



Philosophy Syllabus
Grand Haven High School
Social Studies Department



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This course will be an introduction to philosophical thinking at a general level. Rather than trying to focus on each and every philosophical discipline, we will focus on the general ideas and some characteristic examples of how philosophers throughout time have struggled with those ideas. Consequently, we will focus on questions such as:

- Does knowledge come from reason or experience? How sure can we truly be of what we know?
- Are human actions free or determined?
- Are moral norms relative or absolute?

Additionally, we will be addressing some specific concepts philosophers have used to articulate their experience and the world we live in (being, substance, *a priori*, *a posteriori*, empirical, etc.)

Objectives:

- To explore standard philosophical questions (How do we know what we know? How should we act in order to find happiness, satisfaction, or meaning? What is this existence all about?), and the ways that our thinking has developed over time.
- To begin the process of developing your own answers to philosophical questions.
- To become comfortable with arguments defended with consistent logic and reason, and to recognize logical flaws and incompatibilities.

What will you need for this class?

1. A writing utensil (pen, pencil, etc.)
2. A 3-ring binder and spiral notebook. This will organize all of your notes, in-class assignments, homework, and handouts. This is critical to your success in this class, and is strongly recommended.

What will we Study?

This course will break into 6 specific units:

- An overview of the study of Philosophy
- Ancient and Medieval Philosophy
- Eastern Philosophy
- Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment
- Modern Philosophy
- 21st Century Issues

What will you be graded on?

20% of your grade will be determined by formal, summative assessments.

30% of your grade will be determined by assessing your level of class participation.

40% will be determined through your writings, presentations, and other course assignments.

What if you turn an assignment in late?

You will not receive any credit. Please try to be on time. If you have computer issues, I can accept papers on a disc, or emailed to howardk@ghaps.org (Meijer is open 24 hours) 😊

What if you are absent the day of a test, or a project due date?

You will take the test or turn in the project the day you return. If your absence is excused, you will receive credit. If it is unexcused, you will receive a zero.

What if you are late for class?

Tardies 1-7 will negatively affect your class participation grade, depending on the severity of your tardiness and the degree of disruption they cause the rest of class.

Tardies 8 and up will result in referrals to the appropriate administrator for detentions, suspensions, or whatever else they feel you deserve.

What if you need to use the hall pass?

Your presence here is important. Therefore, I will be stingy with the hall pass regardless of race, creed, religion, or gender. You have 6 minutes between classes: use them wisely.

All that being said, there will be no hall passes in the first or last 10 minutes, and a reasonable amount of time will pass between uses (if someone just got back, wait a few minutes to ask)

What are the rules of this class?

My rules are simple and easy. Treat others the way you would like to be treated and we'll get along famously.

1. Respect. Yourself, your classmates, me. We will approach this class in a mature fashion. I will treat you like adults, and I expect you will act accordingly. Your mature behavior is important if we are going to have a great time in this class. (also see rule 5.)
2. Follow instructions
3. Be in your seat, on time, and ready to go.
4. All school rules apply (No food or drinks, no coats, no hats, etc.)
5. Don't use your phone when someone is trying to talk to you. It's rude, at the very least. If you make me confiscate your phone, you'll get it back either after a lunch detention, or after a parent or guardian talks me into giving it back to you.

What if you need extra help, or have an issue with something we are doing in class?

I am here almost every day after school. Don't hesitate to stop by whenever, or feel free to set up a specific time. I am aware that complications may arise which are beyond your control. If you are honest with me, and willing to put in the effort, I promise that I will do my best to accommodate you.

Keep in mind that this class is important and should be enjoyable. If you come in with the right mindset, we should have a lot of fun 😊