

Invitation to Philosophy

Fall 2021

Instructor: Prof. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc.,

Language: English

Course Description:

This course will introduce you to the major problems and methods of philosophy with accent on anthropology and theory of culture. Philosophy is on one side about asking /as if for the first time/ “big questions” concerning our Being-in-the-World. On the other side it requires familiarity with intricate variety of basic concepts developed through the major thinkers in world history.

During the semester we will read two books. The first is the book **An Essay on Man** written by **Ernest Cassirer**, the eminent philosopher of 20. Century. This book in agreeable way combines the systematic and historical approach to the basic models of philosophical thinking. The reading of Cassirers book we will combine with reading of the book **A Philosopher looks at Human Beings** written by Michael Ruse.

Philosophers should read slowly (but thoroughly) and therefore we will read and discuss *all in all* just these two books during the whole semester.

Copies of Cassirer´s and Ruse´s books are at disposal via Moodle

Main Topics

What does it mean to be a human being?

From animal reactions to human responses

The human world of space and time

Facts and Ideals

The definition of Man in terms of human culture

Myth and religion

Language

Art

History

Science

Symbol and Existence: E. Cassirer in conflict with M. Heidegger

The course **Introduction into Philosophy** aims to:

- provide you with an understanding of key concepts, theories, and debates in selected areas of philosophy.
- develop critical judgement in your understanding and interpretation of any texts and arguments.
- demonstrate you different perspectives within philosophy and to teach you to evaluate them critically
- develop your capacities in critical reasoning and argument.

Desired learning outcomes

On completion of this course you will have acquired knowledge and understanding of:

- what it means to approach an issue philosophically
- how to analyse and construct philosophical arguments

- the key approaches to philosophy, and the contribution of different theorists to philosophical ideas and thinking
- what constitutes a rational approach to philosophy and of the differences between commonsense and theoretical explanations of human behavior

On completion of this course, you will be able to:

- understand and critically evaluate primary and secondary literature (including commentary in recorded audio format) and formulate your own views about the problems discussed
- plan and execute philosophical writing at the appropriate level, including the ability to expose a number of arguments and counter-arguments into a coherent essay
- define and use key terms and concepts in philosophy
- explore hypotheses and construct arguments, with appropriate use of philosophical concepts, theories and evidence
- understand and evaluate the range of research strategies and methods used by philosophers.

Practical and/or professional skills

On completion of this course you will be able to:

- understand the structure of complex philosophical problems and some of the strategies that philosophers have used to solve these problems
- read carefully and critically texts drawn from a variety of historical periods and traditions with a sensitivity to context and, where needed, an understanding of some specialised philosophical terminology

- design and conduct philosophical investigations using a range of methods and types of historical and structural analysis and report these in appropriate formats
- **be ready to view unfamiliar ideas with an open mind and a willingness to change one's mind when appropriate.**

Evaluation

30% - 4 short essays (between 500 – 1000 words)

40% - several non-signaled in-class-tests

30% - active participation

Passing a course assumes that student was not absent at more than 4 sessions