



**University of Tehran**

**Faculty of Literature & Human Science**

(School of Letters & Humanities)

**Department of Philosophy**

*Interpretation of Philosophical Texts in a European Language I & II*

**Course Syllabus**

**&**

**Readings**

**First and Second Semesters 1386-87**

# University of Tehran

## Faculty of Literature & Human Science

(School of Letters & Humanities)

### Department of Philosophy

Course Syllabus, Second Semester 1385-86

*This syllabus is tentative and is subject to revision and refinement.*

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**Course Title: Interpretation of Philosophical Texts in a European Language I & II**

**Course No: PHI 305H5S**

**Time and place: Saturday & Monday 3: 00-5: 00 Room 228**

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**Instructor: Hossein Mesbahian**

Office:

Phone:

Fax: ...

Email: [hmesbahian@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:hmesbahian@oise.utoronto.ca)

Office Hours:

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Course Description: ..... 7

Sessional Readings..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Session: The Pre-Socratic Philosophers (Pythagoras)** Error! Bookmark not defined.

*The transcript* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Session: The Pre-Socratic Philosophers- Continued (Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno, Empedocles)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.

*The transcript* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

**4<sup>th</sup> Session: The Pre-Socratic Philosophers- Continued (Anaxagoras)** Error! Bookmark not defined.

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*Some Basic Philosophical Concepts* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Quiz* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

**5<sup>th</sup> Session: Socrates (469-399 B.C.E.)**----- Error! Bookmark not defined.

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*Some Basic Philosophical Concepts* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Quiz* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

**6<sup>th</sup> Session: Plato (427- 347 B.C.E.)**----- Error! Bookmark not defined.

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*Some Basic Philosophical Concepts* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Quiz* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

**7<sup>th</sup> Session: Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C.E.)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.

*The transcript* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

**8<sup>th</sup> Session: Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C.E.) Continued** ---- Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Selected primary sources: Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII.* Error! Bookmark not defined.

**9<sup>th</sup> Session: Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C.E.) Continued** ---- Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Some Basic Philosophical Concepts* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Quiz* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

**10<sup>th</sup> Session: Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.

*The transcript* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Quiz* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

**11<sup>th</sup> Session: Thomas Aquinas (1225 –1274)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.

*The transcript* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Selected primary sources: Of God As He Is In Himself By Aquinas; Summa Contra Gentiles PP.1-2*

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**12<sup>th</sup> Session: Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.

*The transcript* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Selected primary source: The Elements of Law Natural and Politic by Thomas Hobbes 1640* Error!

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**13<sup>th</sup> Session: Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)- Continued** - Error! Bookmark not defined.

