



Term Two Philosophical Inquiry

What are we going to do: We will conduct a philosophical inquiry into a big question over the course of this term

Objectives: To deepen our understanding of the question | To learn from engaging in a Philosophical Community | To learn to think like a Philosopher

How: You will engage in a philosophical inquiry process. This involves the following:

- Posing questions | Stating problems / propositions
- Theorising | Develop ideas in response to the big question
- Gathering information and theory from authoritative sources (Philosophers)
- Developing explanation and evidence to support these ideas
- Critically examining ideas you and your community pose | Challenging or refuting ideas
- Improving ideas - building on them and developing them further (especially by the community)
- Engaging in discussion with other students
- Drawing conclusions from evidence and ideas

A ‘Philosophical Inquiry’, is a collective endeavour. You are responsible for not only improving your own ideas, but also for advancing the ideas and knowledge of the community as a whole. For a community of learners, the creation of new knowledge constitutes any collective knowledge advances that are new to that particular community. Your community is your group, but we also want to pull together ideas across groups.

A distinction between philosophical inquiry and many other approaches is the importance of every member of a class community contributing and advancing collective, public knowledge, rather than just their own individual learning.

We ultimately want this to lead toward developing original, new knowledge. So in essence that you are able to propose some new theory. A tall task when only just learning, but still worth aiming for.

Why? Philosophical Inquiry provides a useful framework to guide your philosophical thinking. In essence it helps you think as a philosopher. It also allows you to learn on an individual level and as part of a community

Where: Most of the inquiry will occur in Knowledge Forum. KF is designed to support this process and is ideal for this sort of activity. You will also use various channels in The Philosophy Hub to support discussion and conversation. Or



to ask your community for help, suggestions, ideas. It is far more immediate than knowledge forum. You will also have time where you will be stopping for some independent work.

The Plan

Overview

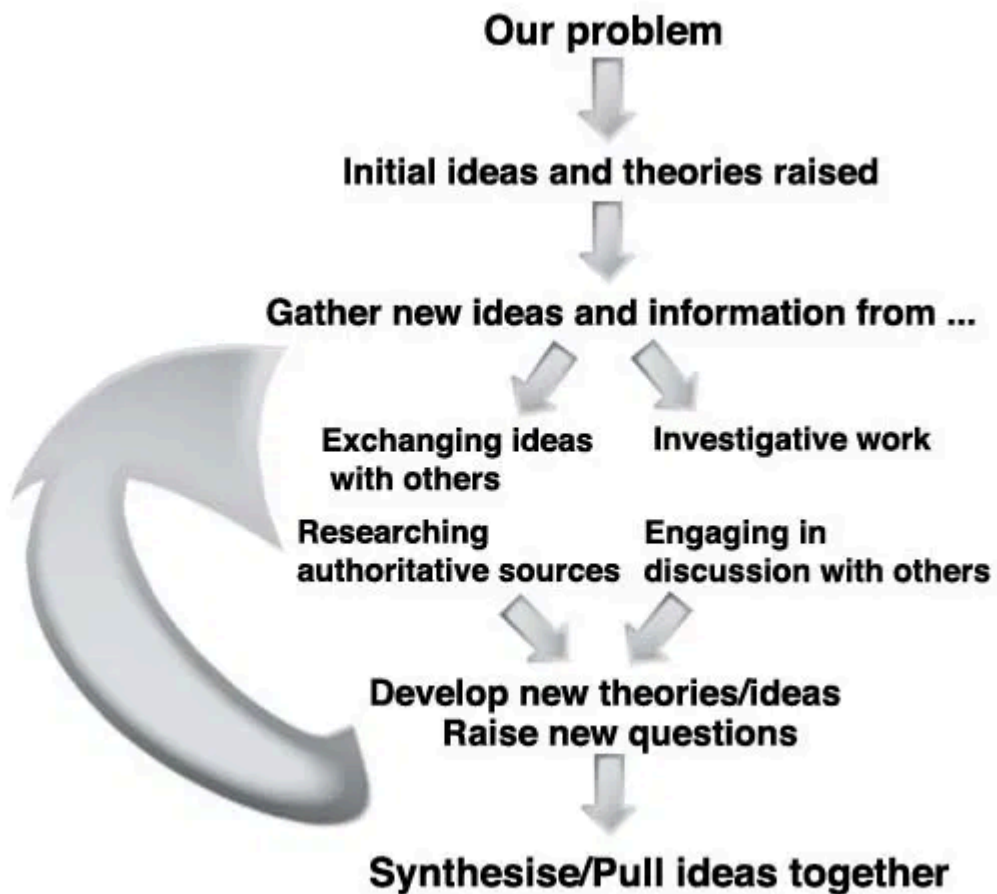
We have a big question to explore. Our job is to commit to an in-depth critical inquiry of this question. Examine our own, and existing ideas, consider possibilities, analyse, to question and reflect. At the end of it all (and during) we need to be able to draw our own conclusions based on all the evidence we have been presented with. You will be developing your own theory and ideas, but also, importantly **researching and examining existing theory**. Each one of you needs to contribute research and information on these theories so we all develop a full picture of each. What are the key components?

