YEARS 11&12

PHILOSOPHY
TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPLEMENT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS TASMANIA

TASMANIAN CATHOLIC education office

Tasmanian Government

ADVICE TO TEACHERS

This document helps to describe the nature and sequence of teaching and learning necessary for learners to demonstrate achievement of course outcomes.

It suggests appropriate learning activities to enable learners to develop the knowledge and skills identified in the course outcome statements.

Tasks should provide a variety and the mix of tasks should reflect the fact that different types of tasks suit different knowledge and skills, and different learning styles. Tasks do not have to be lengthy to make a decision about learner demonstration of achievement of an outcome.

COURSE SPECIFIC ADVICE

This Teaching and Learning Supplement for *Philosophy* Level 3 must be read in conjunction with the *Philosophy* Level 3 course document. It contains advice to assist teachers delivering the course and can be modified as required. This Teaching and Learning Supplement is designed to support teachers new to or returning to teaching this course.

Philosophy Level 3 enables learners to develop logical responses to questions without definitive answers, thus helping them to become comfortable with difficult intellectual challenges. The emphasis on epistemology, the scientific method and logic allows learners to identify faulty or weak arguments and understand the limits of knowledge.

SEQUENCE OF CONTENT

Philosophy level 3 is divided into five **(5)** compulsory units of study.

	Unit Title	Indicative Times
Unit 1	Introduction to Epistemology	30 hours
Unit 2	Mind/Body	30 hours
Unit 3	Free Will	30 hours
Unit 4	ELECTIVE TOPICS – one will be completed 4.1 Contemporary Conflicts in Moral Theory OR 4.2 Life, the Universe and Everything	30 hours
Unit 5	The Good Life	30 hours

COURSE DELIVERY

Learners will study five (5) compulsory units. Each unit is of approximately 30 hours duration.

The skills and understanding acquired in studying Unit 1 – Introduction to epistemology will be applied to all other units.

Unit 1 will be delivered first, it is recommended that Units 2, 3, 4 and 5 are delivered sequentially

One (1) elective topic in Unit 4 will be completed.

SPECIFIC SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Philosophical Writing

Writing an essay in Philosophy can be challenging. The following advice is written to support students in structuring a concise, clearly articulated argument.

A Guide to Support Students in Structuring a Philosophical Essay

Thesis

A clear and precise thesis statement at the beginning of your paper is vital. A thesis statement is usually expressed in one sentence. It identifies the main idea and/or purpose of your essay and shows the reader what you will be exploring. Make sure you get to the point quickly and show that you have understood what the question is asking you to do. Using the question in your thesis statement and indicating the direction of your discussion is a good idea. An ideal position for your thesis statement is at the end of your introduction.

Make sure your thesis remains consistent throughout your paper. You may find that through the course of researching and writing your paper, your thesis may have changed. If it does, make sure you go back and edit your paper to reflect this. Your thesis should be restated in your final paragraph with reference to the analysis and weight of argument behind it.

Making an Argument

- arguments should be clearly stated and show a logical sequence of reasoning – a plan or outline at the beginning of the writing process is a good idea
- assume your reader has similar background knowledge – consider whether your writing is clear enough for them to understand
- anticipate counter-arguments and address these providing evidence where possible; this strengthens your argument
- intersection of arguments and ideas provides substance to your argument
- ensure that your define key terms contained in your paper – especially those in your thesis, any that are ambiguous or technical in nature
- clearly indicate when you are speaking in your own voice as opposed to explicating someone else's argument or ideas but not yourself advocating it
- be discerning about the information you choose to include in your paper; ask yourself – is this relevant to my thesis?
- return to your plan or outline and check that your line of argument is clear, coherent, answers the essay question and adequately answers/outlines your thesis statement.
- does your argument progress? Check for unnecessary information and paragraphs that don't advance your argument or paper.
- briefly conclude your paper with an evaluation of the arguments you have considered

Stylistic Conventions

Using first person pronouns is fine in a philosophy paper. Statements such as 'I will use the term …. to mean'' , 'I will argue that …' or 'my argument has shown that …' can clarify how you are using key terms and structuring your arguments. Avoid using personal pronouns to simply state your opinion; it is the reasons underpinning your points that matter.

Use specialised philosophical terms accurately and define key terms (especially those of a technical or ambiguous nature) where necessary.

