

Teaching Portfolio

Name: Forsman, Jan Juhani

Education: PhD

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Nationality: Finland

Teaching and Supervision Experience

Teaching

7.9.-27.10.2026 FIL.FIA.001 Introduction to the History of Philosophy, primary instructor, Tampere University, Finland.

Introductory. Introducing history of philosophy from ancient Greece to Immanuel Kant, through Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, classic Islamic, Latin middle ages, renaissance and early modern periods

27.10.-2.12.2025 700635P Problem of Knowledge and Ways of Knowing, primary instructor, University of Oulu, Finland.

Introductory. Introducing epistemology and the problem of knowledge. Topics include what is knowledge and can anything be known with certainty, how truth can be known and what its relationship is to knowing, what are different methods of acquiring knowledge and reasoning, does knowledge have a foundation, can we objectively know what is good and what is evil?

1.9.-21.10.2025 FIL.FIA.001 Introduction to the History of Philosophy, primary instructor, Tampere University, Finland.

Introductory. Introducing history of philosophy from ancient Greece to Immanuel Kant, through Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, classic Islamic, Latin middle ages, renaissance and early modern periods.

2.9.-22.10.2024 FIL.FIA.001 Introduction to the History of Philosophy, primary instructor, Tampere University, Finland.

Introductory. Introducing history of philosophy from ancient Greece to Immanuel Kant, through Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, classic Islamic, Latin middle ages, renaissance and early modern periods.

17.1.-12.5.2024 PHIL:2214:0001 Seventeenth Century Philosophy, primary instructor, University of Iowa.

Intermeditate. Examining central components of the philosophical systems of Rene Descartes, Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, Baruch Spinoza, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Conway, G.W. Leibniz. Topics include discussion of free will and human responsibility in the context of deterministic science, views and arguments surrounding science vs. religion, the nature and existence of God, the nature and existence of the physical world, skepticism, the place of minds in a physical universe, the limits of human cognition, and the good life.

22.8.-15.12.2023 PHIL:1861:0002 Introduction to Philosophy, primary instructor, University of Iowa.

Introductory. Introducing philosophy as an academic subject by concentrating on the three major areas of study: Epistemology, Metaphysics, and Ethics. Topics include self-knowledge and personal identity, philosophical skepticism, mind-body problem, time travel, and the good life. These will be discussed with the help of a textbook as well as original texts, films, and so on.

17.1.-12.5.2023 PHIL:1861:0005 Introduction to Philosophy, primary instructor, University of Iowa.

Introductory. Introducing philosophy as an academic subject by concentrating on the three major areas of study: Epistemology, Metaphysics, and Ethics. Topics include self-knowledge and personal identity, philosophical skepticism, mind-body problem, time travel, and the good life. These will be discussed with the help of a textbook as well as original texts, films, and so on.

4.1.-31.5.2022 FIL.FIA.160 Bachelor Thesis Seminar, teacher in charge (with adjunct professor Inkeri Koskinen, University Lecturer), supervising 6 Bachelor's Theses, Tampere University, Finland.

Intermediate. Supervising 6 Bachelor Thesis works.

7.9.-9.12.2021 FIL.FIA.160 Bachelor Thesis Seminar, teacher in charge (with adjunct professor Markku Keinänen, University Lecturer), Tampere University, Finland.

Intermediate. Seminar for students working on Bachelor's Thesis.

22.1.-14.5.2021 FILA02b History of Philosophy: Freedom of the Will (4 ECTS), teacher in charge (with adjunct professor Jani Hakkarainen, Senior Lecturer), Tampere University, Finland.

Intermediate. Seminar on early modern accounts of freedom of will, consisting of reading original and commentary texts, doing a presentation, and discussing the texts with the rest of the class.

23.1.-11.5.2018 FILA6 History of Skepticism -seminar (5 ECTS), teacher in charge (with adjunct professor Jani Hakkarainen, Lecturer and Post-Doctoral Fellow), University of Tampere, Finland.

Intermediate. Seminar on philosophical skepticism from ancient Greece to contemporary epistemology, consisting of reading original and commentary texts, doing a presentation, and discussing the texts with the rest of the class.

21.1.2014 Introduction to Descartes's view of mind and body -lecture (90min), part of FILA1 History of Philosophy -course (5 ECTS), University of Tampere, Finland.

Intermediate. A lecture on Descartes as part of a course on history of philosophy.

Supervision

4.1.-31.5.2022 FIL.FIA.160 Bachelor Thesis Seminar, Tampere University, Finland.

Supervising 6 Bachelor's Theses.

Pedagogical Training and Competence

31.5-6.6.2026 Early Modern Summer Program, Center of Canon Expansion and Change, University of Minnesota.

12.12.2021 EDUPEY03 Academic Supervision and Guidance (5 op), Tampere University, Finland.

7.5.2021 EDUPEY02 Curriculum and educational development (5 ECTS), Tampere University, Finland

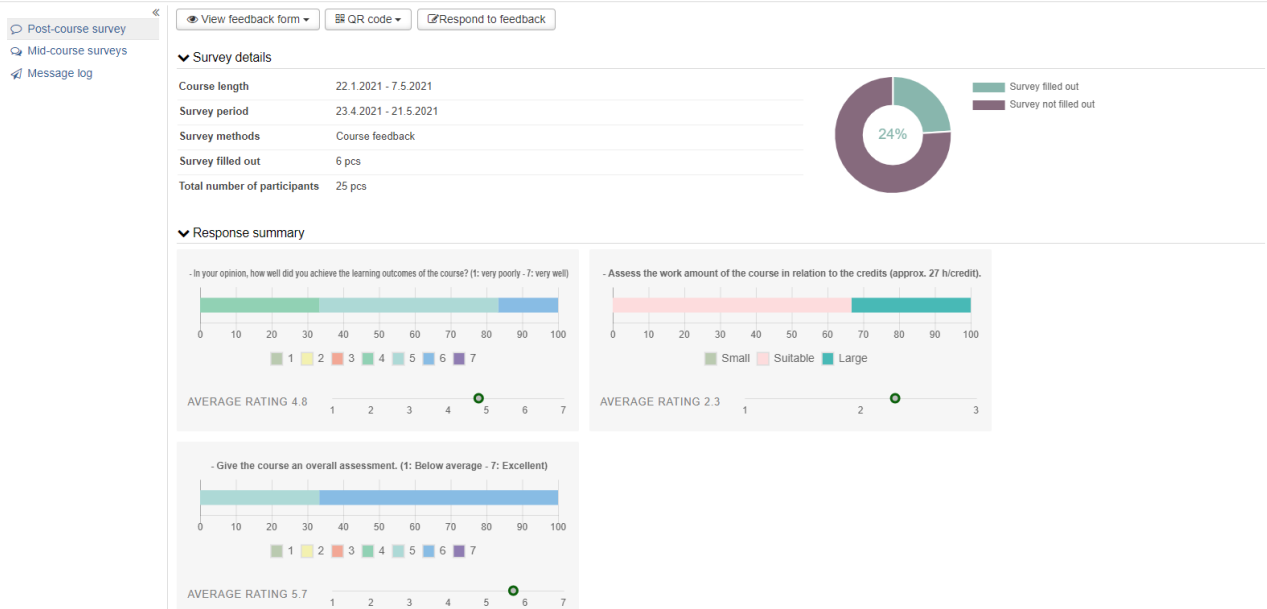
27.1.2017 PEDAYOP1 Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (10 ECTS), University of Tampere, Finland

Summary of Course Ratings (Tampere)

Below is a summary of course ratings of the courses in which I have served as a primary or a co-instructor in Tampere University.

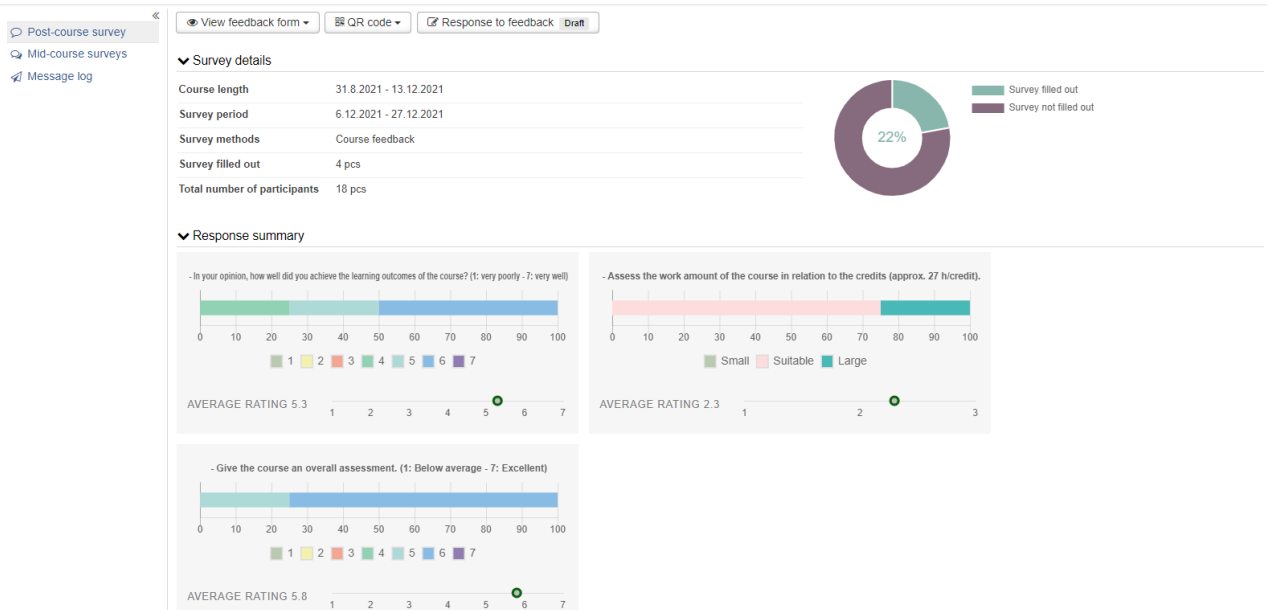
Spring 2021 FILA02b History of Philosophy: Freedom of the Will, Tampere University, Finland.

