

**SATURDAY ENRICHMENT SPRING 2019**  
***PHILOSOPHY FOR YOUNG LEARNERS***

Instructor: Jordan Sherry-Wagner M.Ed.

Instructor Email: [jsherr13@uw.edu](mailto:jsherr13@uw.edu)

Location: Loew Hall 117

## **Course Description**

This course builds from the interests of the students as we work together to make sense of timeless questions, paradoxical situations, and personally relevant experiences. Children will identify and ask philosophical questions, using a range of prompts to encourage their contribution of thoughts and ideas to the investigation at hand. Through peer discussion and experienced facilitation, students will explore a range of philosophical quandaries, developing skills in reasoning, reflection, and respectful social interaction with others whose viewpoints may differ from their own. Appropriate for new and returning philosophers, this will be a space for collaborative investigation into timeless philosophical questions.

## **Essential Questions**

- What is important for a good life?
- What does it mean to be alive?
- What is the nature of reality?
- What are our obligations to other living things?
- What does it mean to know something?
- What is morality and where does it come from?
- What is the nature of personal identity?
- What makes a good reason?

## **Learning Outcomes**

- What students will know:
  - Critical reflection can help us reach deeper understanding.
  - Collaborative inquiry is essential to meaningful knowledge.
  - Everyone is capable of meaningful questioning and participation in dialogue.
- What students will understand:
  - What make a reason a “good” reason; how to justify reasons with evidence.
  - There is seldom one “right answer” to a philosophical question.
- What student will be able to do:
  - Learn to ask philosophical questions.
  - Be respectful and reflective listeners.
  - Value diversity as a strength.

## Instructional Strategies

Most classes will begin with an activity, story, or other prompt designed to stimulate curiosity about a topic of philosophical interest. Following this introduction, students are asked to share questions that come up for them as they reflect on the prompt. The class will then collectively identify a handful of particularly interesting questions and we will spend the bulk of the session discussing them. Near the end of the class, we will reflect on our discussion and identify potential conclusions that have been drawn, as well as lingering questions for future discussion. Overall, this class operates on the belief that philosophy is not a set of knowledge to be passed on, but a collaborative practice of thinking deeply and exploring ideas together through collaborative dialogue. As such, there are no rigid learning goals set by the instructor. Students are invited to take up topics in ways that are most meaningful to them, though they are encouraged to articulate how their questions and insights are connected to previous topics. Because of this focus on guided instruction, the schedule and activities listed here are subject to change based on students' interests and the instructor's discretion.

## Student Assessment

There is no formal assessment for this course.

## Resources and Materials

There are no required materials for this course, however students are welcome to bring a notebook and writing utensil to class.

## Tentative Course Schedule

(Please note that we do not meet April 20th or May 25th)

Date	Topic(s)	In-Class Activities
<b>Session 1</b> April 6	Introductions and Norms	What is a philosophical question? What do you wonder?
<b>Session 2</b> April 13	Wondering about Reality	How do I know I'm not dreaming? The "problem" of other people
<b>Session 3</b> April 27	Wondering about Reasons	Guess the claim: What's your reason? Two truths and a lie
<b>Session 4</b> May 4	Wondering about Power	Very good to very bad (and why?) Ring of Gyges / Trolley Problem
<b>Session 5</b> May 11	Wondering about the Environment	What is alive? <i>The Lorax</i>
<b>Session 6</b> May 18	Wondering About Perspective	Robin Hood: Hero and/or Thief? <i>The Giving Tree</i>
<b>Session 7</b> June 1	Wondering about Childhood	What's it like to be an adult? What does it mean to like to grow up?
<b>Session 8</b> June 8	Wrapping up and lingering questions	Student choice <i>Oh the Places You'll Go</i>