Since the present is always moving forward in time - a state that the Buddhists call the eternal now - what happened seconds ago is as much a part of our memory as something that happened much farther in the past. But these two memories don’t share the same degree of reliability. Over time, memories seem to change. Why is this? And since our identity is very much a part of those memories, does that suggest that our identity, our self, changes over time?
  3. Student pairs return to their Venn diagram and review it in light of the discussion on memories. They should make any changes they feel are necessary.
  4. Working from the completed Venn diagram, each student designs a collage, which captures their uniqueness as individual persons. At this stage, students generate a list of ideas, items, photographs, and symbols, which reflect something important about themselves. Before turning the list of ideas and items into a collage, students share the list with at least two other students. Others may be able to point out unique features in us that we ourselves overlook.
  5. Remind students that a collage is a picture created by gluing small pieces of torn or cut coloured paper or fabric onto any flat surface, such as another piece of paper or bristol board. Three-dimensional objects, such as tins or boxes, are suitable as well for a sculptured effect. Depending of the size of the bits of paper, the image can be quite detailed. Also, a variety of styles can be easily and effectively explored by students to depict their personal notions of memory and self in this self-portrait exercise.
  6. Once students have completed their collage, they prepare an entry for their Philosopher’s Journal, which captures their self in words. They can write a poem, prepare a descriptive paragraph, or create a word collage using only words and phrases to capture the essence of themselves. This journal entry should be peer assessed.
  7. Remind students that the completed collage may be a useful piece for the Culminating Activity.

### **Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement**

Each student produces a collage self-portrait. Students need to be guided in the creation of the collage and reminded that the key to this activity is the ability to reflect philosophical ideas through a visual display. Once the collages are finished, the teacher should assess using the rubric (see Website) and indicate a level of performance. Students then have the opportunity to refine their work. Students then place the collage in their portfolio. It may be submitted at the end of the unit as part of the body of work to be evaluated.

### **Accommodations**

- Provide students with a Socratic discussion Road Map, which identifies the main ideas for discussion. Students should then make brief notes under each of the headings. The teacher should have a similar outline on the board or an overhead to assist students in their note taking. Be sure to assess students’ notes to make sure they understand the key points.
- Allow students to present to small groups rather than the whole class.
- Encourage students who are struggling with the use of the English language to create a word collage for the journal entry.

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## Resources

Magazines, construction paper, scissors, and glue sticks

## Websites

[www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/)

## Activity 3: Are the mind and the body the same thing or are they separate and distinct?

**Time:** 225 minutes

### Description

As the class explores a series of thought-provoking questions, they formulate a personal view of the relationship between the brain, the mind, and being a person. In the process of their considerations, students complete a graphic organizer, gathering information on the contrasting views of dualists and monists. Based on the information gathered in the graphic organizer, students write an explanation as to why they consider themselves either a dualist or a monist.

### Strand(s) & Learning Expectations

**Strand(s):** Philosophical Theories, Research and Inquiry Skills

#### Overall Expectations

PQV.01 - describe precisely and clearly three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy;

ISV.03 - formulate and defend a response of their own to one or more of the big questions of philosophy.

#### Specific Expectations

PQ1.02 - give appropriate reasons for their own or others' answers to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy;

IS1.01 - correctly use the terminology of philosophical argumentation.

### Prior Knowledge & Skills

Students need to be able to extract essential information from the Socratic method of questioning. The need to take concise notes based on discussions should be stressed/reviewed.

### Planning Notes

- Obtain or prepare concise and readable summaries of Rene Descartes', George Berkeley's, and Thales' views on reality and the mind-body dilemma.
- Create a graphic organizer which provides boxes to define dualist and monist; boxes to list some of the essential ideas of Descartes, Berkeley, and Thales (or other relevant philosophers); boxes for students to list questions and reactions to the contrasting points of view; and a larger box where students can respond to the statement "I believe myself to be a monists/dualist/idealist."
- Book a TV/VCR for viewing a video such as, *Are the Mind and the Brain Distinct?*.