Avoid rhetorical questions or, at least, use these sparingly.

Keep your language simple, clear and concise. State your points carefully and say exactly what you mean without unnecessary flourishes and embellishment.

Examples and thought experiments help to clarify your arguments but must be explained when used.

Quotes should be used sparingly and try to embed them within the text by explaining what the author means in your own words. In other words, make sure you analyse what is quoted. You might use a direct quote to present an ambiguity in a text or source. When paraphrasing you should be aiming to demonstrate your understanding of the text and not merely repeat what is written using different words.

Reference:

A Brief Guide to Writing the Philosophy Paper
Philosophy.fas.harvard.edu
http://philosophy.fas.harvard.edu/files/phildept/files/brief_guide_to_writing_philosophy_paper.pdf

Types of evidence utilised by Philosophy

Students are often asked to provide evidence for their thinking and ideas. In Philosophy, evidence may include but is not limited to:

- philosophical works (quotations or summary)
- thought experiments
- philosophers' arguments
- illustrations and examples (in support or contradiction of an argument)
- named arguments (eg. Descartes' argument from doubt, indivisibility etc.)
- any other interdisciplinary evidence (for example, history, psychology, science etc.)

When using evidence, learners should be mindful of what is being asked of them in using the evidence. Are they being asked to use evidence:

- to support their own interpretation or discussion of philosophical arguments/problems
- from philosophers' arguments to validate or coheres with the complexity of the learner's discussion
- to discuss or support their analytical position on philosophical issues

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Unit 1   **An Introduction to Epistemology**

Examples of learning activities

Learners:

- work in small groups, to draw a T Bar and list on one side all the things they know through sense experience and on the other all the things they know by reason alone; they discuss similarities and differences between the two groups
- identify, discuss and formulate epistemological questions raised in films such as The Matrix or The Truman Show or use stimulus such as a story, picture or cartoon for class discussion
- use a thought experiment to explore questions associated with a chosen epistemological problem, for example one of the Gettier cases outlined at www.iep.utm.edu/gettier/

- work in pairs, to create definitions for key terms associated with the Tripartite Theory of Knowledge; swap and discuss any ambiguities that arise from these definitions. Discuss whether alternative theories resolve these issues
- work in pairs to map the structure of argument in a relevant philosophical text, for example Descartes' First Meditation, and identify with annotations any problems or criticisms that can be raised in response to the argument; use a site such as http://austhink.com/critical/
- use a software program to construct a concept map that depicts the arguments and viewpoints of different philosophers in response to a fundamental question associated with the chosen epistemological problem
- organise and participate in an online debate on one of the questions associated with the chosen epistemological problem using inductive and deductive reasoning
- construct a thought experiment or scenario that explores a view of epistemology represented in the philosophies or the philosophers being studied such as Plato, Descartes, Hume,. William James, Richard Rorty or Paul Gettier
- compare a philosophical argument with a non-philosophical (i.e. rhetorical) argument and discuss what distinguishes one from the other
- underline words and phrases in examples of reasoning that indicate premises and conclusions
- construct a series of simple arguments and invite learners to identify the premises and conclusion of each argument
- construct a worksheet of simple arguments in 'standard form' and invite learners to assess these arguments using the basic techniques and key terminology associated with philosophical reasoning
- produce a written response to a set questions associated with a chosen value theory problem, using appropriate techniques of reasoning and argument
- read a text associated with a chosen value theory problem and identify and discuss how techniques of philosophical reasoning are being used to construct arguments
- using hypertext, analyse and evaluate a piece of philosophical writing related to Foundationalism or Coherentism, using terminology associated with philosophical reasoning
- use a thinking tool such as a Venn Diagram to describe the differences between 'is' and 'ought'; Is the distinction valid?; make explicit the arguments used by learners to make their distinctions; consider, for example, David Hume

Detailed examples

Investigating certainty

1. Learners are divided into small groups of four or five and given blank poster paper or butchers paper.

2. Learner groups write down three examples of what they all agree they know for certain.

3. The groups then complete and record the following tasks on their poster:

   a) Why are these good examples of knowledge that is certain?

   b) List examples of knowledge that were once regarded as certain knowledge but are now known to be false. Broadly state why they were found to be false, for example due to advances in exploration of space.

   c) Revisit answers to 3. above and discuss whether these really are certainties. As you do so, attempt to develop criteria for something to count as a certainty. Learners share their

responses with the class. The different groups could rotate around the room to read each other's responses or they can present to the class.

