

# PHILOSOPHY

## (1 Unit – Preliminary 60 hours)

This course is perfect for students looking for an extra unit that will enhance their performance in multiple disciplines and subjects. It is a Preliminary Course only at this stage but may be extended if there is student demand for it in Year 12. A copy of the syllabus will be emailed to Year 10 students.

This syllabus was developed and written by Greg Henshaw – Deputy Principal NSGHS, Associate Professor Karen Lai – UNSW and Associate Professor Phil Cam – (UNSW), President, Philosophy in Schools Association of NSW. It will be taught in over 20 NSW Secondary Schools in 2019.

### COURSE BREAKDOWN

**LOGIC** (15 hours) Students will gain a basic understanding of the principles of logic and learn how to construct valid arguments. The students will hone these skills in structured practical philosophical discussions called Communities of Inquiry. This module is dealt with as an overarching unit of work that is concurrently taught with all other modules.

**EPISTEMOLOGY** (15 hours) is the study of the nature of knowledge, its acquisition, justification and application. Students will be introduced to views of knowledge that shaped western intellectual history as well as some views of how such knowledge is acquired and justified. The course also considers how knowledge is applied in different fields: mathematics, science, art, social sciences and the humanities. Familiarity with key concepts and basic themes and engagement in epistemological debates, will help students inculcate a deeper awareness of what it means to know something. The activities associated with this module will help develop the metacognitive skills of students through structured reflection, especially when they reflect on what they learn, how they learn, and how they apply their knowledge. Students who have grasped these ideas and successfully developed these skills will think more critically and become more active learners, taking an independent role in planning and reflecting on their own learning in their different fields of study.

**ETHICS** (15 hours) Students will become familiar with key ideas and theories in the philosophical study of morality. These include conceptions of what is morally good and morally right, and both teleological or ends-based and deontological or duty-based ways of evaluating conduct, as well as approaches that emphasise character rather than conduct. They will also consider a variety of views regarding the basis of moral standards, the nature of moral knowledge and how we come by it, as well as the conditions under which people are morally responsible for what they do. Students will explore all these matters through structured philosophical discussions called Communities of Inquiry.

**METAPHYSICS** (15 hours) is a disciplinary field within philosophy that attempts to understand the nature of existence, or what is ultimately real. Often, this will involve getting beyond the appearance of this world and our understanding of it. The questions metaphysics raises are some of the most fundamental in philosophical inquiry. In this module, students will explore some central problems in metaphysics, drawing upon both the history of philosophy and contemporary discussion. The topics covered include Plato's theory of forms, Descartes' mind-body problem, Berkeley's idealism and modern materialism, free will and determinism and personal identity. The reflections on the natural world complement studies in the sciences. More generally, consideration of points of view, themes and arguments will equip students in any subject area with skills for metacognitive reflection.

### ASSESSMENT

Communities of Inquiry (COI) 40%, Extended Essay (Personal Interest Project - PIP) 40%, Examination 20%.