

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

## Course Description

This course introduces students to the study of philosophy and is the first subject of the philosophical biennium. It examines the nature of philosophy and philosophical reflection, which begins in wonder, and its method. The parts of philosophy are covered as well as a brief overview of the history of philosophy and key philosophers, the big questions asked in philosophy, and how they relate to life. We will look closely at the relationships between philosophy and science, and faith and reason. Students will also be introduced to the classical Christian philosophical tradition, especially St Thomas Aquinas, and Pope John Paul II's great encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, on faith and reason.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Recognise key figures in the history of philosophy and their principal contribution to philosophy
- Understand and explain the nature of philosophical reflection
- Understand and explain the importance of philosophical reflection for human flourishing
- Understand and explain the relationship between science and philosophy
- Understand and explain the importance of philosophy for the study of the Christian faith and theology
- Be familiar with the orientations of the Church's Magisterium on Philosophy
- Identify philosophical errors underlying problematic ways of thinking in society and culture

## Program

### 1. ***What is Philosophy?***

- 1.1. Meaning of the term "philosophy"
- 1.2. The scope of philosophy
- 1.3. Philosophy begins in wonder
- 1.4. Continuity with ordinary human knowledge
- 1.5. Realist and metaphysical: the study of Being and its principles
- 1.6. Universal: philosophy as all-encompassing knowledge

### 2. ***Brief History of Philosophy***

- 2.1. Philosophy, myth and ancient religions
- 2.2. Classical philosophy
- 2.3. Philosophy in the Early Christian era
- 2.4. Scholastic Philosophy
- 2.5. The crisis of Modern Philosophy
- 2.6. Modern science and philosophy
- 2.7. Positivism and Scientism

- 2.8. Philosophical methods in the 20th century (phenomenological, analytical)
- 2.9. Philosophy in contemporary culture

### 3. ***Philosophy in Human Life***

- 3.1. Philosophy and ideology
- 3.2. Philosophy in life and culture: speculative and practical aspects
- 3.3. The value of studying philosophy
- 3.4. Some philosophical values: truth, profundity, essentiality, foundation
- 3.5. Relativism

### 4. ***Philosophy and Science***

- 4.1. Similarities and differences
- 4.2. The relationship between philosophy and science
- 4.3. Positivism and scientism

### 5. ***Philosophy, Christian Faith and Theology***

- 5.1. Harmony between faith and reason
- 5.2. The importance of philosophy for believers
- 5.3. Christian faith as guide to philosophy in the believer
- 5.4. The relationship between philosophy and Revelation
- 5.5. Some effects of radically separating philosophy, faith and theology
- 5.6. The use of philosophy in theology
- 5.7. Christian Philosophy

### 6. ***Philosophy and the Church***

- 6.1. The Church's interest in philosophy and culture for evangelization, pastoral work and theology
- 6.2. Obstacles to Christian faith posed by certain philosophical positions
- 6.3. The Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879)
- 6.4. The authority of St. Thomas Aquinas in the teaching of philosophy and theology
- 6.5. Vatican Council II and post-conciliar magisterium on philosophy and on the teaching of philosophy

### 7. ***Method and Principal Areas of Philosophy***

- 7.1. Plurality and unity in method of research and across philosophical fields
- 7.2. Sources for philosophy
- 7.3. Discovery and development of fundamental philosophical ideas
- 7.4. Importance of the method being metaphysical and realist
- 7.5. Principal areas of philosophy
- 7.6. The importance of history in philosophy
- 7.7. Philosophy as a sapiential habit related more to intellectual virtues of than to method
- 7.8. The teaching of philosophy and its formative function
- 7.9. Some risks of proceeding with faulty method or approach to studying philosophy

## **Bibliography**

Artigas, M., *Introduction to Philosophy*, Sinag-Tala, Manila, 1990.

De Torre, J. M., *Christian Philosophy*, Vera Reyes Inc., Manila, 1980.

Maritain, J., *An Introduction to Philosophy*, Sheed & Ward, New York, 1962.

Sullivan, D., *An Introduction to Philosophy: The Perennial Principles of the Classical Realist Tradition*, TAN, Illinois, 1992, pp. 1-6, 247-265.

Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Aeterni Patris*, 1879.

Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, 1998, especially

nn. 3-4: nature of philosophy

nn. 43-44: philosophy and the Church

nn. 73-76, 79: philosophy, Christian faith and theology

nn. 81-84, 103-4, 106: philosophy in human life

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013, especially

nn. 132-4: thought, culture & education

nn. 242-3, 257: dialogue between faith, reason & science