Re-write an argument from a platonic dialogue in standard form

Consider a passage from a Platonic dialogue and reconstruct it using standard form.

One example is the Cyclical or Re-incarnation argument from Plato's Phaedo 70c–72e. In this argument Plato has Socrates construct an argument for reincarnation. Learners set the argument out showing the premises and conclusion, for example:

Premise 1:   All things come to be from their opposite states; for example, something that comes to be 'larger' must necessarily have been 'smaller' before (70e-71a)

Premise 2:   Between every pair of opposite states there are two opposite processes; for example, between the pair 'smaller' and 'larger' there are the processes 'increase' and 'decrease' (71b).

Premise 3:   If the two opposite processes did not balance each other out, everything would eventually be in the same state; for example, if increase did not balance out decrease, everything would keep becoming smaller and smaller (72b).

Premise 4:   Since 'being alive' and 'being dead' are opposite states, and 'dying' and 'coming-to-life' are the two opposite processes between these states, coming-to-life must balance out dying (71c-e).

Conclusion: Therefore, everything that dies must come back to life again (72a).

Another example could be The Argument from Recollection (Phaedo 72e–78b). For more details on the standard form arguments in Plato see: www.iep.utm.edu/phaedo/#SSH3bii

Confirmation bias

Confirmation bias is committing the logical fallacy of only looking for evidence to confirm one's existing hypothesis or argument, rather than looking for contradictory evidence or the existence of any evidence that falsifies one's hypothesis. One related bias is termed the Dunning Kruger effect, whereby less knowledgeable thinkers typically rate themselves more highly in competence than those that are more knowledgeable.

Using a current example from the media, learners could explore the confirmation bias and illustrate its relevance to philosophical thinking and present it to the class with their explanation and reasoning for their judgment.

After this introductory exercise learners try to identify this effect in selected readings. For example, they could identify and examine an argument from Socrates and test whether or not he is committing the confirmation bias fallacy.

The gambler's fallacy

Have a coin tossed in class and after a number of times ask the learners to predict and record the next outcome.

Share the predictions and have learners explain and give reasons for their predictions. They then record their predictions and explanations.

Next watch this short video that explains the gamblers' fallacy: www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8SkCh-n4rw

Ask learners to review their recorded predictions and explanations, and explain whether their recorded predictions are illustrative of the fallacy.

Ask learners to consider and find examples of scientific theories and explanations that use patterns to predict events. Discuss whether these avoid the gamblers' fallacy.

Unit 2   **Mind/Body Problem**

Examples of learning activities

Learners:

- develop responses, without prior research, to each of the following questions: What is your mind? What is its relationship to your body or brain? What is its relationship to your soul? If your mind is distinct from the body, how does it interact with the body?; learners evaluate these initial reflections after completing learning activities on the chosen metaphysical problem
- draw a T bar graph, prior to reading the set texts, to list what they consider to be the qualities of mind on one side and the qualities of brain on the other; they then use the graph to identify whether they are dualists or materialists
- use visual illusions from a variety of sources to stimulate discussion on sense perception and reality
- construct a chart that identifies the variety of definitions for the key terms and concepts associated with the chosen metaphysical problem, for example mind, and discuss the arguments related to these definitions
- use a software program, outline and examine the arguments proposed in a selected philosophy text which explores the questions and concepts associated with the chosen metaphysical problem
- construct in pairs a visual representation that compares the responses of different philosophers to the questions associated with the chosen metaphysical problem; develop arguments for and against a position associated with the chosen metaphysical problem and discuss these as a class
- outline the key arguments presented in the texts on the mind and brain in standard form
- construct an online site to discuss questions associated with a contemporary debate on the mind–body problem; for example, discuss the implications a physicalist conception of the brain has on the phenomenon of free will we typically experience when we make a decision or think about the world around us
- use a graphic organiser to explore the consequences and implications of making the mind physical; for example, the central claim could be: If the mind is physical then what are the consequences and implications of such a view?
- create an oral presentation that evaluates a philosophical point of view on the mind–body problem and a relevant contemporary debate
- source and read an article on artificial intelligence and apply the concepts learnt in this area of study to identify whether the contention supports a materialist or dualist position; evaluate the argument
- engage in dialogue with a speaker or multiple speakers to share and discuss their understanding of mind and body; for example, speakers could be from various fields such as literature, medicine, law, sociology, psychology as well as from philosophy; ask questions of the panel
- respond in writing or oral form to a prompt such as: Has your identity been determined by your genes or are you simply created by your experiences? Is it determined by both? Do you consider one aspect stronger than the other? Why? And why not?
- investigate in groups the key questions outlined in the course document.