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Before embarking on an exploration of the mind-body problem, students need to consider the world in a material and immaterial sense. To get them thinking about the issue, do a concept attainment with students on Material and Immaterial. Tell students you have grouped items into List A and List B. Reveal pairs of words (one word from each list) and ask students to attempt to determine what the words in each list have in common. Reveal the following five sets of words. Students create a hypothesis individually and then share their hypothesis with a partner. Once students have a hypothesis, reveal a final pair of words (testers) and ask students to place each word in one of the

lists based on their hypothesis. Students share their hypotheses. Students should see that List A is material while List B is immaterial. Ask students which list represents reality. Can both be a part of reality? Allow time for students to discuss this question in small groups.

<b>List A</b>	<b>List B</b>
chairs	dreams
trees	anger
cats	seeing
stones	God
atoms	happiness
<i>Tester: time</i>	you

2. After a debriefing in which the groups share ideas with the class, provide definitions for monism, dualism, and idealism. Students should record them in the appropriate boxes on the graphic organizer supplied by the teacher.
  - Idealism: The metaphysical theory that ideas (thoughts, concepts, minds) are ultimately real. (Be careful not to confuse idealism as a moral theory.)
  - Dualism: The theory that reality is both material and immaterial. It leaves open the questions of the relationship between the two. Is one more important than the other?
  - Monism: The theory that there is a single reality. One could be either materialist or idealist.
3. Students create a graphic organizer with three concentric circles. Have them place the word “Brain” in the inner circle, “Mind” in the middle circle, and “Person” in the outer circle. Instruct students to place words and phrases in each of the circles as the following discussion unfolds. Words/phrases that make connections between any of these words should be placed on the organizer to reflect this connection.
4. Carry out a Socratic discussion by asking these questions and allow time for responses. For this activity, discourage digressions.
  - a) What is a brain? Describe it. Anticipate answers regarding its physical nature and location.
  - b) What is a mind? Describe it. Encourage answers like: ideas, thoughts, senses, and memories.
  - c) Is a mind physical? Is it physical in the same way that a brain is physical?
  - d) Is a mind part of the brain? Note that a mind may be part of a brain, but not the same thing as a brain.
  - e) Is the brain a container for a mind?
  - f) Are the mind and the brain two aspects of the same thing?
  - g) If the mind and the brain are separate and distinct, how do they interact? (This is the heart of the mind-body debate.)
  - h) What is a thought? Where/how does a thought arise?
  - i) Considering our earlier discussions on what it means to be a person, what is the relationship between the mind and being a person?
5. Once the discussion is complete and students have finished placing words and phrases on their graphic organizers, they consider the relationship between these contrasting views of reality and the mind-body dilemma. They can do this by penciling in on the supplied graphic organizer why, at this point they would consider themselves an idealist, monist, or dualist.
6. Show the video *Are the Mind and the Brain Distinct?* As students watch the video, they add relevant notes to the organizer, helping them to understand the central issue and the contrasting philosophies.

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7. Place students in groups of three. Ask students to number off from one to 3. The one's form a group, the two's form another group, and the three's form a third group. Assign the one's a reading about Rene Descartes' view on the mind-body dilemma, the two's a reading about George Berkeley's view, and the three's a reading about Thales' view. Readings need to be straightforward, readable summaries. They may be found in a philosophy text or prepared by the teacher. Other philosophers could be chosen as long as a monist, dualist, and idealist viewpoint is represented.
  8. Each group reads and discusses the assigned viewpoint. It is essential that all members of the groups understand and can explain the ideas as they will be returning to their original (home) group and explaining the ideas to their group members.
  9. Once the three groups have read and discussed their assigned reading, students return to their original group. Each member of the home group explains a reading. Students record the main ideas on the graphic organizer supplied.
  10. Once the three contrasting views are explained, students should have completed their graphic organizer. Based on the ideas expressed by the philosophers, students should reflect on their earlier position regarding are they a monist, dualist, or idealist? They revise and finalize this section of the organizer.
  11. A final class discussion should be held to clarify any questions or concerns. Students submit their completed graphic organizer to be assessed by the teacher.
  12. Once students receive their graphic organizer back and make any necessary revisions, they write a paragraph in which they clearly explain why they consider themselves a monist, dualist, or idealist. Their paragraph is peer assessed and revised before being placed in their portfolio.

