

Liberal Studies Program

PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

Learning Outcomes and Writing Expectations

*Revisions approved by LSC, FC, and Provost
Winter 2016*

Philosophical Inquiry examines the most basic questions of human existence. It considers the fundamental beliefs and convictions that shape what it means to be human, our relationships with others, and the nature of the world itself. Its aim is to develop our critical, imaginative, and analytical abilities, and it enables students to understand various kinds of important intellectual problems from a variety of perspectives and approaches, interpret and assess historical and contemporary texts concerned with these issues, and articulate reasoned judgments about these most basic concerns of human life. Philosophical inquiry is thus committed to the task of reflecting on the ideas and events that make up the cultures, societies, and traditions within which we live and to enhancing our understanding of their significance and complexity. Courses in Philosophical Inquiry support the mission of the Liberal Studies Program by fostering deeper understanding and appreciation of the worlds of meaning and of value and of the enterprise of intellectual inquiry and social dialogue.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems
2. Students will be able to evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment
3. Students will be able to analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems
4. Students will engage with philosophical topics and figures in their historical context
5. Students will confront and interpret primary texts from the philosophical tradition
6. Students will be able to write an analytic essay treating a philosophical question, issue and/or problem that forwards an identifiable thesis, argument, and conclusion

Writing Expectations:

The expectation of the Philosophical Inquiry Liberal Studies Learning Domain is that students taking courses in this domain will write at least 10 pages per quarter. This writing may take the form of essays, response papers, reading journals, take-home essay exams, critical analyses, etc. At least one assignment should involve revision, which may count (but only once, not twice) towards the 10 page minimum.