Detailed examples

Investigating research questions

Select a newspaper or magazine article that explores a contemporary debate associated with the chosen metaphysical problem, e.g. artificial intelligence. Learners formulate a series of questions that link the issues raised in the article to the metaphysical problem and explore and investigate within the context of a research project. Learners working in small groups can use the Question Protocol below to determine the question they will investigate.

Questions that may be considered by learners using the above example include:

- What is intelligence?
- How can we tell if something possesses intelligence?
- What is thinking?
- Does thinking require a mind?
- Does a mind require a biological body?
- Could a machine have a mind?
- If a machine could have a mind, what implications may this have for the way in which we understand ourselves?

The ideas and issues raised could then be used as an entry point for exploring and presenting on the key questions associated with the chosen metaphysical problem.

Choosing a Question Protocol

Developed by Project Zero, Harvard University (Evidence Project, 2000) , this protocol was originally designed to structure and facilitate educational research in teacher practice. Here it is adapted for learners to identify their research question, either individually or in a group.

This protocol helps clarify the process for choosing a question to focus on in Evidence Process work. As learners identify questions that feel important to them, they are asked to consider the three questions below.

1. Why is this question important to you?
2. How is it relevant to the metaphysical topic in question?
3. What direct connections to contemporary debates can we identify?

If the group feels there are satisfactory answers to all three questions, the question is considered appropriate for investigation. If a question does not meet these criteria, the group modifies the question or identifies another question for study and investigation.

Before commencing the activity, ask learners to research a relevant contemporary debate using the library and/or Internet. Learners should be encouraged to seek out materials that explore the debate from relevant philosophical perspectives, to consider the relationship between these perspectives and the viewpoints and arguments expressed in the set texts, and to think about the implications of adopting positions expressed in the set texts for one's position on the debate.

Debates learners may like to consider for this activity include: animal rights, artificial intelligence, stem cell research and other debates applicable to questions associated with mind and body.

When the research is completed, ask learners to give an oral presentation on their chosen debate, which includes: a broad overview of the debate and its relationship to questions associated with mind and body, a brief outline of at least two perspectives on the debate, including an account of the arguments used to support these perspectives, a critical comparison of the viewpoints and arguments used to support these perspectives, the implications of adopting perspectives on the

debate for evaluation of viewpoints and arguments expressed in the set texts and/or how viewpoints and arguments expressed in the set texts may respond to perspectives in the debate.

Thought experiment – the Ship of Theseus

The thought experiment describes a ship that remained seaworthy for hundreds of years thanks to constant repairs and replacement parts. As soon as one plank became old and rotted, it would be replaced, and so on until every working part of the ship was replaced and no longer original.

Present the class with a thought experiment that explores the concept of identity: if the Ship of Theseus was dismantled and reassembled exactly as it was but now in a museum, is it still the same ship? Has its function determined a new identity for the ship? Is function a fundamental criterion for identity?

Consider and answer the following questions:

- Is this end product still the same Ship of Theseus, or something completely new and different?
- If it is not, at what point did it stop being the same ship?
- The philosopher Thomas Hobbes would later take the problem even further: if one were to take all the old parts removed from the Ship of Theseus and build a new ship from them, then which of the two vessels is the real Ship of Theseus?

Unit 3   Free Will

Examples of learning activities

Learners:

- list five actions they have chosen to do in the last week and five actions where they have had no choice. For two of the five actions where they have had no choice map the events that led to their choice (agency) being taken from them. Discuss these in a group of around four and choose one person to present to the class their best example of a complete loss of choice
- watch excerpts from a film or television series that explore free will; examples can be found here: http://www.tasteofcinema.com/2016/10-great-philosophical-movies-that-question-free-will/. Learners explore the premises, arguments and conclusions provided or implied in the piece and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these
- define and explain Hard Determinism and Soft Determinism. Discuss in relation to creating arguments in standard form or different epistemic approaches
- define and explain the position of Libertarianism and its relationship and differences with Indeterminism
- in small groups, discuss standard form arguments for Hard Determinism, Soft Determinism and Libertarianism to investigate the relationships and differences between them
- explore whether 'free will' and determinism are incompatible? Discuss in relation to the position of at least two philosophers
- design a simple physical system where its operation is entirely and demonstrably *predictable*. Learners answer: under what circumstances would this predictability break down? What implications does this have for Hard and Soft Determinism?