Seminar 22.1.-7.5.2021 22.1.2021 - 7.5.2021



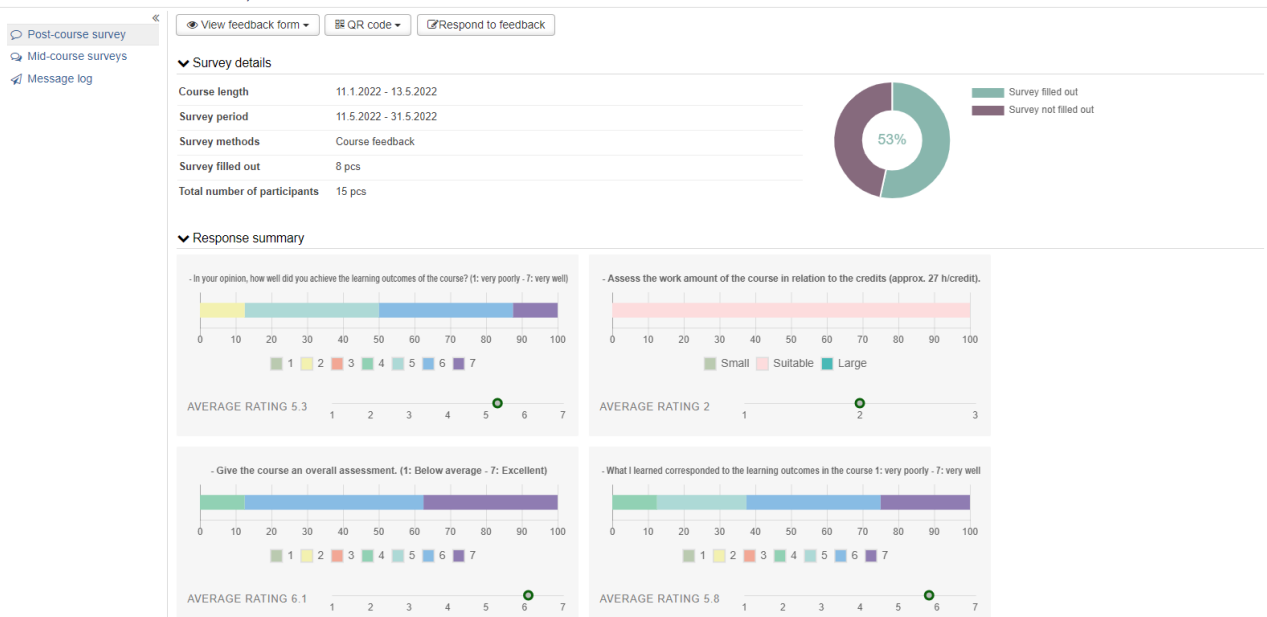
Fall 2021 FIL.FIA.160 Bachelor Thesis Seminar, Tampere University, Finland.

Seminar and Bachelor's Thesis, Seminar 31.8.-13.12.2021 31.8.2021 - 13.12.2021



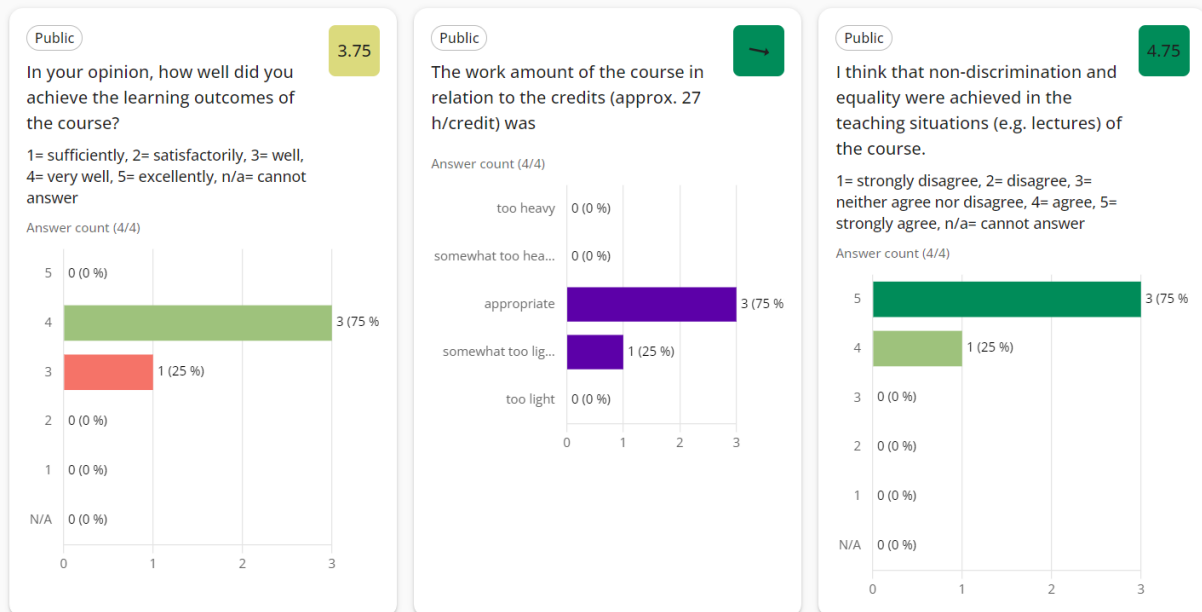
Spring 2022 FIL.FIA.160 Bachelor Thesis Seminar, Tampere University, Finland.

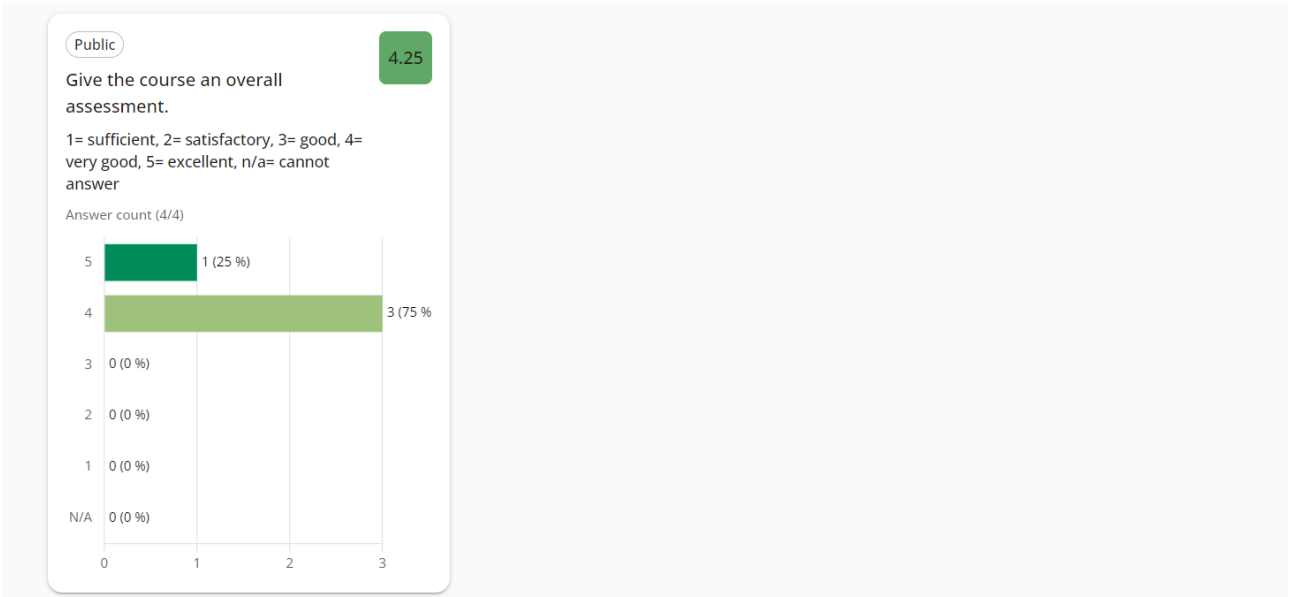
Seminar and Bachelor's Thesis, Seminar 11.1.-13.5.2022 11.1.2022 - 13.5.2022



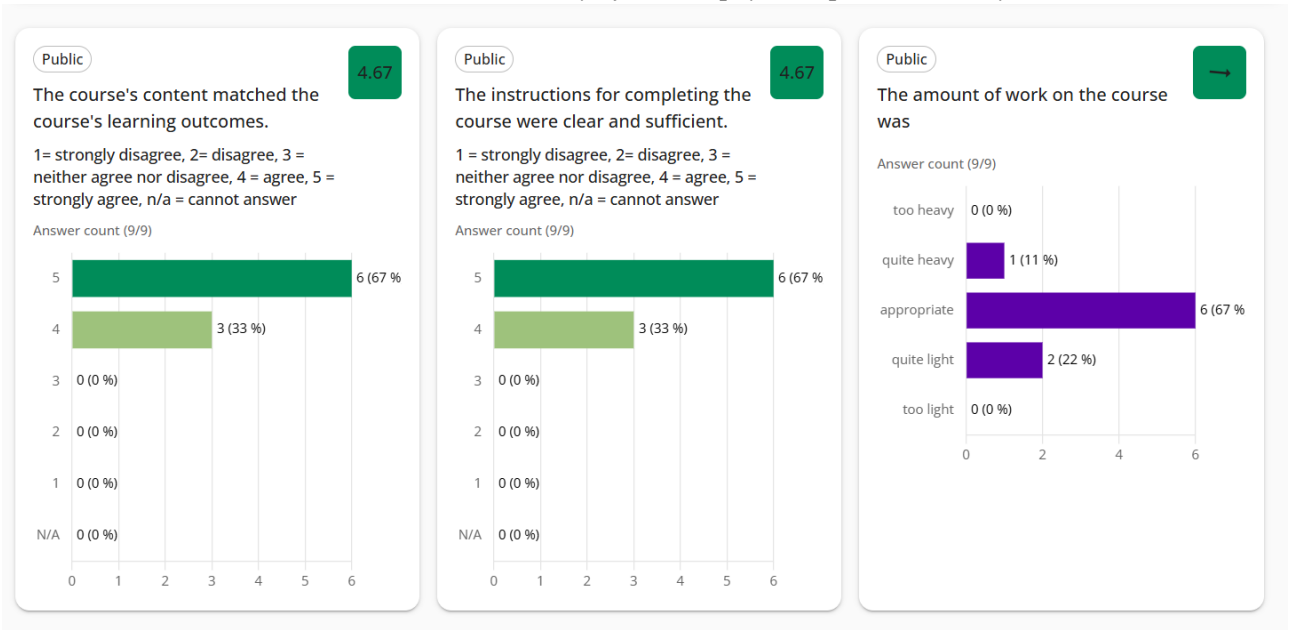
Fall 2024 FIL.FIA.001 Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Tampere University, Finland.