- Selected primary source: The Elements of Law Natural and Politic by Thomas Hobbes 1640* Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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 Quiz..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 14th Session: Rene Descartes (1596-1650)**----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 The transcript ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 15th Session: Rene Descartes (1596-1650) Continued-** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Some Basic Philosophical Concepts ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Quiz..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 16th Session: Bendict de Spinoza (1632-1677)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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 Some Basic Philosophical Concepts ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 17th Session: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) --** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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 A Philosophical Concepts ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 18th Session: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)- Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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 Selected primary sources: Discourse on Metaphysics, Pp.2-8..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 19th Session: John Locke (1632-1704)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 The transcript ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 20th Session: John Locke (1632-1704)- Continued**----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources An Essay Concerning Human Understanding By Locke Book II - Chapter II Of Simple Ideas. Pp.57-58..... Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Quiz..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 21th Session: Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753)**----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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 Selected primary sources A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge By Berkeley, Introduction,Pp.1-3..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 22nd Session: Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753)- Continued** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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 Selected primary sources A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge By Berkeley, Introduction,Pp.1-3..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 23rd Session: David Hume (1711-1776)**----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 The transcript ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Some Basic Philosophical Concepts ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 24th Session: David Hume (1711-1776)-Continued**----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding By Hume: Section I. Of the Different Species of Philosophy, Pp.1-6..... Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Quiz..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 25th Session: Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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- 26<sup>th</sup> Session: Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)- Continued** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources: Critique of Pure Reason, by Kant: Book II; The Transcendental Procedure of Pure Reason.Pp.157-168. Part I..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 27<sup>th</sup> Session: Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)- Continued** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources: Critique of Pure Reason, by Kant: Book II; The Transcendental Procedure of Pure Reason.Pp.157-168. Part I..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 28<sup>th</sup> Session: Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)- Continued** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Some Basic Philosophical Concepts..... Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Quiz..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Session: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, (1770-1831)**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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- 30<sup>th</sup> Session: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, (1770-1831) Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources The Philosophy Of History (Introduction) By G. W. F. Hegel, Pp.1-7, Part I ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 31<sup>st</sup> Session: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, (1770-1831) Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources The Philosophy Of History (Introduction) By G. W. F. Hegel, Pp.1-7, Part II ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Quiz..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 32<sup>nd</sup> Session: Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)-----** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 The transcript..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 33<sup>rd</sup> Session: Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources, The Challenge of Every Great Philosophy by Friedrich Nietzsche . Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 34<sup>th</sup> Session: Karl Marx (1818-1883)-----** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 The transcript..... Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources, Karl Marx. The German Ideology. 1845 Part I: Feuerbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook A. Idealism and Materialism ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 35<sup>th</sup> Session: Karl Marx (1818-1883) - Continued -----** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources, Karl Marx. The German Ideology. 1845 Part I: Feuerbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook A. Idealism and Materialism ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Some Basic Philosophical Concepts..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 36<sup>th</sup> Session: Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813- 1855) --** Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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- 37<sup>th</sup> Session: Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813- 1855)- Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
 Selected primary sources: The Concept of Dread by Kierkegaard, IntroductionError! Bookmark not defined.
- 38<sup>th</sup> Session: Pragmatism-----** Error! Bookmark not defined.

- The transcript* ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 39<sup>th</sup> Session: Pragmatism - Continued** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Selected primary sources How to Make Our Ideas Clear By Charles Sanders Peirce*Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 40<sup>th</sup> Session: Pragmatism - Continued** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Selected primary sources How to Make Our Ideas Clear By Charles Sanders Peirce*Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Some Basic Philosophical Concepts*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 41<sup>st</sup> Session: Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951): The Early Years**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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- 42<sup>nd</sup> Session: Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)- Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Selected primary sources Lectures on Philosophy by Ludwig Wittgenstein*Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Some Basic Philosophical Concepts*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 43<sup>rd</sup> Session: Martin Heidegger (1889 –1976)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Selected primary sources , Martin Heidegger. The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking (1969) Part I*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 44<sup>th</sup> Session: Martin Heidegger (1889 –1976)- Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Selected primary sources Martin Heidegger. The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking (1969) Part I*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 45<sup>th</sup> Session: Martin Heidegger (1889 –1976)- Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Selected primary sources Martin Heidegger. The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking (1969) Part I*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 46<sup>th</sup> Session: Martin Heidegger (1889 –1976)- Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Selected primary sources Martin Heidegger. The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking (1969) Part I*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 47<sup>th</sup> Session: Martin Heidegger (1889 –1976)- Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Selected primary sources Martin Heidegger. The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking (1969) Part I*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 48<sup>th</sup> Session: Martin Heidegger (1889 –1976) - Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Selected primary sources Martin Heidegger. The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking (1969) Part I*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 49<sup>th</sup> Session: Martin Heidegger (1889 –1976)- Continued**Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Some Basic Philosophical Concepts*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.  
*Quiz*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 50<sup>th</sup> Session: Jean-Paul Sartre (1905 –1980)** ----- Error! Bookmark not defined.  
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*Some Basic Philosophical Concepts*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 51<sup>st</sup> Session: Jean-Paul Sartre (1905 –1980)**----- Error! Bookmark not defined.

*Selected primary sources Critique of Critical Investigation from Critique of Dialectical Reason. Jean-Paul Sartre. 1960, pp. 47-48 ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.*

## **Course Description:**

This course, which can be considered a chronological journey of western philosophy in the English language, has been structured based on a documentary DVD, containing expert commentary and analyses by leading scholars. The main aims of this course are: 1. To draw a realistic, comprehensive and methodologically appropriate picture of the history of philosophy in the western world; 2. To provide students with an understanding of philosophy in the English language; 3. To encourage students to interpret philosophical subjects, to ask fundamental questions about human nature and our world and to gain critical perspective on philosophical issues; 4. To examine the nature of philosophy itself by means of the historical development of philosophical thought, and an exploration of its relationship with contemporary philosophical issues and; 5. To encourage students to think about the role philosophy might play in the modern world.