- design a simple physical system where its operation is entirely and demonstrably *unpredictable*. Learners answer: under what circumstances would this system become predictable? What implications does this have for Hard and Soft Determinism?
- discuss in small groups and come to agreement about evidence, philosophical or otherwise, for each of Hard Determinism, Soft Determinism and Libertarianism
- investigate the purpose and function of the law that has developed in our community addressing how should the actions of an individual be interpreted with respect to the law when considered with each of Hard Determinism, Soft Determinism and Libertarianism
- examine the implications of different views on free will if the primary purpose of punishment is retribution. What if the primary purpose is deterrence or rehabilitation?

Detailed example

How to love a less free will

Learners listen to *How to love a less free will* summarising arguments and evidence given. They then discuss in groups agreeing on the arguments and evidence given and linking them to the ideas of at least two philosophers.

Learners then come to their own position of free will including:

- arguments
- evidence
- philosophers' arguments
- and an evaluation to support their own position

Learners draft a thought experiment with like-minded class members designed to lead a parent, carer or significant other to the learners' position. The subsequent conversation about the thought experiment between the learner and their chosen person should be recorded, either with video or audio, for assessment.

| Unit 4 | **Elective Studies: Contemporary Conflicts in Moral Theory OR Science and Faith** |

4.1 Contemporary Conflicts of Moral Theory

4.1 Contemporary Conflicts in Moral Theory

This study of moral theory explores ideas about what it means to think, act and reason ethically, with an emphasis upon applying modern philosophical theories and specific skills to contemporary issues.

Students will investigate **two (2) core moral theories** from the list provided in the TASC course document and apply their understanding to contemporary moral conflicts.

They will also investigate **one (1) or more inquiries** as listed in the TASC course document. These inquiries relate to ethical issues in contemporary society. Students will evaluate the outcomes of their inquiry against **at least two (2) ethical frameworks.**

For example, you could investigate:

- liberties in the age of terror from Moral Relativist and Deontological perspectives
- the application of the capabilities approach and Preference Utilitarianism when providing opportunities for people with disabilities

Examples of learning activities

Learners:

- individually, in pairs, and as a class, construct a glossary with definitions for key terms and concepts associated with class readings in ethics and moral philosophy
- use a 'thought experiment' to explore questions and issues associated with an ethical problem; for example, the desert island scenario where learners identify 15 items that they would take with them and explore the decision making that led to their choices
- examine one or a variety of current issues in the print and/or visual media and identify, discuss and evaluate the values and ethical dimension/s demonstrated by the viewpoints, arguments and responses
- engage in a debate on questions of freedom and equality; for example, the question could be: Is it more important that each individual have absolute freedom or that all basic goods be distributed equally among all people?
- research and make a presentation on a political philosopher on human nature; for example, they could explore whether they think Rousseau's thesis of the 'noble savage' is acceptable or not, and contrast his view with that of anarchist political philosopher Mikhail Bakunin
- construct a human figure on a chart; list on the left side the various rights that a human being ought to be entitled to; list on the right side the needs that are required for humans to achieve those rights; discuss what could support and constrain the achievement of rights, including what obligations there may be and who bears those obligations; see the following site for more activities: www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/activities.shtm
- consider how sustainable democracy is and what are the essential elements of a democracy?; a prompt question could be: Are we justified in going to war for democracy?
- develop a digital presentation that outlines the viewpoints and arguments around the question of freedom of the individual in society; specifically, is there a contract between an individual and the society of which they are a part, where each has obligations and responsibilities toward the other?
- research contemporary case studies from the media and consider arguments for and against the legal and moral points of view; for example, consider the legality of live animal export and the moral position for and against this practice or the legality and moral standing of codes of practice, such as for the media
- take a current news dilemma surrounding art and explore the relevant aesthetic and/or moral issues involved; for example, controversies have arisen on provocative artistic representations of topics including: the human body, refugees and critiques of bourgeois values

Detailed examples
Journal reflection on values

Learners keep a personal journal or blog throughout the unit, for reflection on learning and skill development, in particular, reflecting critically on their own viewpoints and arguments relating to ethics and moral philosophy.