### **Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement**

Students complete a graphic organizer, which defines the terms dualist, monist, and idealist; summarize key ideas of various philosophers; and reflect their views of the mind-body question. Once complete, students submit their organizer to the teacher to be assessed. Based on the complete organizer, students write a clear paragraph in which they explain why they consider themselves to be either a dualist, a monist, or an idealist. The paragraph is peer assessed using the rubric provided. Based on the peer assessment, students revise and polish their paragraph before placing it in their portfolio.

### **Accommodations**

- Write key ideas on the board to assist students in zeroing in on what to include in their organizer.
- If students are struggling with abstract ideas, reduce the focus of the lesson to the mind-body dilemma without considering the contrasting viewpoints
- Provide students the option of explaining their viewpoint orally, either in a small-group discussion or on audio tape.

### **Resources**

Blackburn, Simon. *Think*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Descartes, Rene. *Meditations IV*.

Miller, Ed L. *Questions That Matter*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996.

### **Video**

*Are the Mind and the Brain Distinct?* Magic Lantern.

### **Websites**

[www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/)

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## **Activity 4: Is there a soul and, if so, what is it?**

### **Can a soul exist after the body has died?**

**Time:** 375 minutes

#### **Description**

This activity extends from the previous one by emphasizing that if the mind has some kind of special status or difference from the brain, then the issue of a soul arises. After exploring the possibility of the soul's existence, the teacher poses the question, "Can a soul exist after the body has died?" The teacher provides a written summary of varying viewpoints on the issue (Aristotle and Descartes). In pairs, students analyse the validity of the arguments and individually create a visual representation (cartoon) of one of the arguments.

#### **Strand(s) & Learning Expectations**

**Strand(s):** Applications of Philosophy to Other Subjects, Philosophical Questioning

#### **Overall Expectations**

PQV.02 - summarize their own or others' answers to these questions, and give reasons in support of the answers;

ISV.02 - evaluate some main philosophical arguments;

PTV.01 - summarize the ideas of some famous philosophers with respect to one or more of the big questions of philosophy;

PTV.02 - describe the strengths and weaknesses of the responses to some of the big questions of philosophy defended by some major philosophers or schools of philosophy;

ISV.03 - formulate and defend a response of their own to one or more of the big questions of philosophy;

OSV.02 - demonstrate how philosophical skills that are used to address the big questions of philosophy can be used effectively in other subjects.

#### **Specific Expectations**

PQ1.05 - compare philosophical approaches to some of the big questions with non-philosophical approaches;

PQ1.02 - give appropriate reasons for their own or others' answers to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy;

IS1.04 - illustrate common fallacies in reasoning;

PT1.01 - compare answers to some of the big questions by different philosophers;

PT1.03 - describe important similarities and differences among some of the world's philosophical traditions with regards to three (or more) of the big questions;

IS2.02 - compile information related to the big questions of philosophy, using the Internet;

OS1.03 - identify examples of fallacies in reasoning in writings from other subjects.

#### **Prior Knowledge & Skills**

Students need to have a firm grasp of the concepts raised in Activity 3, including Socratic questioning. Students also have some experience evaluating philosophical arguments.

#### **Planning Notes**

- Obtain concise and readable summaries or prepare overheads or handouts that summarize Descartes' and Aristotle's arguments on the immortality of the soul.
- Develop the rubric for this assignment and share with students before they begin their cartoon. (See website [www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil).)
- Show an example of a cartoon that depicts a philosophical argument. Students can use such cartoons as models for their own work.