Multiple choice questions 4





Fall 2025 FIL.FIA.001 Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Tampere University, Finland



Summary of Course Ratings (Iowa)

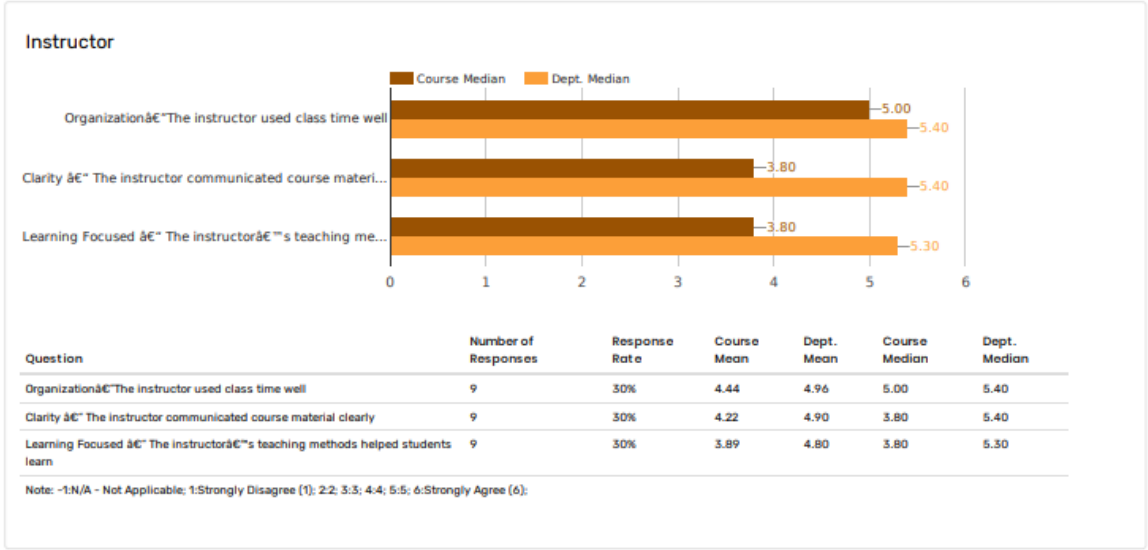
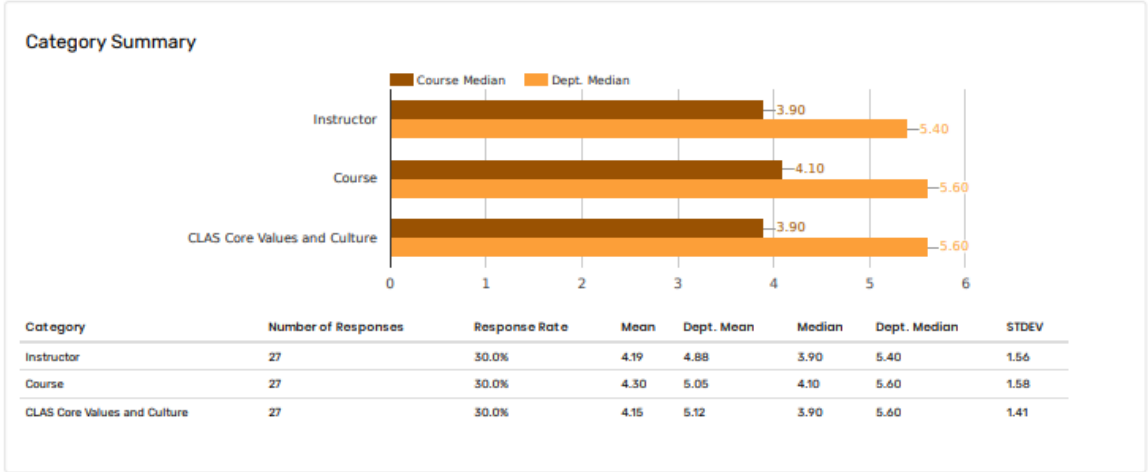
Below is a summary of course ratings of the courses in which I have served as a primary instructor in University of Iowa

Spring 2023 PHIL:1861:0005 Introduction to Philosophy, University of Iowa.

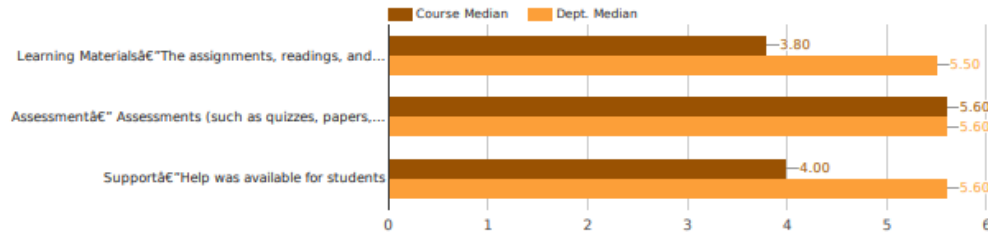
Introduction to Philosophy (Spring 2023)

Instructor: **Forsman, Jan**
Section: **0005**
Course Title: **Introduction to Philosophy**
Course ID: **PHIL:1861:0005**
Objectives:

Enrollment: **30**
Responses Incl Declines: **9**
Declines: **0**



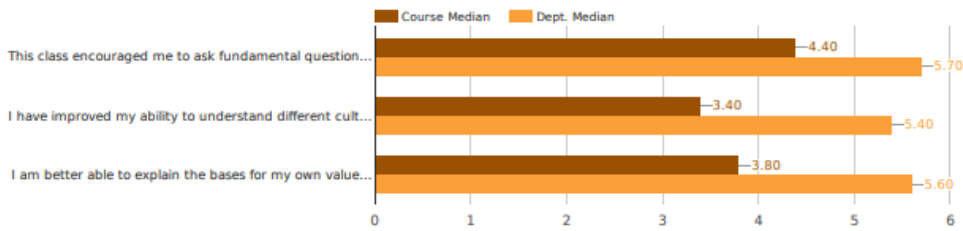
Course



Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median
Learning Materialsâ€”The assignments, readings, and activities facilitated student learning	9	30%	3.78	4.95	3.80	5.50
Assessmentâ€”Assessments (such as quizzes, papers, and exams) aligned with course objectives	9	30%	4.67	5.09	5.60	5.60
Supportâ€”Help was available for students	9	30%	4.44	5.11	4.00	5.60

Note: -1:N/A - Not Applicable; 1:Strongly Disagree (1); 2:2; 3:3; 4:4; 5:5; 6:Strongly Agree (6);

CLAS Core Values and Culture



Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median
This class encouraged me to ask fundamental questions about human values and experience.	9	30%	4.67	5.22	4.40	5.70
I have improved my ability to understand different cultural value systems.	9	30%	3.78	4.96	3.40	5.40
I am better able to explain the bases for my own values and beliefs.	9	30%	4.00	5.16	3.80	5.60

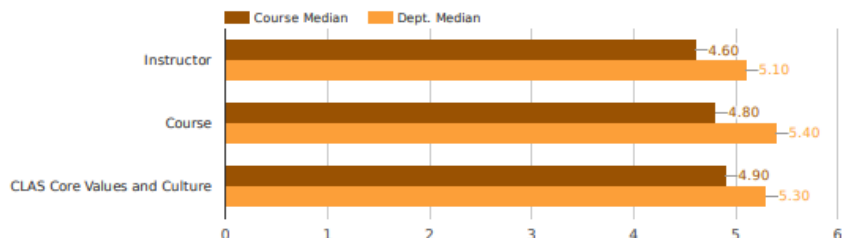
Note: -1:N/A - Not Applicable; 1:Strongly Disagree (1); 2:2; 3:3; 4:4; 5:5; 6:Strongly Agree (6);

Autumn 2023 PHIL:1861:0002 Introduction to Philosophy, University of Iowa.

Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2023)

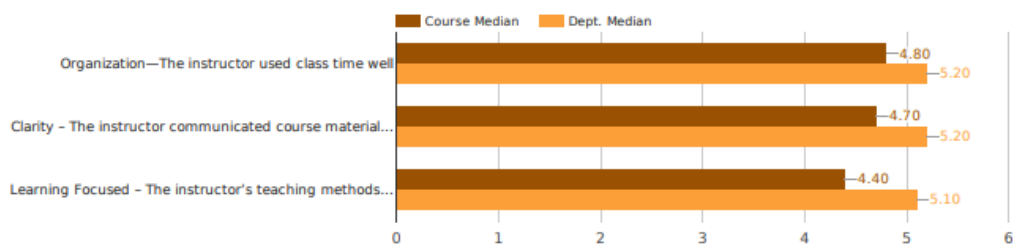
Instructor: **Forsman, Jan** Enrollment: **28**
 Section: **0002** Responses Incl Declines: **17**
 Course Title: **Introduction to Philosophy** Declines: **0**
 Course ID: **PHIL:1861:0002**
 Objectives:

Category Summary



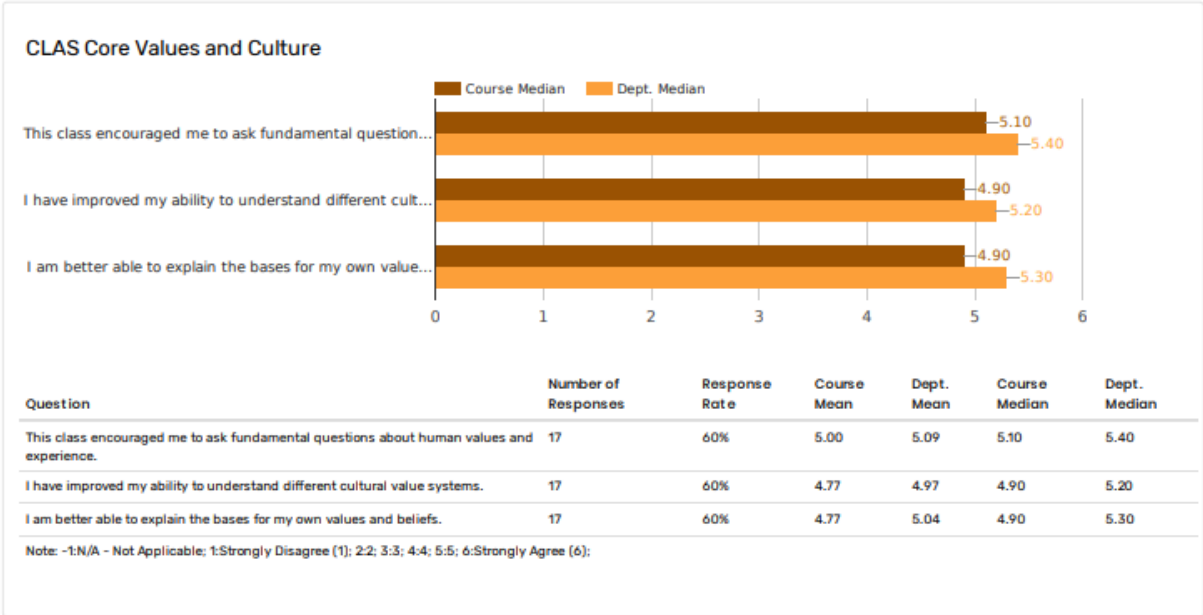
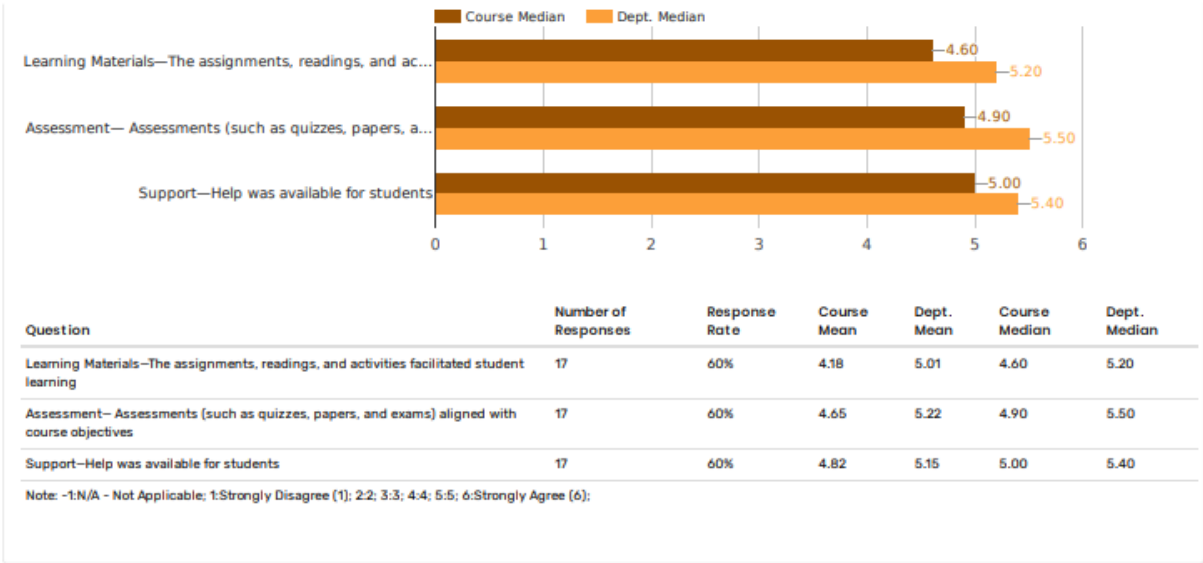
Category	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Mean	Dept. Mean	Median	Dept. Median	STDEV
Instructor	51	60.7%	4.55	4.87	4.60	5.10	1.09
Course	51	60.7%	4.55	5.13	4.80	5.40	1.33
CLAS Core Values and Culture	51	60.7%	4.84	5.04	4.90	5.30	0.92

Instructor

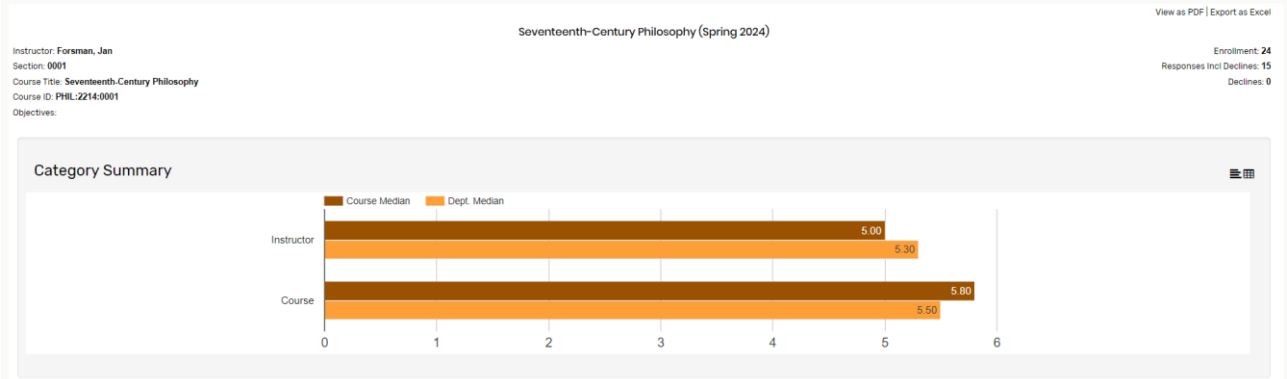


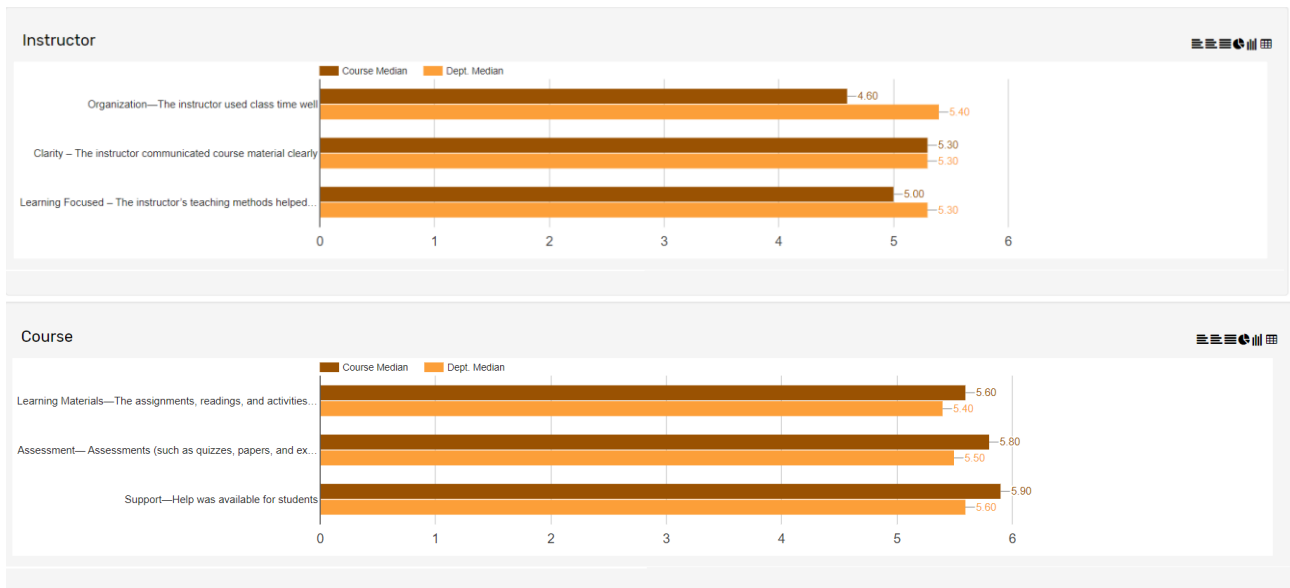
Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median
Organization—The instructor used class time well	17	60%	4.82	4.91	4.80	5.20
Clarity - The instructor communicated course material clearly	17	60%	4.47	4.91	4.70	5.20
Learning Focused - The instructor's teaching methods helped students learn	17	60%	4.35	4.79	4.40	5.10

Note: -1:N/A - Not Applicable; 1:Strongly Disagree (1); 2:2; 3:3; 4:4; 5:5; 6:Strongly Agree (6);



Spring 2024 PHIL:2214:0001 Seventeenth Century Philosophy, primary instructor, University of Iowa.





Examples of Comments from Students

Below are examples of comments from students from courses I have been either the primary of a co-instructor in Tampere University and University of Iowa. The comments from Tampere University were originally written in Finnish. Translations are by me.

Spring 2021 FILA02b History of Philosophy: Freedom of the Will, Tampere University, Finland

“Seminar form was good and made it possible to delve into the topic in a different way than just by for example reading material for an exam.”

“Reading the material beforehand and going through it in the seminar helped in memorizing the topics.”

“Seminar implementation was great. I would not have learned nearly as much just by reading the texts.

“I think that essay and presentation are a better form than reading and an exam. It was also a plus that the teachers took part in the discussion in a joking fashion, while still keeping to the discussed topic, which made the learning process more meaningful.”

Fall 2021 FIL.FIA.160 Bachelor Thesis Seminar, Tampere University, Finland.

“The structure was clear and coherent. The seminars had great atmosphere, which made giving and receiving constructive feedback satisfactory.”

“The seminar works were overall of good quality and evaluation was precise. The atmosphere was good and there was a good amount of feedback and discussions.

Spring 2022 FIL.FIA.160 Bachelor Thesis Seminar, Tampere University, Finland.

“Discussions in the seminar went well in my opinion and was nice that the supervisors took actively part in the discussion and gave suggestions for improvement (which did not really happen in the previous seminar).

“My bachelor’s thesis work has evolved and progressed and will be finished. I have received a sufficient amount of supervision, which has taken the work significantly forward.”

"I am extremely happy with the seminar. The teachers are well-adept and highly motivated and the works were thoroughly examined. Taking part in the seminar was in itself a part of the learning process. Reading and listening to the works of others and their feedback makes one learn a lot."

"I received supervision sufficiently and it was of high quality, discussions were diverse and feedback was constructive."

"I received good learning feedback from my instructor."

Spring 2023 PHIL:1861:0005 Introduction to Philosophy, University of Iowa

"He is a very passionate about what he teaches & chose to reach out to me when my grade was struggling & offered a way for me to get it up. Although philosophy isn't my favorite subject he is a great teacher!"

"Seems very passionate about the subject and loves to hear class discussions!"

"Really made my mind work in a way I never have experienced."

"This was always an interesting course and I took what I think were good notes. I felt like I learned something almost every class, and I was always challenged by the essays, but not so much as I couldn't do them."

"The readings were the best way to integrate the theories into my understanding and then reiterating them with the slideshow presentations in class."

"I thought that conversation ultimately aided understanding concepts. Applications, thought experiments, interesting situations all helped very well."

"I really enjoyed everything, overall a great course."

"I really really enjoyed the instructor as a person. I feel like he is very passionate about teaching and I hope he continues to grow as an instructor."

Fall 2023 PHIL:1861:0002 Introduction to Philosophy, University of Iowa

"Jan's hands on approach helped to facilitate for my learning style as class involvement helps me."

"The lectures did a good job explaining the content and Jan was very willing to answer any questions that we had. He knew the content well and could ask great follow-up questions."

"Professor was good at describing philosophy and very knowledgeable."

"Lectures were fun and insightful. Professor Forsman was always open to answering our questions and did a great job facilitating in-class discussions."