One aspect of this is reflection on values. Learners consider and answer the following questions to help them identify what they value.

- Is there something that's important to you? What is it?
- Do you know why this is important to you? If so, list the reasons and/or feelings you have that you use to support your values.
- Have you ever done anything that indicates that this is important to you?
- Is this something you would stand by even if others strongly disagreed?
- Does this fit in with your vision of who you are? Why?
- Have you ever encountered a situation where your own values conflict with each other? How did you resolve it?

Human rights and freedom

In this activity learners consider the reasoning behind political leaders and their case for human rights and freedom. Examine a speech from an influential person and identify the premises and justifications given in their speech to support their view of human rights and/or freedom.

For example:

Listen to a speech on human rights or freedom and discuss underlying principles and concepts referred to and the issues raised. For example, see Julia Gillard's 'Mysogyny speech' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOPsxpMzYw4 Martin Luther's speech 'I have a Dream' http://teachertube.com/viewVideo. php?video_id=94828

4.2 Life the Universe and Everything

4.2 Life, the Universe and Everything

Specific content for this elective unit is outlined in the TASC course document.

Of particular note for Science and Faith as Ways of Knowing:

Learners study BOTH Science as a Way of Knowing AND Faith as a Way of Knowing They are also required to study how faith-based institutions have responded to scientific developments.

Examples of learning activities

Learners:

- discuss in pairs examples of faith and science based understanding and explore whether faith relies of deductive reasoning and science relies on inductive reasoning
- investigate, in small groups and with reference to philosophers, the extent and limitations of knowledge drawn from faith and science; are these ways of knowing in conflict or can they be unified?
- choose an issue to investigate, outside the origins of life or the Universe, where there is a perceived conflict between science and faith, this could include the nature of gender, the effects of prayer, or the existence of life after death
- explore the testable and contestable nature of science based knowledge compared to faith as a way of knowing; where faith does not revise beliefs as new evidence comes to light
- map the scientific history of the Universe including what is known and unknown and then explore the need for there being an initial cause at a particular time to evaluate the plausibility of a beginning

- compare the modal and temporal cosmological arguments, their similarities and differences and come to a defendable position on whether both arguments are compatible
- describe the influence on the lives of individuals and communities of accepting one of, or both, faith or science based understanding for the origins of the universe; what is at stake? does it matter at all?
- visualise the timeframes involved in evolutionary theory in a way they can understand showing the rate of change that is proposed if we accept adaptation and natural selection as the mechanisms of the origins of humans
- discuss and come to a reasoned conclusion whether all scientific evidence thus far points to evolutionary theory being correct and thus that *evolutionary theory has evolved but not contradicted its original tenets*
- evaluate the Teleological and Anthropic arguments for design and how they are supported through faith based understanding and other evidence and explore the arguments for the role of God within design
- consider the issues associated with evolution and design that inspire lively discourse and disputed intervention within our local and broader communities. Through relating these issues to philosophical positions learners should argue how these issues could be resolved or otherwise.

Detailed examples

The intersection between science and faith

Learners research and find a number of current news articles on different topics that have some relationship with science and/or belief; including at least 3 items each that:

- relate to science and have little or no impact on faith
- relate to faith and have little or no impact of science
- have implications for both faith based and scientific ways of knowing

In groups of around four learners pool and organise their articles into these three groups (hoops or a large two circle Venn diagram could be useful). Once this is complete learners are to report back to the class:

- issues and ideas where science and faith are distinct
- where scientific and faith based understanding intersect or conflict

Once all groups have reported back to the class learners can then participate on an online discussion about faith and science and their places in our community.

Exploring different traditions of creation

Learners research and investigate three of four different creation traditions from around the world:

- assessing relationships and differences within their narratives with Aristotle's idea of a 'Prime Mover'.
- reflecting on whether they start with a beginning in time and/or a causal action
- recording what is common between these traditions?

Learners then focus on western traditional interpretation of Genesis and the two main cosmological arguments:

- articulating and evaluating the standard for each argument and relating them to Genesis

- describing their similarities and differences
- outlining the relationships between these and the scientific account of the origins of the Universe

Learners can demonstrate their understanding of these by relating examples of contemporary debate about the origins and history of the Universe with relevant philosophy.