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## Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Students create five second-order questions about the relationship between the soul and self (Activity 1.) Teachers should quickly review the questions to ensure students have generated second-order questions. Students create questions, such as What is a soul? If there is one, is it different from a mind?
2. Put students in pairs. Assign each student a reading on either Descartes or Aristotle. Once students have completed their reading, they respond to as many of the questions they created as possible. After students have had time to read and respond to the questions, they explain their reading and answers to their partner. Based on this explanation, students expand on their responses to their questions.
3. Students designate one partner A and the other partner B. Ask all Bs to put their hands up and leave them up until a new A student has joined them. Students discuss their readings and ideas relating to the soul. Once more students are to add to or expand on their responses to their questions.
4. Ask the existing pairs of students to join another pair of students. Each member in the group of shares one of their responses with the group. After a brief discussion to clarify ideas or raise new questions, the student contributing the idea neatly writes the question or statement in large letters on a large piece of paper. Each group then puts up their questions and/or statements around the room.
5. The teacher does a final debriefing, noting questions that dominate, have much in common, or are unique.
6. As a final exercise in thinking about the soul, students close their eyes and imagine they are living in the future. The ability to transport people through time and space has been developed by breaking the body into electrical impulses and reconstructing it at the intended destination. When the body is reconstituted, would the soul have also been transported? If not, how would the newly reconstructed physical form differ from the original form? Allow students an opportunity to discuss this idea with a partner or small group, followed by a class discussion.
7. Students prepare an entry in their Philosopher's Journal based on their responses to this question. The response can be in the form of cartoon, a short piece of fiction, or a paragraph response.
8. The teacher recaps the discussion regarding the existence of the soul, through oral questioning (e.g., What do we mean by the term soul? What evidence is there to suggest that we have a soul? What evidence is there to oppose this theory? In your opinion, what argument is the most compelling?).
9. The teacher should then introduce the question, "Can a soul exist after the body has died?" Students work in pairs to brainstorm this question and then a general class discussion ensues.
10. An overhead or handout is presented to the class, outlining the contrasting arguments of Aristotle and Descartes regarding immortality of the soul. In pairs, students discuss the validity of both arguments.
11. Individually, students create a cartoon that illustrates the components of either Aristotle's or Descartes' argument. After creating a draft, the cartoon is peer assessed using the supplied rubric. Students revise and polish their cartoon, based on the peer feedback, and then place the cartoon in their portfolio.

## Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement

The discussion surrounding the soul is very important to the visual representation required in this activity. Teachers should ensure that all students participate in the discussion and make some brief notes on the main ideas arising from the discussion. Teachers should assess students' notes to ensure that they have recorded the central ideas and concepts. Students should then prepare a rough sketch of their cartoon, including both the visual and written aspects. The draft of the cartoon should be teacher or peer assessed using the rubric supplied. Students then revise and finalize their cartoon and place it in their portfolio.

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## Accommodations

- Allow students in pairs or small groups to work and discuss the issues in their first language, before recording their main ideas in English.
- Some students may feel uncomfortable drawing and may use the computer to create their illustrations.
- Readings may be altered to accommodate student needs.
- An example of a visual representation of a philosophical argument may be shown and explained by the teacher. It would be beneficial to show an illustration of an argument that they have previously studied.

## Resources

Blackburn, Simon. *Think*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Miller, Ed L. *Questions That Matter*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996.

Popkin, R. and A. Stroll. *Philosophy Made Simple*. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

Thompson, Mel. *Teach Yourself Philosophy*. Chicago: NTC Publishing Group, 1995.