"He was very knowledgeable on all the topics discussed in class and was able to come up with other scenarios or ways to explain material if someone couldn't understand something."

"I loved touching on the core ideas of philosophy and diving deeper into those conversations."

"This is a course that I would recommend to anyone looking to learn a good amount about all of the aspects of phil."

“Professor Forsman's personality and enthusiasm for philosophy were infectious. I had a phenomenal time in a class I was initially a little unsure about.”

Spring 2024 PHIL:2214:0001 Seventeenth Century Philosophy, primary instructor, University of Iowa.

“The readings were extremely aligned with the course. I enjoyed the reading choices to help us better understand each philosopher's views.”

“More than half of the lectures were given by students who had closely read the material. This was smart as it forced students to closely read the text at least once and helped by bringing a student's perspective to the material. Quizzes were short and relatively easy. The professor was very flexible in making-up missed quizzes. Provided readings were short and focused on the specific subjects talked about in class the next day. Also, an immense focus on participation and student discussion aided in understanding the material, since the material could present very strangely worded or otherwise difficult to grasp concepts.”

“I really enjoyed how each of us got to present on one section, I think it allowed us to take a deeper dive into the pieces we'd chosen. I think what we were graded on was a good representation of the key concepts we talked about.”

“Interesting in class discussions, Jan does a good job at explaining dense topics.”

“Professor Forsman's lecture slides were very helpful for introducing each philosopher who's works we discussed throughout the semester. Before each philosopher's work, he introduced some of their main philosophical claims that, not only helped to individuate each philosopher, but also gave some background into their histories and influences.”

“I thoroughly enjoyed the material and the professor. It makes me happy to finally read some early female philosophers and to see their representation. It is also interesting to see how the concepts developed as science and scientific understanding progressed or was made legal. We definitely take for granted the fundamental aspects of how our society approaches the world, so while the class was simple, the concepts were interestingly difficult to grasp... which I loved.”

“I enjoyed this course and appreciate Jan's flexibility in terms of assignments and quizzes. The open-ended nature of the class made approaching complicated philosophy less daunting. I also appreciated his explanations and insightful answers when asked questions.”

“I enjoyed our discussions about each philosopher and their works, and I particularly enjoyed some of the in-class discussions that talked about thought experiments. These hypothetical scenarios really helped to understand the substance of each philosophers' views.”

Fall 2024 FIL.FIA.001 Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Tampere University, Finland.

“I really enjoyed how open the lecturer was for conversations and questions. Discussions were interesting and helped keeping up my concentration. The lecturer also moved instead of sitting, which I found helpful.”

Fall 2025 FIL.FIA.001 Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Tampere University, Finland.

“The scheduling was clear and it was easy to connect and compare topics due to this. The topics were explained clearly and often all the ambiguities got cleared out by asking. I also enjoyed how the course involved women philosophers and other points of view that are not often part of the discussion.

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

As a teacher, I aim at not just making my students memorize terms, philosophical theories and years, but to make them understand the underlying issues and concepts in a deeper and more meaningful way, creating narratives and helping in the learning process. I believe that learning occurs easiest by doing and reflecting, not by memorizing certain terms, philosophers, and doctrines for an exam. Accordingly, I emphasize classroom discussions and dialogical approach to teaching and learning. I likewise prefer essay and creative writing as a test for understanding of the material over traditional exams, as it requires the students to ruminate further, do comparisons, and practice creative thinking. I want to hear the opinions and views my students have and why they have those views, making them also defend their views by argumentation and discussion. I also think it is important from very early on in undergraduate studies to start reading and reflecting on original texts and their historical context.

I aim to create an inclusive, relaxed, and supportive learning environment for the students to increase their knowledge, giving them room to express their views and thoughts and become better both as academics and as human beings. Some of the ways I do this is by having clear definition of the classroom as a safer space in the syllabus, encouraging participation and taking part in the discussion, and by allowing room for everyone's views (as long as they are not against the notion of a safer space). I also enjoy presenting examples from both everyday life and popular culture to make the material more accessible and engaging. My passion and enthusiasm likewise play a role here, and I rarely stand still while I am teaching.

I am passionate about program development and have taken courses in university pedagogy on the subject, aiming to raise undergraduate enrolment by creative and engaging course design. In the Summer of 2026, I also took part in the Center for Canon Expansion and Change Early Modern Summer Program at the University of Minnesota, organized by Jessica Gordon-Roth, Dwight K. Lewis, Nada Mohamed, and Aleks Zarnitsyn. I am always working to make my teaching as inclusive as possible and include non-canonical, marginalized figures into the curriculum wherever I can. I find it important not to have them there just as a representation of marginalized groups but as intriguing and thought-provoking philosophers in their own right. Here, I consider, lies also one of the clearest examples of combining my research with my teaching.

For me, the best evidence of student learning is the ability to discuss and reflect the material presented. However, I am flexible here and recognize that different courses and different learners require different methods of testing student learning.

I have previously taught discussion-based seminars in Finland and at the University of Iowa on history of philosophy. My approach in these seminars is interactive and emphasizing textual material and student participation. Each week has historical texts that all the students are expected to read, with one or two students tasked in giving a presentation on the text. The presentation can include power points and other guiding materials, and are intended in leading the discussion, with the other students and the instructor(s) commenting on issues that are unclear or otherwise debated. The grading of the course is based on the presentation as well as on one or two written essays. For the second seminar in Finland, on free will in early modern philosophy, I also created short introduction videos for the students to watch before reading the texts. Extra points were earned by giving more than one presentation and writing a longer essay. At Iowa, I also included introductory lectures on each philosopher before reading the texts.

I also have extensive international experience in supervision and mentoring at Tampere University and University of Iowa at undergraduate level in both writing and research. At Tampere especially, I have worked as co-primary instructor of Bachelor Thesis seminar, supervising 6 Bachelor's works in history of philosophy.

In the future, I am also interested in testing the *bricolage*-style of solution focused teaching, where the process of trial and failure is part of the learning experience. However, in implementing this style I feel it important to likewise focus on planning the course well and following feedback; thus, not use the *bricolage*-style as an excuse for poor course planning and management.

Sample Syllabi

Below are sample syllabi of courses I have taught and/or can teach as a primary instructor.

Syllabus 1

Course: History of Skepticism

Department: Philosophy

Level: Intermediate

Instructor: Jan Forsman, PhD (Primary Instructor)

Description of Course: The course discusses the history of skeptical philosophy from ancient Greece to contemporary epistemology. Skepticism is one of the most significant issues in history of philosophy, and its most important phases are concentrated in the epistemological and ethical discussions of antiquity and in the scientific development of the renaissance and early modern period. However, latest research has uncovered skeptical significance to likewise medieval and modern philosophy, as well as to the phenomenological movement of the early 20th century. Philosophical skeptic is still a dangerous (although mostly a fictional) challenger to the contemporary epistemological theories.

Textbook/Materials: Classic texts, commentaries, and research papers

Learning Objectives: The students know the most significant skeptical movements and arguments, and their historical development. The students can likewise apply their knowledge and are familiar with the skeptical challenge to contemporary epistemology.

Teaching: First two weekly meetings consist of lectures by the instructor and the rest of discussions based on the reading material. Before each seminar, the students read an excerpt of a classic text. The texts are presented by some of the students (individually or as group work) for each seminar discussion. Reading the material, class presentation, quizzes, and two written essays fulfil the course credit.

Week 1. Introduction to History of Skepticism I: What is Philosophical Skepticism

Week 2. Introduction to History of Skepticism II: Historical Phases of Skepticism

First Part: Before Descartes

Week 3. Ancient Skepticism I: Academical Skepticism

(reading: Cicero: *Academica*, 2.20.64–2.34.110; presented by [Add])

Week 4. Ancient Skepticism II: Pyrrhonian Skepticism

(reading: Sextus Empiricus: *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* I, 1–72; presented by [Add])

Week 5. Medieval Skepticism I: St. Augustine and al-Ghazali

(reading: Augustine: *Contra Academicos*, 3.8.17–3.11.26; Augustine: *City of God*, 11.26; presented by [Add]; Al-Ghazali: *Deliverance from Error* Part 2; presented by [Add])

Week 6. Medieval Skepticism II: Medieval Debates

(reading: Paris Condemnation 1277, §20, §§22–28 and §§66–69; Nicholas of Autrecourt: *First and Second Letter to Bernard*; Jean Buridan: *Quaestiones in Aristotelis Metaphysicam* II, 1 & *Summulae de Dialectica*, 8.4.4.; presented by [Add])

Week 7. Skepticism in the renaissance: Pyrrhonism, fideism and empiric fallibilism

(reading: Michel de Montaigne: *Apology of Raimond Sebond* excerpts; Fransisco Sanches: *That Nothing is Known*, excerpts; presented by [Add])

First Essay Deadline: [Add]

Second Part: Descartes and Beyond

Week 8. Skepticism and Early Modern Science: Method of Doubt and Indubitable Knowledge

(reading: René Descartes: *Meditationes on First Philosophy*, Meditation I, II, & III; excerpts from the Second (Marin Mersenne) and Fifth (Pierre Gassendi) Objections, and Descartes's Replies; Pierre Gassendi: *Doubts and Rebuttals concerning the Metaphysics of René Descartes* I, i, 5 & II, i, 2; Descartes's Letter to Clerselierille, 12 January 1646; presented by [Add])

Week 9. Skepticism in Modern Time: Hume's Skepticism and Shepherd's Response

(reading: David Hume: *Of Academical or Sceptical Philosophy*; presented by [Add]; Mary Shepherd: *Essays on the Perception of an External Universe*, excerpt; presented by [Add])

Week 10. Skepticism in the 1900s I: Influence on Husserl's Phenomenology

(reading: Edmund Husserl: *Idea of Phenomenology*, Second Lecture; presented by [Add])

Week 11. Skepticism in the 1900s II: Moore and Wittgenstein

(reading: G. E. Moore: *Proof of an External World*; Ludwig Wittgenstein: *On Certainty* §§1–6, §§112–115, §125, §§243–245, §250, §341 and §§520–521; presented by [Add])

Week 12. Skepticism in Contemporary Epistemology: The Skeptic as a Sparring Partner

(reading: Hilary Putnam: *Reason, Truth and History*, chapter 1; Duncan Pritchard: "Epistemological Disjunctivism and the Bioscopic Treatment of Radical Scepticism" (Presented by: [Add])

Week 13. Final Discussion

Second Essay Deadline: [Add]

Grading: Final course grades will be assessed based on your performance in the following activities:

Class participation and attendance (10%): Regular and prompt attendance is not mandatory but is highly recommended. Since a substantial percentage of your grade will be based on class attendance and participation in discussion it is in your interest to attend every class and to arrive with significant contributions to the discussions. Participation in this class includes being prepared to join the discussion and give oral responses to questions on textual and visual materials.