Unit 5   **The Good Life**

Examples of learning activities

Learners:

- construct a timeline which situates the philosophers in their historical and philosophical context
- work in pairs or small groups to address one of the key questions from the course document; developing a web page which includes a brief biography of the philosopher, information regarding the political, philosophical and social context against which his or her work was created, and links to other relevant sites; use as a class resource
- create a poster (or concept map) which shows how the philosophical, political and social context of a set text is reflected in its viewpoints and arguments
- use coloured highlighters to identify the conception of human nature that is implied in the selected text/s on the conception of the good life
- work in pairs, and on a large piece of paper, to map the structure of an argument expressed in an excerpt from a set text that makes a claim that morality is central to living a good life; discuss any potential criticisms that could be raised in response to these arguments, and share with the class
- in pairs, construct an argument using an online mapping tool, such as that found at asuthink.com, whose contention is: our conception of the good life is influenced by the social context of our lives; then using hypertext, self or peer evaluate their arguments by providing annotations that assess the plausibility of the premises and the relationship between the premises and conclusions; reflect on the set texts and their contexts to help inform their annotations
- compare the role of pleasure in the conceptions of the good life from the set texts; draw up a table with philosopher names across each column and the features of pleasure in the rows; consider if there is any distinction between pleasure and happiness, drawing on the arguments in the set texts
- take on the role of a philosopher from the set texts and construct a fictitious blog that outlines what their view is on the good life; the blogs are completed in the context of current events and issues of the day as references and examples that support and challenge their point of view

Montaigne
- explain how Montaigne's arguments apply to topics such as self-loathing, body image or eating disorders
- investigate Montaigne's position on moral objectivism; support your analysis with aspects of Montaigne's work that imply the existence of objective moral truth

Schopenhauer
- analyse and interpret Schopenhauer's 'will to life' as a driving force; how do ethics, ascetics and aesthetics respond to the problem of suffering created by the 'will to life'.

- analyse and discuss the following statement: 'Anti-consumerism, a socio-political ideology that is opposed to consumerism, is supported by the philosophical arguments of Schopenhauer'

Nietzsche
- analyse and discuss Nietzsche's philosophical response to the concept of 'good'
- discuss and analyse Nietzsche's theory of the 'creative' act: that slaves, in response to their resentment of their oppressors, invented the concepts of good and evil and the concepts of heaven and hell

Thoreau
- discuss and explain how Thoreau's response to the 'good life' is interpreted in today's environmentalism
- analyse Thoreau's interpretation of the 'good life' and how this applies in today's society

Detailed examples

The individual and society

This activity leads to an examination of whether or not there is an intrinsic conflict in the relationship between the individual and society in achieving the good life. The class can use images from the internet, newspapers and magazines to illustrate their views.

- Learners make up a list of three things they like best about living in Australia.
- Next make up a list of three things they like least about living in Australia.
- Learners share their choices and explain their decisions with reasons.
- The class then considers the question: Who is responsible for fixing the least liked things about living in Australia?
- Learners will need to justify their answers.

Examples of a good life

The class researches lives of people who they think represents an example of the good life. Individually or in small groups they research and present their findings to the class as a presentation or individually as an essay.

An example of such an essay is found at: www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/feb/10/ what-good-life/?pagination=false.

They should consider, for example, the criteria of the good life that they have encountered in the set texts from the philosophers they have studied.

Extended investigation

Learners are to select one of the philosophers who wrote about the four key questions in the course document:

- what roles do our bodies and our reasoning play in helping us achieve the good life? (Montaigne)
- is romantic love a necessary part of the good life? (Schopenhauer)
- what is the role of life's difficulties in the formation of character? (Nietzsche)
- what is the role of the natural world in achieving the good life? (Thoreau)

Learners will then produce a researched extended piece of writing referring specifically to the philosophers writings:

- outlining the philosophers ideas, and the relationships between them, on what it is required to live a good life
- identifying and describing the rationale and philosophical arguments provided by the philosopher; evaluating relative strengths and weaknesses
- using philosophical and other evidence to assist in the interpretation of the philosopher's ideas
- describing and analysing the implications and applications of the philosopher's ideas for individuals in the 21st Century and society in general
- examining how relevant these ideas are to themselves personally and how they may apply them