## Activity 5: Is a person a part of or separate from his/her environment? (Fallacies in Reasoning)

**Time:** 225 minutes

### Description

In this activity, students consider to what degree, if any, a person is a part of their environment or an entirely separate entity. While considering this issue, they are introduced to the terminology used to describe fallacies in reasoning. They are provided with the opportunity to identify and explain fallacies found in a philosophical article and in a newspaper article. This will be done in groups of four and then individually. Using a four corners exercise, students debate the question, “Is a person a part of or separate from their environment?” Once the debate has been completed, students prepare a visual representation of the relationship between themselves and their environment for their Philosopher’s Journal.

### Strand(s) & Learning Expectations

**Strand(s):** Philosophical Questions, Research and Inquiry Skills

#### Overall Expectations

PQV.02 - summarize their own or others’ answers to these questions, and give reasons in support of the answers;

ISV.02 - evaluate some main philosophical arguments.

#### Specific Expectations

PQ1.02 - give appropriate reasons for their own or others’ answers to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy;

IS1.04 - illustrate common fallacies in reasoning.

### Prior Knowledge & Skills

Students have some previous experience evaluating philosophical arguments. This lesson provides students with terminology that they will utilize for the remainder of the course.

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## Planning Notes

- Prepare a handout that lists the fallacies in reasoning with an appropriate definition and example.
- Obtain various articles that deal with the guiding question for the class.
- Construct mixed-ability groups.
- Prepare signs for the four corners of the room (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree).

## Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. The teacher hands out an Activity Sheet that lists common fallacies in reasoning (e.g., using ambiguous language to reach a conclusion, dismissing an argument because of who advanced it instead of evaluating its intrinsic merits). The Activity Sheet should have three columns: the name of the fallacy, the definition, and an example of each fallacy. The examples should be out of order and, after the teacher has reviewed the definitions with students, they should attempt to match the correct example to the definition. The activity may be done in pairs.
2. The Activity Sheet should be taken up by the teacher, ensuring that each student understands each term.
3. The following question should be put on the board: Is a person a part of or separate from their environment? A general class discussion, facilitated by the teacher, should ensue.
4. Students are put in groups of four. Each group should be given a different article that deals with the discussion question. In their groups, students summarize the argument that is made in the article and list any fallacies in the author's reasoning. The information is recorded on chart paper and presented to the class.
5. After each group has presented their article, the teacher leads a four corners exercise based on the statement, "A person is separate from their environment." Each corner in the room will have a specific designation: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Students contemplate the statement and move to the corresponding corner. When all students have moved to their specific corner, each of the four groups receives a piece of chart paper. As a cohesive group, students record the reasons for their opinion on the chart paper. The group selects a spokesperson to convey their opinion to the class. At this point, students who have changed their mind may move to a different corner. The chart paper is posted on the wall. Students should be encouraged to watch for fallacies in reasoning as the groups explain their positions.
6. For homework, students find a newspaper article and list and explain the fallacies in reasoning that are found within it. The article is added to the student's Portfolio after they have had an opportunity to respond to teacher feedback.

## Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement

The teacher should visit each group while they are completing the matching exercise to ensure that all students understand the terminology. The newspaper assignment should be formally assessed by the teacher and then placed in the student's portfolio. The visual representation of the self and the environment should also be assessed so students have an opportunity to revise and polish as necessary.

## Accommodations

- Readings may be altered to accommodate student needs.
- The teacher may provide a suitable newspaper article with the fallacies highlighted. The student would then be asked to identify and explain the fallacies.

## Resources

Kessler, Gary. *Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Reader*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2000.  
Popkin, R. and A. Stroll. *Philosophy Made Simple*. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

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## Activity 6: Can machines and animals be persons?

**Time:** 225 minutes

### Description

In this activity, students deepen their understanding of personhood and are challenged with the question, “Can machines and animals be persons? Students work in groups to create ten criteria that define being a person. After reading various articles on animals and machines, students individually write a reflection paper that analyses if animals or machines can be considered persons. Students then uncover the implications of their assertions.

