after:hours Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication

**Course Descriptor**

**Course Title:** An Introduction to Western Philosophy

**Type of Course:** Adult Education

**Credit:** Not credit bearing

**Weekly Session Titles and Descriptions**

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| Week | Session Title |
| 1 | Introducing Philosophy and Plato |
| 2 | Metaphysics: What is Reality? What exists? How? Why? When? |
| 3 | Introducing Aristotle |
| 4 |  Epistemology - What is knowledge? What are its limits and how do we come to know things? |
| 5 | Introducing Descartes |
| 6 | Philosophy of Mind - What is consciousness? Is there a Mind? If so how does it relate to the body? |
| 7 | Introducing Locke |
| 8 | Politics - The relationship between people and states; Laws, disobedience and rights |
| 9 | Introducing Hume |
| 10 | Philosophy of Religion - Does God(s) Exist? What is religious belief? Faith, knowledge and truth |
| 11 | Introducing Kant |
| 12 | Aesthetics and Art - What is art? What is beauty? How do we judge? |
| 13 | Introducing Nietzsche |
| 14 | How to be Good? Why Be Good? Judging by rules vs. judging by consequences |
| 15 | Introducing the American Pragmatists (James, Peirce and Dewey) |
| 16 | Philosophy of Science - What is Scientific Method? Is science about truth? How is it different to non-science? |
| 17 | Introducing Wittgenstein and de Beauvoir |
| 18 | Metaphilosophy: What is Philosophy For? How is to be done? Is it a doomed (imperialist) project? |
| 19 | Introducing Heidegger and Existentialism |
| 20 | The Philosophy of the Future - The coming debates: Anthropocene, Post-human and the breakdown of our worlds |

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| Course OverviewIn this course our tutor will introduce us to the ideas, lives and social contexts of some of the greatest Western philosophers in human history. This will take us on a journey stretching back to the sixth century BC and coming forward to the present day.Beginning with the idea of philosophy itself, and the changes in the definition of philosophy over the centuries, the course will focus on the works of a number of key historical and more contemporary philosophers. It will examine some of the key concepts philosophers have sought to address, their relationship to the societies in which they lived, and their influence on social thought and action, as well as their impact on subsequent thinkers.Philosophers studied might range from Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, to Kant, Nietzsche and de Beauvoir, amongst others, and students will be encouraged to consider the work of historical and contemporary philosophers in light of their own experiences, and to address the question whether philosophy is still relevant in our lives today.Required Previous Experience (if any)NoneRequired Reading Material or Special Equipment Needed (if any)NoneLearning OutcomesAt the end of this course you should be able to1. Understand a number of basic concepts in diverse branches of Western philosophy
2. Understand the basic methodology of key Western philosophers and how those philosophers reached the conclusions the come to
3. Identify aspects of Western philosophy that has impacted in the wider world.

**Possible Further Study**Further courses on the after:hours programme might be useful to you.Additional informationThis course descriptor may be subject to change during the delivery of the course, depending on the specific direction and nature of the learner cohort, and is intended to be responsive to the group dynamics as they emerge during the delivery of the course. |