

## Philosophy 3025: Philosophy for Children



Summer Session E  
June 20 – August 2, 2024

Online, Asynchronous

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### Course Description

*A question is a request to attend to a curiosity, uncertainty, or doubt,  
and it implies the desire for a response.*

*Asking good questions is an art, NOT a fixed ability.*

*It is a skill you develop and practice.*

*Questions can be powerful.*

Philosophy seeks to understand the nature of the world, and our role in it. Philosophy for Children (p4c) introduces K-12 students to philosophy, teaching them how think for themselves while at the same engaging in respectful discussion with others. It teaches them how to think collaboratively and how to communicate about meaningful topics and questions. Best of all, teaching philosophy opens up the world of Ideas for exploration, and builds their leadership, empathy, and character — skills we carry through our entire lives. Philosophical Inquiry the art of asking questions and engaging in collaborative, intellectually safe dialogue in the pursuit of developing meaningful views supported by reasons.

In this course, we will learn techniques for bringing philosophical thinking to children and youths: early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school. Students are introduced to the discipline of philosophy, and the skill of question asking. We will explore questions like: Who is philosophy for, and who counts as a philosopher? How do we facilitate authentic conversations? Why are some conversations difficult? Why are some questions powerful? How do we teach critical thinking skills? What does self-empowerment look like? What is the role of philosophy in moral education and in science education? What is the role for philosophy in social change & justice, and society?

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of our course, students will be able to:

<b>Learning Outcome...</b>	<b>Will be supported by...</b>	<b>Will be assessed through...</b>
<p><b>Identify</b> and <b>Ask</b> 5 different kinds of questions.</p> <p><b>Assess</b> and <b>analyze</b> situational factors to know when to use different kinds of questions.</p>	<p>Reading a variety of philosophical texts that represent a diversity of approaches to question asking and inquiry;</p> <p>online discussions and lectures.</p>	<p>Weekly assignments which demonstrate knowledge and critical thinking regarding question asking and inquiry.</p>
<p><b>Discuss</b> topics in philosophy and ethics as a member of a community of inquiry in a rigorous, respectful, productive, and authentic way.</p>	<p>Class meetings and course content focused on learning about modes by which one can engage in productive philosophical discussions and how to cultivate intellectually safe spaces for discussions;</p> <p>engaging in discussions with the instructors and classmates.</p>	<p>Course engagement &amp; course reflection assignments.</p>
<p><b>Apply</b> the course material and course skills related to discussion and engagement efforts, in order to...</p> <p><b>Develop</b> and <b>facilitate</b> a philosophy for children style engagement activity.</p>	<p>Weekly assignments in which students practice applying course content to topics and/or relating course content to public outreach experiences.</p>	<p>A course final project portfolio in which students design and/or participate in philosophy for children engagement effort.</p>

## Required Readings and Videos

This course will use (1) *Thinking Through Questions: A Concise Invitation to Critical, Expansive, and Philosophical Inquiry* by Anthony Weston and Stephen Bloch-Schulman (available for free through the UC online library) and (2) pdfs of various articles and papers. All course readings will be made available on Canvas. There will also be required videos in this class. These will also be posted in Canvas, and are watchable through free platforms like YouTube.

## Course Requirements

Student grade in this course will be determined by the following:

- 15% Course Engagement through Discussion Boards, including mid and final course reflection
- 45% Weekly Assignments/Quizzes
- 40% Course Portfolio Final

Further details on each of these requirements will be discussed in class videos, as well as provided in an assignment guideline posted online in Canvas. Below is a short overview of each component to give you a sense of what to expect.

### Course Engagement

Course engagement is an important part of your performance in this course. Participating in a course involves engaging—both by yourself and with others—with the material and concepts presented in, or learned through, the course. Throughout the class I will ask you to submit online discussion board posts. I will also ask you at two points in the class to reflect on your own course engagement in the class.

### Weekly Writing Assignments

Each week I will ask you to turn in a short **assignment** that will assist you in working through the readings and discussion. This might include a quiz, brief analysis of the topics under discussion, a review of the arguments provided, an attempt to clarify a concept you were confused about, objections and critiques, or further questions you have that the author or discussion left unresolved.

**Weekly assignments will be due by 11:59pm on Thursdays.**

### Course Portfolio Final

One of the goals in this course is to learn how to apply the course material and course skills related to discussion and engagement efforts, in order to **develop** and **facilitate** a philosophy for children-style engagement activities.