### Strand(s) & Learning Expectations

**Strand(s):** Philosophical Theories

#### Overall Expectations

PTV.01 - summarizes the ideas of famous philosophers with respect to one or more of the big questions of philosophy;

ISV.05 - effectively communicate the results of their inquiries.

#### Specific Expectations

PT1.01 - compare answers to some of the big questions by different philosophers;

IS3.02 - clearly explain their views and display their use of philosophical reasoning skills in short written papers, using acceptable forms of documentation as required.

### Prior Knowledge & Skills

Students need a basic understanding of the term personhood. They also need to know how to analyse a specific argument and how to formulate and defend a response of their own. The previous six activities provide the sufficient background needed for this lesson.

### Planning Notes

- Prepare class sets of short readings based on the question, “Can animals or machines be persons?”
- Divide the class into groups of four. Mixed-ability groupings should be used to assist students who have difficulty reading extended passages.
- Prepare the rubric for this assignment and share with students before they begin writing their reflection paper.

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. In groups of four, students brainstorm ten criteria for being considered a person. The group should come to a consensus. The teacher should reinforce the idea that the terms “person” and “human” should not be used synonymously and that the term “human” is a biological concept, whereas the term “person” is a philosophical one.
2. Each group presents their findings to the class. The class then comes to a consensus and produces a final list of the ten criteria for personhood. The teacher facilitates this discussion.
3. The teacher should then introduce the idea that we often assume humans are the only candidates for personhood. The teacher can then pose the question, “Is it theoretically possible to have “persons” who are non-human?” A general class discussion should ensue.
4. Students return to their original group of four and receive an article to analyse. Half of the groups should receive an article that deals with the issue that animals are non-human persons (see Resources). The article “Is A Dolphin A Person?” is an interesting example. The other groups should receive an article that deals with the issue that machines are non-human persons (see Resources). The article “Can Machines Think?” is an interesting example. The teacher should visit each group to pose questions and to clarify specific passages.

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5. In their groups, students take the information they have learned about a machine or specific animal and test it against the ten criteria that the class created for personhood. The group determines if the machine or animal is a candidate for personhood. Their conclusions should be informally presented to the class.
  6. Students individually write a reflection paper on the question, “Can machines and animals be persons?” They should specifically refer to the ten criteria of personhood in their response. In their response, they should also refer to the implications of their findings (e.g., If animals are persons, does this mean that they have certain rights? Is it wrong to keep them in captivity?). The polished reflection paper is placed in the student’s portfolio.

### **Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement**

During the group presentations of the ten criteria for personhood, the teacher should formatively assess the student’s understanding of the topic. If there are groups that do not seem to understand the main concepts behind the activity, the teacher may need to do some further explanation of the topic. Each student’s reflection paper is assessed by the teacher using a rubric. Students then have an opportunity to make improvements on their paper and may choose to submit it in their portfolio.

### **Accommodations**

- Students should be placed in mixed-ability groups in order to assist those students who may experience difficulty reading extended passages or for those students whose language skills may make them reluctant to speak in front of the class.
- Vocabulary lists may be provided to assist students with difficult terms and/or ideas.
- Prepare a set of prompts for the reflection paper.

### **Resources**

#### **Print**

Leiber, Justin. *Can Animals and Machines Be People?* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1985.

Wright, Robert. “Can Machines Think?” in *TIME*, April 1, 1996, pp. 50-58.

White, Thomas. “Is A Dolphin A “Person?” in *Discovering Philosophy: Brief Edition*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1996.

Wolff, R. “Do Computers Think?” in *About Philosophy*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1995.

#### **Video**

*Bicentennial Man*

#### **Websites**

[www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/)

## **Activity 7: How do non-western traditions address these questions?**

**Time:** 225 minutes

### **Description**

This is the last of the seven questions in this unit. While working on this activity, students reflect on the theories presented in the previous six questions and compare those theories with the Buddhist concept of the self. The teacher begins the lesson by facilitating a class discussion based on a quotation. Students view a short video that illustrates Buddhist theories and then have one research period in the Library/Resource Centre. From their research, students individually write a poem or short story that illustrates the Buddhist theories of the self.

