



# PHILOSOPHY SL

Philosophy deals with issues that are profound, usually difficult, and important for humanity. It is a systematic critical enquiry into profound, fascinating and challenging questions that people have asked since the beginning of time, and confronts new problems arising within contemporary society.

## Course summary

The emphasis of the IB philosophy course is very much on doing philosophy. Students develop their skills through the study of philosophical themes and the close reading of philosophical texts. Students learn through tools, such as critical and systematic thinking, careful analysis and evaluation, and construction of arguments. Students are challenged to develop their own philosophical voice and independence of thought. IB Philosophy aims to bring the subject of philosophy alive, gaining a sense of its richness and practical value in daily life and expanding our appreciation of ourselves and the world around us. It teaches us not what to think, but how to think. By participating in the great philosophical debates, students will develop their skills of rigorous reasoning; by study, analysis and criticism of the great works of philosophy, ancient and modern, students will develop their capacity to make reasoned judgments for themselves.

## Syllabus overview

The IB Philosophy course is composed of three parts at SL.  
Part 1: Themes

This is divided into two further parts - the core theme and the optional themes.

1.1 The Core Theme - This is the study of the core theme "What is a human being?". The core theme offers students the opportunity to search for a better understanding of ourselves, both as individuals and as members of groups and wider communities. Awareness of the human condition inspires us to examine our characteristics and notions of "person" or "identity".

1.2 Optional Themes - One optional theme for study from must be selected at SL from the list eight possibilities below:

1. Grounds of epistemology
2. Theories and problems of ethics
3. Philosophy of religion
4. Philosophy of art
5. Political philosophy
6. Non-Western traditions and perspectives
7. Contemporary social issues
8. People, nations and cultures

## Part 2: Prescribed Texts

This consists of the study of one text at SL from the IB Philosophy Prescribed Text List. The purpose of studying a prescribed philosophical text is to allow students to achieve an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a challenging work, and to extend their overall comprehension of philosophy. The detailed study of a philosophical text can be seen as another way in which students learn to do philosophy by entering into dialogue with another philosopher. In studying the prescribed text, students should develop their ability to present a philosophical argument by testing their own position against the standpoint of the author, and using the author's ideas to expand their own thinking on the issue(s) under discussion. Students are expected to develop the skills required to undertake a critical analysis of the text.

## Part 3:

Internal assessment - Students are required to produce a philosophical analysis of non-philosophical material, to demonstrate their philosophical skills. The internal assessment exercise takes the form of a philosophical analysis of non-philosophical material, which allows students to be rewarded for doing philosophy under ordinary conditions, without the time constraints associated with written examinations. It reflects common activities used in teaching and doing philosophy.

## Prerequisites

The philosophy course requires no previous formal experience in philosophy. No particular background in terms of specific subjects studied for national or international qualifications is expected or required of students. The specific skills required by the philosophy course are developed in the various components of the course.