Analyse and critically evaluate these theories and ideas. This means you need to visibly critique them. Look at similarities and differences across theories. Look where there are holes. Where one theory seems to refute or possibly disprove another. Look to think beyond the obvious.

Visibly draw conclusions from what you examine. Think about the wider implications of what you have found out. These implications may be social or political, or even personal. Ensure conclusions are supported by evidence.

The Process

The process is outlined below. Have a good read through it. The process begins with a big question or problem. Then students propose initial ideas and theories. These are generally from what you currently think. This needs to be done by building onto a common thread of ideas. Multiple threads will emerge. Then each student gathers new ideas and information and brings it back into knowledge forum as build ons to relevant posts. Ensure you read through all new posts and engage in those posts by developing the information, proposing an idea, questioning or discussing ideas. This continues as an ongoing process until we get to the point that ideas need to be synthesised or pulled together.



What are we working towards?

As stated at the beginning the objective here is to learn from engaging in a Philosophical Inquiry. Both in terms of development of competence and in knowledge. The final piece of the process is your own demonstration of understanding. You will have some flexibility in how you present this, but it will involve a process of synthesis and reflection. Think a more in depth version of what you did last term. This happens in three blocks throughout the term, but students are free to do it on an ongoing basis.

The Utopia group have an opportunity to approach this a bit differently. Ultimately the goal is to get to a point where you (as a group or in groups) create your 'ideal' society. If we could get close to that, what would it look like?



Assessment and Competency

There are two 6 credit standards (12 total) that are applied to the work you do this term. You are assessed based on evidence you develop against certain competencies involved with Philosophical Inquiry. Over the course of the term we will stop to engage in a process of synthesis and evidence gathering which will guide you in pulling evidence and ideas together. This will also help in the formal aspects of NCEA. Competencies are outlined below.

Questioning / Inquiring

The ability to apply open ended questions to an inquiry in various forms.

- To begin a new line of inquiry
- To 'open up' a thread of inquiry which may have closed
- To question ideas / theory in order to improve them

Gather Information / theory

Able to research / gather relevant information from multiple sources.

Gather relevant ideas / explanation from **authoritative Philosophical Sources**

Critical Thinking

The analysis and evaluation of ideas, questions and theory. **It is your ability to clearly reason.** It will involve

- The questioning / critiquing of ideas. This may involve quite open reflection
- Are able to analyse and see patterns and dissonance (differences). For example the links between ideas
- Clearly approach a theory / problem / idea in a planned and systematic way. There is a process that is objective
- Be able to synthesise, reflect, and draw conclusions

Discussion

The ability to engage in constructive discussion on an idea, theory or question with other students

The discussion should progress the idea in some way. This could involve refutation or questioning

Participation in discussion should be objective

Apply Different Perspectives

Argument



Able to identify and explain (in depth) a range of perspectives on a big question, issue, problem or idea.

Different philosophical perspectives are applied from authoritative sources

Able to apply both secular and religious perspectives to an issue / idea / question

The ability to build a logical case in support of an idea. This will involve a proposition or statement of some kind backed by structured explanation. It will also use evidence to support argument

Develop theory / Ideas

Able to clearly explain an idea or theory

Able to improve an idea through questioning, explanation, application of evidence, analysis and evaluation.