Class presentation (20%): Each student will present part of the original reading material during the class (either on their own or as a group), while the ones who are not presenting offer criticism and feedback. For extra credit, a student can present on more than one topic.

Quizzes: (10%): There will be a short quiz about the reading material on unspecified dates.

Two essays (30% each): Each student will prepare two short (about 4-5 pages) essays based on (at least) one of the discussed philosophical works that the student did NOT present on. You will receive grades and written feedback from the instructor on the essay. Work submitted late will be subject to a 5% penalty for each day/portion of day submitted after the date due deadline. For extra credit, students can either write a third essay, or write a longer essay (e.g., 8-10 pages) as one of the two. Discuss these options with the instructor.

Syllabus 2

Course: Freedom of the Will in Renaissance and Early Modern Philosophy

Department: Philosophy

Level: Intermediate

Instructor: Jan Forsman, PhD (Primary Instructor)

Description of Course: The course discusses the problem of free will in renaissance and early modern philosophy, involving central philosophical questions from metaphysics to ethics.

Textbook/Materials: Classic texts and commentary papers

Learning Objectives: The students know the major philosophical questions and arguments through their main historical versions. The students likewise understand that history of philosophy is also philosophical practice, not merely historical research.

Teaching: First two weekly meetings consist of lectures by the instructor and the rest of discussions based on the reading material. Before each seminar, the students read an excerpt of a classic text and watch a short video lecture introducing the topic. The texts are presented by some of the students (individually or as group work) for each seminar discussion. Reading the material, watching the video lectures, presentation and a short, written essay fulfil the course credit.

Week 1. Introduction to the course and the topic I

Week 2. Introduction to the course and the topic II

Week 3. Freedom of the will in 16th-century Scholasticism: Libertarianism and compatibilism

(reading: excerpts from St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* and Francisco Suárez's *De Animata*; presented by [Add])

Week 4. Freedom of the will for Thomas Hobbes

(reading: excerpts from *Leviathan* and *Of Liberty and Necessity*; presented by [Add])

Week 5. Freedom of the will for Margaret Cavendish

(reading: excerpts from *Philosophical Letters* and *Philosophical and Physical Opinions*; presented by [Add])

Week 6. Freedom of the will for René Descartes

(reading: excerpts from *Meditations on First Philosophy*; *Principles of Philosophy* and Letters to Mesland; presented by [Add])

Week 7. Freedom of the will for Benedictus Spinoza

(reading: excerpt from *Ethics*; presented by [Add])

Week 8. Freedom of the will for John Locke

(reading: excerpt from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; presented by [Add])

Week 9. Freedom of the will for G.W. Leibniz

(reading: excerpts from *Discourse on the Metaphysics* and *Theodicy*; presented by [Add])

Week 10. Freedom of the will for Émilie du Châtelet

(reading: *On Freedom*; presented by [Add])

Week 11. Freedom of the will for David Hume

(reading: excerpt from *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*; presented by [Add])

Week 12. Freedom of the will for Immanuel Kant

(reading: excerpts from *Critique of Pure Reason*; extra: excerpts from *Prolegomena* and *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*)

Week 13. Discussion on questions raised during the course

Essay Deadline: [Add]

Grading: Final course grades will be assessed based on your performance in the following activities:

Class participation and attendance (10%): Regular and prompt attendance is not mandatory but is highly recommended. Since a substantial percentage of your grade will be based on class attendance and participation in discussion it is in your interest to attend every class and to arrive with significant contributions to the discussions. Participation in this class includes being prepared to join the discussion and give oral responses to questions on textual and visual materials.

Class presentation (30%): Each student will present part of the original reading material during the class (either on their own or as a group), while the ones who are not presenting offer criticism and feedback. For extra credit, a student can present on more than one topic.

Quizzes: (10%): There will be a short quiz on each text on unspecified dates.

One essay (50%): Each student will prepare a short (about 4-5 pages) essay based on (at least) one of the discussed philosophical works that the student did NOT present on. You will receive grades and written feedback from the instructor on the essay. Work submitted late will be subject to a 5% penalty for each day/portion of day submitted after the date due deadline. For extra credit, students can either write a second essay, or write a longer essay (e.g., 8-10 pages). Discuss these options with the instructor.

Syllabus 3

Course: Introduction to Philosophy

Department: Philosophy

Level: Introductory

Instructor: Jan Forsman, PhD (Primary Instructor)

Description of Course: Have you ever wondered who you are? Whether you are a physical body or an immaterial mind? Have you ever asked yourself what makes you the same person you were ten years ago? Have you sometimes worried that you cannot know anything with certainty? Have you ever wished that someone would provide a decisive argument for the existence of God? Have you ever been concerned with how you ought to act towards others? In this course, we will explore these and other important philosophical questions through a selection of classical and contemporary readings. We will engage in lively class discussions and writing; we will learn to analyze others' philosophical arguments and build our own; and we will gain a better understanding of our own philosophical outlook and the philosophical questions that matter most to us.

Textbook/Materials: Solomon, Robert C.; Higgins, Kathleen M.; Martin, Clancy: *Introducing Philosophy, 12th Edition*, Oxford University Press, 2021; Classic texts and research papers

Learning Objectives: *The students know the major discussions and arguments in both history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy.*

Teaching: The course will introduce philosophy as an academic subject by concentrating on the three major areas of study: Epistemology, Metaphysics, and Ethics. Topics include self-knowledge and personal identity, philosophical skepticism, mind-body problem, time travel, and the good life. These will be discussed with the help of a textbook as well as readings, films, etc. Students will read a previously assigned section from the textbook before each class and part of the class is dedicated to discussing that text. Two or three written essays fulfil the course credit. The students will also get to practice essay writing with a practice essay.

Introduction to the Course

Week 1. (a; b): Introduction: What is Philosophy?

Part I: Metaphysics

Week 2. (a; b) Introduction: What is Real?

Week 3. (a; b) Materialism & Dualism

Week 4. (a; b) Mind and Body & Self

Week 5. (a; b) Freedom

(Practice essay – deadline [add])

Week 6. (a; b) Time

Part II: Epistemology

Week 7. (a; b) Introduction: What is Knowledge?

Week 8. (a; b) Rationalism

Week 9. (a; b) Empiricism

Week 10. (a; b) Skepticism

(1st short essay – deadline [add])

Week 11. (a; b) Kant's Transcendental Revolution

Part III: Ethics

Week 12. (a; b) Introduction: What is to be Good?

Week 13. (a; b) Virtue Ethics, Consequentialism, Deontological Ethics

Week 14. (a; b) Theory of Justice

Week 15. (a; b) Animal Ethics & Conclusion

(2nd short essay – deadline [add])

Introduction to the Course

Week 1. (a; b): Introduction: What is Philosophy?

Part I: Epistemology

Week 2. (a; b; c) Introduction: What is Knowledge?

Week 3. (a; b; c) Rationalism I & II and Empiricism

Week 4. (a; b; c) Empiricism II and Self-Knowledge I & II

(Practice essay – deadline [add])

Week 5. (a; b; c) Skepticism (150 min.)

Part II: Metaphysics

Week 6. (a; b; c) Kant's Revolution and Introduction: What is Real? I & II

(1st short essay – deadline [add])

Week 7. (a; b; c) What is Real? III and Materialism I & II

Week 8. (a; b; c) Dualism and Mind & Body

Week 9. (a; b; c) Freedom

Week 10. (a; b; c) Time

Part III: Ethics

Week 11. (a; b; c) Introduction: What is to be Good?

(2nd short essay – deadline [add])

Week 12. (a; b; c) Virtue Ethics, Consequentialism, Deontological Ethics

Week 13. (a; b; c) Theory of Justice

Week 14. (a; b; c) Gender, Racial, and Animal Ethics

Conclusion to the Course

Week 15. (a; b; c) Conclusion: Major themes revisited

(3rd Short essay – deadline [add])

Grading: Final course grades will be assessed based on your performance in the following activities:

Class participation and attendance (10%): Regular and prompt attendance is not mandatory but is highly recommended. Since a substantial percentage of your grade will be based on class attendance and participation in discussion it is in your interest to attend every class and to arrive with significant contributions to the discussions. Participation in this class includes being prepared to join the discussion and give oral responses to questions on textual and visual materials.

Two short essays (45% each) or three short essays (30% each): Each student will prepare two (about 4–5 pages) or three (about 3–5 pages) essays. You will receive grades and written feedback from the instructor on these essays. Essays are to be submitted electronically via ICON by the due dates posted in the schedule below. Work submitted late will be subject to a 5% penalty for each day/portion of day submitted after the date due deadline. For extra credit, students can either write an extra short essay, or write a longer essay as one of the two or three (e.g., 8–10 pages). Discuss these options with the instructor.

Syllabus 4

Course: Seventeenth-Century Philosophy

Department: Philosophy

Level: Intermediate

Instructor: Dr. Jan Forsman, PhD (Primary Instructor)

Description of Course: Much of philosophy in the 17th century is an adjustment of the new Galilean science to theological and other pre-scientific commitments. There were particles and laws of nature, but only in ways allowed by proper conceptions of matter and causation; there was free will and agency, but only in ways allowed by a proper conception of God. The adjustment, of course, went both ways, and in particular, insights in science suggested and then guided revisions of belief in theology. In this course we examine central components of the philosophical systems of Rene Descartes, Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, Baruch Spinoza, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Conway, and G.W. Leibniz. There will be a lot of discussion of free will and human responsibility in the context of deterministic science. We will also consider views and arguments surrounding

science v. religion, the nature and existence of God, the nature and existence of the physical world, skepticism, the place of minds in a physical universe, the limits of human cognition, and the good life.

Textbook/Materials: Classic texts and research papers.

Learning Objectives: The students know the major discussions and arguments in 17th century philosophy.

Teaching: First two meetings on a new philosopher consist of lectures by the instructor and the rest of discussions based on the reading material. Before each seminar, the students read an excerpt of a classic text. The texts are presented by some of the students (individually or as group work) for each seminar discussion. Reading and presenting on the material, quizzes on the material covered, and a short, written essay fulfil the course credit.