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## Strand(s) & Learning Expectations

**Strand(s):** Research and Inquiry Skills

### Overall Expectations

ISV.02 - evaluate some main philosophical arguments;

ISV.05 - effectively communicate the results of their inquiries.

### Specific Expectations

IS2.01 - find overviews of a variety of philosophical concepts and theories by accessing such sources as encyclopaedias and surveys, and report their findings;

IS3.01 - discuss their own views in philosophical exchanges in class with others.

### Prior Knowledge & Skills

This is the last of the seven questions in this unit. Students have a clear understanding of a variety of theories that deal with the question, “What is a person?” They build on this knowledge and use it to analyse the concepts presented in the activity. They have previously been involved in class discussions, where they have evaluated philosophical arguments and presented their own ideas.

### Planning Notes

- Prepare an overhead with the quotation that will be discussed.
- The Library/Resource Centre should be booked and possible resources should be pulled.
- Create handouts that summarize Buddhist theories of the self for students who need accommodation.
- Prepare the rubric to be handed out before students begin their research.

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. The following quotation should be put on the board or on an overhead: “The self is an illusion that keeps people from achieving nirvana (a state of perpetual peace).”
2. The teacher facilitates a discussion based on the quotation (e.g., What do you think the quotation means? How does it differ from the previous theories that we have studied? Does it have any validity?). A general class discussion should occur.
3. After students understand the meaning of the quotation, they are further introduced to Buddhist beliefs regarding the self through a short video (e.g., *Mind as a Myth*).
4. Students should be given one period to work in the Library/Resource Centre to research Buddhist beliefs regarding the self. They should take notes from a variety of sources.
5. Individually, students create a poem or a short story that illustrates the Buddhist theories of the self. The teacher may want to have a review day, during which students receive an opportunity to share their work with other members of the class for peer assessment. After revising and polishing their work, students place this assignment in their portfolio.

### Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement

Through oral discussion, the teacher should ensure that all students have a clear understanding of the Buddhist theory of the self. Students’ research skills should be formatively assessed by the teacher before their investigations begin. The teacher should assess each student’s poem or short story using the rubric ([www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil)). Suggestions for improvement are given to each student. Students then have the opportunity to refine their work and submit it at the end of the unit as a part of their portfolio.

### Accommodations

- The teacher may want to provide a handout that will serve as a viewing guide for the video.
- Students may research in pairs or the teacher may supply a handout that summarizes the theories needed to complete the assignment.

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## Resources

### Print

Collens, Steven. *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravada Buddhism*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Kessler, Gary. *Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Reader*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2000.

Presbey, Gail, et al. *The Philosophical Quest: A Cultural Reader*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000.

### Video

Krishnamurti, J. *Mind as a Myth*. Thinking Allowed Production. 30 min.

### Websites

[www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/)

## Activity 8: A Philosophical Self-Portrait (Unit Culminating Activity)

**Time:** 300 minutes

### Description

This activity calls upon students to review and summarize the insights that they have developed in Unit 1. Each student is required to construct a philosophical self-portrait utilizing a variety of media. Students may choose to create a painting, a videotape, a poem, a sculpture, or other suitable medium. The self-portrait should reflect the student's sense of self and is used at the end of the course to illustrate areas of growth and change. Students present and explain their self-portrait to the class.

### Strand(s) & Learning Expectations

**Strand(s):** Philosophical Questions, Philosophy and Everyday Life, Research and Inquiry Skills

#### Overall Expectations

PQV.02 - summarize their own or others' answers to these questions, and give reasons in support of the answers;

ELV.01 - relate the big questions of philosophy to their own experience, reports in the news media, and their society;

ELV.02 - demonstrate the application of philosophical theories and skills to jobs, occupations, and everyday life;

ISV.01 - apply research and inquiry skills related to philosophy appropriately and effectively;

ISV.04 - effectively use a variety of print and electronic sources and telecommunications tools in research related to the big questions of philosophy.

