

IM SYLLABUS (2025)

PHILOSOPHY

IM 25

SYLLABUS

1. Introduction

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, philosophy has developed into a discipline which asks fundamental questions about all areas of human activity, while seeking to offer plausible answers to such questions. Past philosophers lived in particular historical and cultural circumstances, but their questions and answers have inspired many views of how human beings understand, interpret and change themselves and the reality around them.

At Intermediate Level, Philosophy gives students the opportunity to develop constructive thinking skills. It invites them to explore how Philosophy relates to and complements other subjects such as the Sciences, Languages, Psychology, Sociology, History, Art and Literature, Law and Politics, Religion, Computing, Marketing and Communications. Through the presentation of historical, theoretical and practical considerations, this syllabus is designed to illustrate how the contribution of philosophy lies precisely in giving meaning to how people, as individual persons and societies, live these different realities. Studying Philosophy strengthens the development of a deeper, critical reflection on practical issues in everyday life.

2. Aims

The Intermediate Level course in Philosophy will enable students to:

- gain knowledge and understanding of Philosophy through consideration of some important philosophical issues and approaches to problems;
- develop a rigorous approach, both critical and constructive, to the study of Philosophy and the nature of arguments;
- practise and enhance their abilities to construct, develop and maintain clear and coherent argument;
- acquire skills in comprehension, interpretation, analysis and evaluation that facilitate the development of independent thinking, based on a critical examination of the evidence and rational argumentation. These skills are applicable in the study of other academic subjects and in reflection on other important aspects of human experience.

3. Objectives

Based on the above aims, students should be able to:

- define/describe the main problems raised by the philosophers presented and their
- tentative answers.
- deal confidently with structured questions concerning logic.
- identify the philosophical, existential and ethical concerns of the topics presented
- and their continued relevance.
- present well-structured and logically sound arguments in essay form.
- show a thorough knowledge of the content covered and take a critical stance where necessary.

4. Method of Assessment

The Assessment consists of a three (3) hour written paper, divided into two (2) sections. Section A covers Module 1 (Logic and Reasoning) of the syllabus and carries 30% of the marks for this paper. Candidates will answer three (3) out of four (4) questions. Section B covers Module 2 (Ethics and Society). Candidates will have to answer a compulsory question and another question from a choice of three (3). Each answer will be in essay form and carries 35% of the mark of this paper.

5. Content

Module 1: Logic and Reasoning

Part 1: Introduction to Logic

1. Deduction and Induction
2. Truth and Validity
3. Fallacies:
 - i. Argument from Ignorance
 - ii. Appeal to Inappropriate Authority
 - iii. Argument Ad Hominem
 - iv. Begging the Question
 - v. Appeal to Emotion
 - vi. Appeal to Pity
 - vii. Appeal to Force
 - viii. Irrelevant Conclusion

Part 2: Propositional Logic

1. Elementary Propositions
 - i. Assertions
 - ii. Bi-Location
 - iii. Bi-Temporation
2. Complex propositions
3. Logical Junctors:
 - i. Negator \neg
 - ii. Conjunctive \wedge
 - iii. Disjunctive \vee
 - iv. Disjunctive \sqcup
 - v. Subjunctive \rightarrow
 - vi. Bi-Subjunctive \leftrightarrow
4. Valid Arguments
5. Logically True Propositions

Part 3: Formal Logic

1. The Implication <
2. The Equivalence >>
3. Rules of Inference:
 - i. Modus Ponens
 - ii. Modus Tollens
4. Valid Forms and Admissible Rules:
 - i. Reflexivity
 - ii. Transitivity
 - iii. Symmetry
 - iv. Generalization and Instantiation
 - v. Partial Replacement Rule
5. Properties of Junctors
 - i. Commutativity
 - ii. Associativity
 - iii. Distributivity
 - iv. Self-Distributivity

Module 2: Ethics and Society

Part 1: The Classical Model: How Should One Live?

1. The Sophists: Truth is Relative
 - i. Protagoras – Moral Relativism; Man is the Measure of All Things
 - ii. Gorgias – Moral Nihilism; Moral Truth is Fiction
2. Socrates: Moral Optimism
 - i. Socrates’ Love for the Truth
 - ii. Socratic Method (Dialectic)
 - iii. Knowledge of the Truth and Right Actions
3. Aristotle: Practical Ethics to Achieve Self-Fulfilment
 - i. Definition of Man as a Rational Animal
 - ii. The Proper Function of Human Beings
 - iii. The Pursuit of Virtue and the Golden Mean
4. Epicurus: Practical Ethics as Pleasure Seeking
 - i. Material Definitions of Human Nature
 - ii. Fear of Death and Superstitions
 - iii. Epicurean Pleasure-Seeking Principle

Part 2: The Modern Model: How Should One Act?

5. Kantianism: Doing Good for its Own Sake
 - i. Virtue and Happiness – ‘Faring Well’ and ‘Doing Right’
 - ii. Kant and the Good Will
 - iii. Hypothetical and Categorical Imperatives
 - iv. Pure Practical Reason and the Moral Law
 - v. Universalizability Test

6. Utilitarianism: The Best Outcome
 - i. Utility and the Greatest Happiness Principle
 - ii. Act and Rule Utilitarianism
 - iii. Utilitarianism and Consequences
 - iv. Does the End Justify the Means?

Part 3: The Contemporary Model: How Might One Live?

7. Nietzsche: Should One Be Moral?
 - i. The Crisis of Morality
 - ii. A New Morality Beyond Good and Evil
 - iii. The Will to Power and the Overman
8. Sartre and Existentialism: Freedom and Choice
 - i. Sartre and Radical Freedom
 - ii. Anguish and Bad Faith
 - iii. Acting in Good Faith
 - iv. The Creation of Value

Part 4: The Internet and Society: How Might We Act?

9. The Internet and Ethical Values
 - i. The Role of Morality in Cyberspace
 - ii. Ethical Values for the Digital Age
10. Privacy and Cyberspace
 - i. Definition and Theory of Privacy
 - ii. Personal Information on the Internet
 - iii. Consumer privacy on the Internet
 - iv. Case Study – Newport Electronics

Part 5: Life and Death Issues: How Might We Regulate?

11. Reproductive Technology
 - i. IVF - ET
 - ii. Surrogacy
 - iii. Cloning
 - iv. Applying Moral Theories
12. Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide
 - i. Deciding Life and Death:
 - Voluntary and Non-voluntary Active Euthanasia
 - Voluntary and Non-voluntary Passive Euthanasia
 - Physician-Assisted Suicide
 - ii. Autonomy, Mercy and Harm
 - iii. Applying Moral Theories

6. Recommended Texts

Graham, G., *Theories of Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2011)

Friġġieri, J., *In-Nisġa tal-Hsieb*, vols 1 and 2 (Malta: Media Centre 2000, 2007)

Riolo, V., *Introduction to Logic* (Malta: MUP 2001)

7. Further Reading

Copi, I., *Introduction to Logic* 8th ed (New York: Macmillan, 1990)

Spinello, R., *Cyberethics* (Boston: Jones and Bartlett 2006)

Vaughin, L., *Bioethics* (Oxford: OUP 2010)

8. Online Sources

Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu>

Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: <http://iep.utm.edu>