Week 1. (a; b) – Introduction to the Course

Week 2. (a; b; c) Introduction to Seventeenth-Century Philosophy

2.1. Scholastic Background

2.2. New Science

2.3. Second Scholasticism

Week 3. (a; b; c) – René Descartes I

3.1. Introduction to Descartes I

3.2. Introduction to Descartes II

3.3. Reading: First Meditation (pp. 12–15)

(Presented by [Add])

Week 4. (a; b; c) – René Descartes II

4.1. Reading: Second Meditation (pp. 16–23)

(Presented by [Add])

4.2. Reading: Third Meditation I (pp. 24–30)

(Presented by [Add])

4.3. Reading: Third Meditation II (pp. 31–36)

(Presented by [Add])

Readings: Classic text: *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641–1642) in **Cottingham, John; Stoothoff, Robert & Murdoch, Dugald (eds.):** *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol. II*, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Week 5. (a; b; c) – Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia I

5.1. Introduction to Elisabeth I

5.2. Introduction to Elisabeth II

5.3. Reading: Correspondance between Elisabeth and Descartes I (6 May–10 June 1643, pp. 61–68) (Presented by [Add])

Week 6. (a; b; c) – Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia II

6.1. Reading: Correspondance between Elisabeth and Descartes II (28 June–1 July 1643, pp. 69–73) (Presented by [Add])

6.2. Reading: Correspondance between Elisabeth and Descartes III (18 May–22 June 1645, pp. 85–94) (Presented by [Add])

6.3. Reading: Correspondance between Elisabeth and Descartes IV (6 October–30 November 1645, pp. 120–128) (Presented by [Add])

Reading: Classic text: Correspondence between Elisabeth and Descartes (1643–1645) in **Shapiro, Lisa (ed.):** *The Correspondence Between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes*, University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Week 7. (a; b; c) – Margaret Cavendish I

7.1. Introduction to Cavendish I

7.2. Introduction to Cavendish II

- 7.3. Reading: Lascano 2023: Cavendish on Constituent Parts of Matter (pp. 6–17).
(Presented by [Add])

Week 8. (a; b; c)– Margaret Cavendish II

- 8.1. Reading: Grounds of Natural Philosophy, First and Second Part (excerpts, pp. 131–137)
(Presented by [Add])
- 8.2. Reading: Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy, Chapters XXXIV–XXXVII
(pp. 112–120) (Presented by [Add])
- 8.3. Reading: Philosophical Letters (excerpts), and Philosophical and Physical Opinions III, Chap. X
(Presented by [Add])

Reading: Classic text: *Grounds of Natural Philosophy* (1668); *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy* (1666) in **Cunning, David** *Cavendish: Essential Writings*; Oxford University Press, 2019.
Philosophical Letters (1664) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/53679/53679-h/53679-h.htm>
Philosophical and Physical Opinions (1663; 1655),
<https://cavendish-ppo.ku.edu/texts/philosophical-and-physical-opinions/>
Commentary text: **Lascano: Marcy P.** *The Metaphysics of Margaret Cavendish and Anne Conway*,
Oxford University Press, 2023.

Week 9 (a; b; c) – Benedictus Spinoza I

- 9.1. Introduction to Spinoza I
- 9.2. Introduction to Spinoza II
- 9.3. Reading: Wilson 1996: Spinoza’s Theory of Knowledge, sections 2-5 (pp. 92–100)
(Presented by [Add])

Week 10. (a; b; c) – Benedictus Spinoza II

- 10.1. Reading: Ethics, First Part, Definitions, Axioms, and prop. 1–10 (pp. 3–10)
(Presented by [Add])
- 10.2. Reading: Ethics, First Part, prop. 11–16 (pp. 10–18)
(Presented by [Add])
- 10.3. Reading: Ethics, First Part, prop. 17–29 (pp. 19–28)
(Presented by [Add])

Reading: Classic text: *Ethics* (1677) in **Spinoza, Benedict de:** *Ethics* (ed. Kisner, Matthew J.), Cambridge University Press, 2018.
Commentary text: **Wilson, Margaret D.:** “Spinoza’s Theory of Knowledge” in **Garret, Don (ed.):** *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 89–141, 1996.

Week 11. (a; b; c) – Anne Conway I

- 11.1. Introduction to Conway I
- 11.2. Introduction to Conway II
- 11.3. Lascano 2023: Conway on the Nature of Spirit and Monism (pp. 22–28, 38–42)
(Presented by [Add])

Week 12. (a; b; c) – Anne Conway II

- 12.1. Reading: Principles, Chapter I–III (pp. 9–20)
(Presented by [Add])
- 12.2. Reading: Principles, Chapter IV–V (pp. 21–27)
(Presented by [Add])
- 12.3. Reading: Principles, Chapter VI (pp. 28–40)
(Presented by [Add])

Reading: Classic text: *The Principles of Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (1690) in Conway, Anne: *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (ed. Coudert, Allison P. & Corse, Taylor), Cambridge University Press, 1996.
Commentary text: **Lascano: Marcy P.** *The Metaphysics of Margaret Cavendish and Anne Conway*,

Oxford University Press, 2023.

Week 13. (a; b; c) – G.W. Leibniz I

13.1. Introduction to Leibniz I

13.2. Introduction to Leibniz II

13.3. Jorati 2017: “Leibniz on Free Will”

(Presented by [Add])

Week 14. (a; b; c) – G.W. Leibniz II

14.1. Reading: Discourse on Metaphysics, chapters 1–14 (pp. 35–47)

(Presented by [Add])

14.2. Reading: Discourse on Metaphysics, chapters 22–33 (pp. 54–65)

(Presented by [Add])

14.3. Reading: Theodicy, §§288–296, §298–307

(Presented by [Add])

Reading: Classic text: *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686) in **Leibniz, G.W.:** *Philosophical Essays* (transl. Ariew, Roger & Garber, Daniel), Hackett Publishing Company, 1989. *Theodicy* (1710)

<https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/17147/pg17147-images.html>

Commentary text: **Jorati, Julia:** “Leibniz on Free Will” in **Timpe, Kevin; Griffith, Megan; Levy, Neil (eds.):** *The Routledge Companion to Free Will*, Routledge, 2017.

Week 15. (a; b; c) Conclusion: Later developments and further discussion on questions raised during the course

Essay deadline: [Add]

Grading: Final course grades will be assessed based on your performance in the following activities:

Class participation and attendance (10%): Regular and prompt attendance is not mandatory but is highly recommended. Since a substantial percentage of your grade will be based on class attendance and participation in discussion it is in your interest to attend every class and to arrive with significant contributions to the discussions. Participation in this class includes being prepared to join the discussion and give oral responses to questions on textual and visual materials.

Class presentation (30%): Each student will present part of the original reading material during the class (either on their own or as a group), while the ones who are not presenting offer criticism and feedback. For extra credit, a student can present on more than one topic.

Quizzes: (10%): There will be a short quiz on each text on unspecified dates.

One essay (50%): Each student will prepare a short (about 4-5 pages) essay based on (at least) one of the discussed philosophical works that the student did NOT present on. You will receive grades and written feedback from the instructor on the essay. Work submitted late will be subject to a 5% penalty for each day/portion of day submitted after the date due deadline. For extra credit, students can either write a second essay, or write a longer essay (e.g., 8-10 pages). Discuss these options with the instructor.

Syllabus 5

Course: History of Philosophy from ancient Greece to Immanuel Kant

Department: Philosophy

Level: Introductory

Instructor: Jan Forsman, PhD (Primary Instructor)

Description of the Course: The course introduces the nature of philosophy, its subfields, and their key problems and concepts, both systematically and through the history of philosophy. The historical aspect of philosophy in this course is limited from classical Greek philosophy to the variously unique branches that emerged up to the early 20th century. As such, the course covers philosophy in classical Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, classical Islamic, Latin medieval, Renaissance, early modern, and 19th-century contexts.

Textbook/Materials: None

Learning Objectives: The students will be able to identify the main subfields of philosophy and recognize the characteristic philosophical problems within them. They will understand how philosophical problems and the nature of philosophical inquiry differ from the research issues and nature of other fields of science. They will be able to name and describe key figures and movements in the history of philosophy.

Teaching: Lectures twice a week.

Week 1. a) Introduction to the Course
b) From Pre-Socratics to Plato

Week 2. a) Plato and Aristotle I
b) Plato and Aristotle II

Week 3. a) Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages
b) High and Late Middle Ages

Week 4. a) From Renaissance to Descartes
b) 17th Century Philosophy I

Week 5. a) 17th Century Philosophy II
b) 18th Century Philosophy I

Week 6. a) 18th Century Philosophy II
b) Kant and the Transcendental Revolution

Week 7. a) Final Discussion
b) Exam

Grading: Final course grades will be assessed based on an exam after the course.

Syllabus 6

Course: Problem of Knowledge and Ways of Knowing

Department: Philosophy

Level: Introductory

Instructor: Jan Forsman, PhD (Primary Instructor)

Description of the Course: The course will explore the central problems and questions of epistemology, or the theory of knowledge: What is knowledge? How can knowledge claims be justified? Can anything be known with certainty? The course also ventures beyond traditional epistemology. We will consider how truth can be understood and what its relationship is to knowing. We will examine different methods of acquiring knowledge and reasoning, as well as debates about the foundation of all our knowledge. Only part of our knowledge is based on our own observations or justifications. But how can we trust others as sources of knowledge? And can we objectively know what is good and what is evil?

Textbook/Materials: None

Learning Objectives: The students understand philosophical concepts, problems, and proposed solutions that characterize knowledge, knowing, and ways of knowing.

Teaching: Lectures twice a week.

Week 1. a) Introduction to the Course
b) Problem of Knowledge I – What is Knowing

Week 2. a) Problem of Knowledge II – Classical Definition of Knowledge
b) Skepticism

Week 3. a) Rationalism I
b) Rationalism II

Week 4. a) Empiricism I
b) Empiricism II

- Week 5.** a) Knowledge and Self-Knowledge
b) Kant and the Transcendental Revolution
Week 6. a) Final discussion
b) Exam

Grading: Final course grades will be assessed based on an exam after the course.

Syllabus 7

Course: Seminar on Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Department: Philosophy

Level: Intermediate

Instructor: Jan Forsman, PhD (Primary Instructor)

Description of the Course: The course concentrates on René Descartes's philosophical classic *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641–1642). The work includes several still relevant and important questions and themes from the mind-body problem to epistemological questions.

Textbook/Materials: Classic text and research papers.

Learning Objectives: The students know the major philosophical questions, arguments, and debates related to Descartes's work and how they relate to contemporary philosophical discussions. The students likewise understand that history of philosophy is also philosophical practice, not merely historical research.