The course will begin with some methodological issues and questions: What is philosophy? What does philosophy in a European Language mean? How can these phenomena be studied? It will be suggested that few concepts have come to dominate the human life as much as philosophy, yet there is very little agreement over what the term actually means. Thus, it will become obvious that philosophy is a controversial concept involved in numerous and frequently inconsistent understandings. Philosophy, as we will explore, is not the same as “life” - on the other hand, almost any other definition would seem too narrow. Although attempts at definition and interpretation of philosophy are certainly important, the study of philosophy often doesn't begin with a solid definition of the subject. Instead, it seems easier to define philosophy by doing philosophy.

One way of doing philosophy is to think about how the prominent philosophers begin doing philosophy and investigating philosophical topics. Throughout the historical journey of western philosophy we realize that the primary feature of doing philosophy is offering critical views that put aside a philosopher's claim, and maintain that some philosophical views are less defensible than others, and some are simply indefensible.

The course begins with Pre-Socratic philosophers, and ends with the great 20<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher John Paul Sartre. To extend the historical overview of western philosophy, the final two sessions of this course will be devoted to two contemporary leading scholars in the field of philosophy. Two significant issues, however, should be clarified here: First, the instructor has intentionally excluded the philosophers of the Frankfurt school in order to pay closer attention to them in the next semester; second, the primary aim of structuring such a wide-ranging course is to provide a very basic conceptual framework of western philosophy in the English language. In other words, the main purpose of this course is to introduce some fundamental English philosophical concepts related to the philosophers listed in the course outline, rather than a historical overview of western philosophy.

Each session of this course, excluding the first (introductory) session, is organized in five interrelated parts. Each session begins with a short chronological screening of a DVD documentary covering the key figures in the history of western philosophy, followed by a translation and interpretation of its transcribed text. The session continues by translating and interpreting selected primary source covering the same time period and specific philosopher. The session will be structured by the translation and interpretation of some philosophical concepts, and end with an interactive philosophy quiz.

Goals for students enrolled in this course are to develop the ability to interpret philosophical texts in English, and to think both empathetically and critically about conflicting philosophical claims. This course can be classified as a semi-intensive course, focusing on several aspects of learning a language in its philosophical context: reading, writing and vocabulary, as well as close listening. Classes will also consist of discussion and question periods. Although the outline of the course and the selected materials may appear rather difficult to pursue, student shouldn't be daunted or discouraged. All topics will be clearly explained during class time, and the instructor will be available during office hours and/or by special arrangement to make clear any questions that may arise.

This course is suitable for students looking for an overview of historically grounded philosophical thought, and also for those interested in pursuing a significant research project related to the topic of the course. The course consists of two phases. The first involves a careful reading of several works relevant to the topic of the session. All students in the course are required to do this reading and to respond with brief critical reflections. The second stage will involve the translation and interpretation of a primary philosophical text related to the topic of the course, determined in dialogue with the instructor.

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### **Required Texts: CD and Print Packets**

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### **Evaluation Method:**

This course includes 10 journal reflections, a Mid Term Quiz, a conference presentation, a final assignment and a final exam. Every three sessions, excluding the first and the last two, students will be expected to submit a 1-2 page summary and critical reflections of the readings they have done. On some occasions the instructor will give specific guidance as to how the students should write about the readings (e.g., compare texts a and b); otherwise, straightforward summarization of the texts will be expected. Information on the Mid Term Quiz, conference presentation, final

assignment (which will be on a topic of the student's choice, in consultation with the instructor) and final exam will be provided separately or explained during the course. Students are expected to put together all their writing in a portfolio consisting of their critical journals, and final translated and interpreted paper. The portfolio should be submitted to instructor no later than 13/3/86.

**Grades will be determined as follows:**

Class Participation	10%
Mid Term Quiz	15%
Journals	10%
Final assignment: translating and interpreting a 10 page primary philosophical text.	20%
Final exam	45%