Course Project Portfolio Options include:

- **Philosophy for Children outreach module development.** For this option, students will develop an outreach module for a hypothetical K-12 classroom. The format for this will be discussed during week 3.
- **Participation in a virtual “Philosophy for Children” style discussion.** Students can choose to participate in a short (approximately 40-50 minute) virtual “philosophy for children” style discussion with their peers. Student will then complete a reflection, following the course guiding questions.
- **Student-Proposed application of course content.** I also welcome students to propose their own components as well. This could involve a student running a “philosophy for children” style discussion with K-12 aged students while serving as a childcare giver, babysitter, summer camp counselor, family vacation, etc; running a “philosophy for children” style discussion with adult family/friends; or developing a philosophical outreach curriculum or program idea connected other summer jobs/responsibilities.

For the final project portfolio, students choose 3 of the above options, with at least one choice being a module development. The other two will be of the students choosing.

### **Grading**

The grade distribution for the course is as follows:

A = 93–100%	B+= 87–89%	C+= 77–79%	D+ = 67–69%
A– = 90–92%	B = 83–86%	C = 73–76%	D = 60–66%
	B– = 80–82%	C– = 70–72%	F = Below 60%

### **Course Schedule and Readings**

#### **Week 1: Introductions – Introduction to Philosophy for Children**

Readings:

- Anthony Weston & Stephen Bloch-Schulman, Chapter 1, “Questions about Questions” in (2020).
- Anthony Weston & Stephen Bloch-Schulman (2020). Chapter 2, “First Steps with Questions” in (2020).
- Jana Mohr Lone, “Philosophy for Children” in *A Companion to Public Philosophy* (2022)
- Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 1, “Philosophy beyond the University” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).

#### **Week 2: Philosophical Wonder, Questions, and Learner-Centered Education**

Readings:

- Anthony Weston & Stephen Bloch-Schulman, Chapter 3, “Key Critical Questions” in *Thinking Through Questions: A Concise Invitation to Critical, Expansive, and Philosophical Inquiry* (2020).
- Anthony Weston & Stephen Bloch-Schulman (2020). Chapter 4, “Key Expansive Questions” in *Thinking Through Questions: A Concise Invitation to Critical, Expansive, and Philosophical Inquiry* (2020).
- Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 2, “Wonder, Questioning, and Reflection” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).
- Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 3, “Learner-Centered Education and Dialogical Model” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).

#### **Week 3: Fostering Philosophical Sensitivity & Communities of Philosophical Inquiry**

Readings:

- Anthony Weston & Stephen Bloch-Schulman, Chapter 5, “Key Philosophical Questions” in *Thinking Through Questions: A Concise Invitation to Critical, Expansive, and Philosophical Inquiry* (2020).
- Anthony Weston & Stephen Bloch-Schulman (2020). Chapter 6, “Questionable Questions” in *Thinking Through Questions: A Concise Invitation to Critical, Expansive, and Philosophical Inquiry* (2020).

- Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 4, “Philosophical Sensitivity” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).
- Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 5, “The Community of Philosophical Inquiry” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).

#### **Week 4: Choose Your Own Adventure: Elementary, Middle, or High School | Metaphysics or Epistemology**

Readings:

Choose 1 Education Level...

- Elementary School → Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 6, “Philosophy in Elementary Schools” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).
- Middle School → Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 7, “Philosophy in Middle Schools” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).
- High School → Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 8, “Philosophy in High Schools” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).

Choose 1 Kind of Philosophy...

- Metaphysics → Jana Mohr Lone, Chapter 3, “Death Reality, and Identity: Thinking about Metaphysics” in *The Philosophical Child* (2015).
- Epistemology → Jana Mohr Lone, Chapter 3, “Knowledge and Belief: Thinking about Epistemology” in *The Philosophical Child* (2015).

#### **Week 5:**

Readings:

- Ashby Butnor, “Critical Communities: Intellectual Safety and the Power of Disagreement” *Educational perspectives* 44 (2012): 29-31.
- Kerstin Michalik, “Philosophical Inquiry with Children: Inviting Uncertainty into the Classroom” *Fostering Inclusion in Education: Alternative Approaches to Progressive Educational Practices*, pp. 123-143. (2022)
- Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 10, “Children’s Philosophical Encounters: Taking Seriously the Role of Privilege in Classrooms” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).

#### **Week 6: Philosophical Recognition, Who is Philosophy for?**

Readings:

- Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Chapter 9, “Children’s Philosophical Recognition and Identities: Recognizing the Child” in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and dialogue in schools* (2016).