Teaching: The students take part each week in a lecture (beginning of the week) and a seminar session (end of the week), during which each of the six meditations are discussed separately. In the lecture, the teacher responsible introduces the students to the theme and context of the particular meditation, while also putting the audience's attention to specific parts of the text and demonstrating interpretive disputes related to the topics in question. During the seminar, the students present the text of the meditation either on their own or as a group, while the ones who are not presenting offer criticism and feedback. The teacher is likewise one of the feedback providers. If there are more groups than there are meditations, some of the meditations can be covered in the form of a debate. During the lecture, while discussing the field of interpretations of the meditation in question, the teacher would focus on a particular current interpretive dispute and provide positions in the dispute for two groups to defend against each other (with possible supportive commentary texts). In the seminar, the chosen groups present their supported interpretations arguing against each other and using the original text as evidence. As with the other seminar format, those students not presenting offer feedback and criticism. Reading the material, writing the miniessays and presenting/debating fulfil the course credit.

Schedule:

Week 1. Lecture: *Descartes and Meditations* – Introduction to the work and course

No seminar.

Week 2. Lecture: *First Meditation – Dreams and Demons*

Seminar: First Meditation

Week 3. Lecture: *Toinen mietiskely – The Whirlpool, the Keyhole, and the Wax*

Seminar: Second Meditation

(Miniessay 1.)

Week 4. Lecture: *Third Meditation – Classification of Ideas and God*

Seminar: Third Meditation

(Miniessay 2.; feedback on miniessay 1.)

Week 5. Lecture: *Fourth Meditation – Cognitive error and Cartesian Theodicy*

Seminar: Fourth Meditation

(Miniessay 3; feedback on miniessay 2.)

Week 6. Lecture: *Fifth Meditation – True & Immutable Natures and Cartesian Circle*

Seminar: Fifth Meditation

(Miniessay 4.; feedback on miniessay 3.)

Week 7. Lecture: *Sixth Meditation – Mind & Body and Habitual False Beliefs*

Seminar: Sixth Meditation

(Miniessay 5.; feedback miniessay 4.)

Week 8. No lecture

Seminar: *Beyond the Meditations*: The work as whole, its influence on later philosophy and possible questions raised during the course

(Miniessay 6.; feedback on miniessay 5.)

Week 9. No lecture

No seminar

(Feedback on miniessay 6.)

Grading: The course is evaluated in the form of short essays. Each week the students write a mini-essay (around two pages of length) on the discussed meditation, which are to be returned for the next seminar and evaluated the following week from that. The teacher gives the topics or the questions for the mini-essays during the lecture and provides either written or spoken feedback on the essays after evaluation. This allows rehearsing of the earlier material, as well as realization how themes and topics go together and form a coherent whole throughout the whole work. Along with the six miniessays the final grade is based on presentations/debates and on activity and participation in discussions (each miniessay 10%, presentation/debate 25%, activity and participation 15% of final grade). Attendance on each lecture and seminar meeting is not mandatory but highly recommended. The students also have the possibility of writing a longer essay at the end of the course in order to gain more credits.

Syllabus 8

Course: Introduction to Early Modern women philosophers

Department: Philosophy

Instructor: Jan Forsman, PhD

Level: Introductory

Description of Course: In the teaching of the history of philosophy, there has long prevailed a narrative of a triumphant succession of Great Men. As a result, a typical way of teaching early modern philosophy has been through the so-called “Big Seven” (typically René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, G. W. Leibniz, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant, though Thomas Hobbes and Nicholas Malebranche are also sometimes included). At the same time, however, many women philosophers who were respected and influential in their own time have been marginalized and excluded from this story. This course introduces students to early modern philosophy by retaining the same format but applying it to influential women philosophers of the same period, thereby demonstrating that philosophy in the early modern era was not an exclusively male domain.

Textbook/Materials: Classic texts and research papers.

Learning Objectives: Upon completing the course, the student is familiar with the central philosophical questions and approaches through their most important historical formulations. The main objective is epistemic: after completing the course, the student has an overview of the major classical questions and methods of philosophy. They understand the history of philosophy through questions concerning being, knowledge, and truth, as well as goodness, justice, and beauty. A student who has completed the course is familiar with different philosophical approaches—such as rationalism and empiricism—and is able to evaluate them. They understand the significance of original texts in philosophy and the specific challenges related to their use. The student also understands that studying the history of philosophy is itself a way of practicing philosophy, not merely an exercise in historical research

Teaching: The teaching is conducted as lectures once a week, with an emphasis on discussion. Students will read selected texts and excerpts for each lecture as background for the discussions.

Week 1. Introduction to the course I

Week 2. Introduction to the course II

Week 3. Medieval Background

Week 4. Teresa of Ávila

Week 5. Princess Elisabeth

Week 6. Margaret Cavendish

Week 7. Anne Conway

Week 8. Emilié Du Châtelet

Week 9. Mary Shepherd

Week 10. Mary Wollstonecraft

Week 11. Final Discussion

Week 12. Exam

Grading: Final course grades will be assessed based on an exam after the course.

Syllabus 9

Course: Philosophy of Dinosaurs (key questions in epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of science presented through dinosaurs and history of paleontology)

Department: Philosophy

Instructor: Jan Forsman, PhD (Primary Instructor)

Level: Intermediate

Description of Course: What did the early modern philosophers think about dinosaur fossils? What do we actually know based on the fossil record? Is there such a thing as “Brontosaurus”? What even is a dinosaur and does the movie “Jurassic Park” have any of them? This course utilizes metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of science to introduce students to basic philosophical questions related to dinosaurs and paleontological studies.

Textbook/Materials: Various scientific and popularized texts, including classic texts and paleontological research.

Learning Objectives: The students know major philosophical questions and issues related to paleontological theories and study of dinosaurs. The students can also apply their knowledge to other fields of metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of science.

Teaching: The teaching is conducted as lectures twice a week, with an emphasis on discussion. Students will read selected texts and excerpts for each lecture as background for the discussions.

Week 1. Introduction to the course: why study the philosophy of dinosaurs?

(a; b)

Week 2. What is a dinosaur?

(a; b)

Reading: Robert Bakker: (1986) *The Dinosaur Heresies*, Zebra Books; Michael Crichton: (1990) *Jurassic Park*, Knopf.

Extra Reading: John Conway; C. M. Koseman & Darren Naish: (2012) *All Yesterdays: Unique and Speculative Views of Dinosaurs and Other Prehistoric Animals*, Irregular Books.

Week 3. Giants and Unicorns: Early history of fossils I

(a; b)

Reading: Robert Plot: (1677) *Natural History of Oxfordshire*; Adrienne Mayor: (2000)

The First Fossil Hunters, Princeton University.

Extra Reading: Richard Brookes: (1763) *A New and Accurate System of Natural History*; Jan Forsman: (2023) “Weird Early History of Paleontology: Robert Plot and *Scrotum Humanum*,” *Extinct*.

Week 4. Giants and Unicorns: Early history of fossils II

(a; b)

Reading: Leibniz: (1749) *Protogaea*; René Descartes: (1644) *Principles of Philosophy*

Miniessay 1 Deadline: [Add]

Week 5. Are you too cynical to believe in a miracle? Towards theory of evolution

(a; b)

Reading: David Hume: (1749) “Of Miracles”, in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*; Mary Shepherd: (1827) “The Credibility of Miracles,” in *Essays on the Perception of an External Universe*

Extra Reading: Jeffrey K. McDonough: (2022) “Shepherd’s *The Credibility of Miracles*,” *teoksessa Saints, Heretics, and Atheists*, Oxford University Press.

Week 6. Big lizards in the backyard: Fossils in the 19th century I

(a; b)

Reading: Michael Taylor: (2024) *Impossible Monsters*, Liveright

Extra Reading: Diarmid Finnegan: (2024) *Darwinism’s Generations: The Reception of Darwinian Evolution in Britain, 1859–1909*, Oxford University Press.

Week 7. Big lizards in the backyard: Fossils in the 19th century II

(a; b)

Reading: Christopher McGowan: (2001) *The Dragon Seekers*, Perseus Publishing

Week 8. Dinosaur by any other name: Taxonomy and the names of dinosaurs

(a; b)

Reading: Stephen J. Gould: (1991) “Bully for Brontosaurus” in *Bully for Brontosaurus*, Norton; Leonard Finkelman: (2015) “Brontosaurus and the Nature of Philosophy”, *Scientia Salon*.

Extra Reading: Jan Forsman: (2015) “Night of the Brontosaurus”; Emanuel Tschopp; Octávio Mateis & Roger B.J. Benson: (2015) “A specimen level phylogenetic analysis and taxonomic revision of Diplodocidae (Dinosauria, Sauropoda),” *PeerJ* 3:e857.

Miniessay 2 Deadline: [Add]

Week 9. Ducks and Rabbits: What do fossils really tell us?

(a; b)

Reading: Derek Turner (2011): “A new way of seeing the fossil record” in *Paleontology: A Philosophical Introduction*, Cambridge University Press; Darren Naish: (2020) “Stop saying that there are too many sauropod dinosaurs,” *TetZoo*

Extra Reading: Brian J. Ford: (2019) *Too Big to Walk: The New Science of Dinosaurs*, William Collins

Week 10. So happy together? Dinosaurs and pack behavior

(a; b)

Reading: Brian Switek: *My Beloved Brontosaurus*, Scientific American/Farrar, 2013.

Week 11. You’re hot then you’re cold: Dinosaurs and thermoregulation

(a; b)

Reading: David Hone: *The Tyrannosaur Chronicles*, Bloomsbury, 2016.

Week 12. Jurassic Nark: Is cloning dinosaurs ethical?

(a; b)

Reading: Michael Crichton: (1990) *Jurassic Park*, Knopf; Michael Crichton (1995) *The Lost World*, Knopf.

Extra Reading: Leonard Finkelman (2016): “You call that a Velociraptor?” *Extinct*.

Miniessay 3 Deadline: [Add]

Week 13. Conclusion to the course and final discussions
(a; b)

Final Essay Deadline: [Add]

Grading: Final course grades will be assessed based on the students' performance in the following activities:

Class participation and attendance (15%): Regular and prompt attendance is not mandatory but is highly recommended. Since a substantial percentage of your grade will be based on class attendance and participation in discussion it is in your interest to attend every class and to arrive with significant contributions to the discussions. Participation in this class includes being prepared to join the discussion and give oral responses to questions on textual and visual materials.

3 miniessays (15% each): Each student will prepare three miniessays during the course (about 1–2 pages), describing their progress.

Final essay (40%): Each student will prepare a final essay at the end of the course (about 4–5 pages). You will receive grades and written feedback from the instructor on the essay.

Additionally, there will be a short quiz about the reading material on unspecified dates. These quizzes will not affect the final grading but are meant as a tool for the students to follow their own progress. For extra credit, students can either write a second essay or write a longer final essay. Discuss these options with the instructor.