#### Specific Expectations

PQ1.03 - summarize some arguments for and against answers to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy;

EL1.01 - describe what difference the answers people accept to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy should make to their values, behaviour, and life plans;

EL1.02 - describe the strengths and weaknesses of alternative responses to questions of applied philosophy;

IS1.03 - identify the main conclusions of some philosophical positions regarding one or more of the big questions, and the arguments used to support them;

IS3.02 - clearly explain their views and display their use of philosophical reasoning skills in short written papers, using accepted forms of documentation as required;

IS2.02 - compile information related to the big questions of philosophy, using the Internet.

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### **Prior Knowledge & Skills**

- This activity draws on all of the ideas and skills developed in this unit.

### **Teaching/Learning Strategies**

1. Students are given the assignment and the corresponding rubric at the beginning of the unit. Each student should keep a folder filled with his/her thoughts on the eight questions that guide this unit. These reflections should be used to construct a philosophical self-portrait using a variety of mediums.
2. Student/teacher conferences must be scheduled throughout the unit to ensure progress is being made.
3. The teacher arranges for research time in the Library/Resource Centre at various points in the unit.
4. Students present and explain their philosophical self-portrait to the class. It should be kept by the teacher for the remainder of the course and returned to the student at the end for reflection.

### **Assessment & Evaluation of Student Achievement**

The culminating activity should be formatively assessed by the teacher throughout the process. Students should submit a formal proposal for his/her self-portrait and three student/teacher conferences should take place through the course of the unit. Students need to be reminded to reflect on all of the questions asked in the unit and to consult the rubric to ensure that they have met all of the criteria. The activity is assessed by the teacher using The Philosophical Self-Portrait rubric.

### **Accommodations**

- Provide opportunity and time for peer response throughout the process.
- Provide teacher/peer assistance with research.

### **Resources**

Refer to the course overview Resources.

### **Website**

[www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~hsphil/)

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Unit 1 Culminating Activity: A Philosophical Self-Portrait

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## Appendix 1

### Unit 1 Culminating Activity: A Philosophical Self-Portrait

The central question of this unit is “What is a person?” In this unit, we study eight specific questions that will lead you to formulate your own answer to this question. In the process of answering the central question, you will inevitably come to a greater understanding of your own identity. The culminating activity for this unit asks you to do just that. You will create a philosophical self-portrait that explains your sense of self. You may present your findings in a variety of ways, such as: a poem, a video essay, a painting, a short story, or other appropriate medium. When you have completed your philosophical self-portrait, you will present and explain it to the class. You will be given some class time to research and to create your self-portrait. Keep in mind that your assignment must reflect an analysis of the following seven guiding questions:

1. What are the component parts of a person?
2. What is a self?
3. Are the mind and the body the same thing or are they separate and distinct?
4. Is there a soul and, if so, what is it? Can a soul exist after the body has died?
5. Is a person a part of or separate from their environment?
6. Can machines and animals be persons?
7. How do non-Western traditions address these questions?

You must confer with the teacher several times throughout the unit to ensure that you are meeting the expectations of the assignment. Read the rubric carefully to ensure that you meet all of the criteria.

## Appendix 2

### The Classic Topoi (“Places in the Mind”)

Method of analysis using sequential questioning

1. What is it?
  - description, definition
2. What is it like?
  - comparison, similarities, metaphor, synonym, relationships
3. What is it unlike?
  - contrast, opposition, reversals, dichotomies, antonyms
4. What has caused it to be?
  - analysis, hindsight, history, speculation
5. What can come of it?
  - foresight, prediction, possibilities, speculation, “why?”
6. What has been said about it?
  - quotations and paraphrases, reference to authorities, history, common knowledge
7. Why is it significant to me and/or society in general?
  - connecting yourself to the topic