This is a fundamental aspect of this Philosophical Inquiry - to actively improve ideas

Creative thinking

The ability to consider an idea or question in a new way(s). To think outside of the box and be able to open up an inquiry.

Logic

Able to analyse and evaluate reasoning / argument and see flaws / weaknesses



NCEA Assessment: Philosophical Inquiry

I have created a Philosophical Inquiry standard (a super standard if you will) for this part of the course, which is in essence two six credit NCEA standards combined - 91597 “Conduct a critical social inquiry” and 90827 “Analyse the key beliefs of a religious tradition and secular worldview in relation to ultimate questions”.

To achieve at Excellence Level for Philosophical Inquiry you need to:

- Pose questions / challenges / wonderings that enable continued inquiry
- Gather information / research from a range of authoritative sources (ensuring these are referenced)
- Clearly explain and develop ideas or theories (whether your own or from a source)
- Use philosophical theory from authoritative sources to support explanation / theory / ideas
- Explain a range of philosophical perspectives on the big question and break them down into components and essential features
- *Explain religious perspectives / belief (breaking down into components and essential features) on the big question and /or ideas that have been developed*
- Critically evaluate ideas / theories / arguments in relation to the big question
- *Critically evaluate the inquiry process*
- Draw conclusions supported by a range of evidence that address wider implications

At Merit level students will have engaged in an in depth Philosophical Inquiry, but will not have the level of critical analysis that is necessary for Excellence

At Achieved level students will have conducted a Philosophical Inquiry, but not at the depth necessary for Merit.

Term Calendar (General)

Week One	Set up Inquiry - includes initial discussion, framing of the inquiry and initial posts on knowledge forum, general reading
Week Two	Progress the Inquiry - Develop various threads of inquiry, ensure regular posting, gather research, read theory.
Week Three	Progress the inquiry - should be getting into more depth and detail, further branches



	appearing. By this point everyone should be applying theory they have found from authoritative sources
Week Four	Taking Stock - A week spent synthesising as a group and as individuals. Individuals will need to start pulling evidence together that applies to the various competencies. Individual reflection on learning. Group discussion
Week Five	Diving Back in - Current progress is captured as 'Rise Above' Notes within inquiries. A 'Rise Above' summarises, collects and stores notes on a common theme or concept. This is a key week to work as a group to set up the next phase of the inquiry
Week Six	Progress the Inquiry
Week Seven	Taking Stock Part Two - Further development of synthesis, reflections and evidence gathering. Group discussion
Week Eight	Progress the inquiry
Week Nine	Completing the inquiry - A focus on wrapping up inquiries, drawing conclusions engaging in discussion
Week Ten	Final week. Spent on synthesis and final assessment requirements

Week Five: Where to Next?

Week Five signals the mid way point in the Philosophical Inquiry. At this point all participants take stock and reflect on their individual and group progress so far. A portfolio allows reflection and recording of this progress.

It is also very important that each group tidies up the inquiry so far. This involves the use of the 'Rise Above' Function in knowledge forum.

What is a 'Rise Above'?

A 'Rise Above' summaries, collects and stores all the notes relevant to one common theme or concept. These are often identifiable by long 'threads' of inquiry, but sometimes notes can be a little scattered as well. A 'Rise Above' should:



- Store all notes on a common theme / concept
- Summarise / synthesis the discussion / development of that theme / concept
- Enables these notes to be re-accessed
- Attempt to conceptualise the theme / idea at a higher level. Can you pull things together in a way that advances understanding and provides more direction?
- Explore where to next - this will often involve new questions.

Each student should have the responsibility of completing a 'Rise Above'.

It is also the point where the inquiry begins again. Each group will need to explore how they set up the next phase after all the key 'Rise Aboves' have been completed. This may just involve building from 'Rise Aboves'. Or it may involve new pages / views. It is up to you.

Final Two Weeks: Independent Work

The final two weeks are set aside for independent reflection, synthesis and finalising of your portfolio (in the one of the two formats given).

Key Task: Synthesis. The first task is to return to your synthesis, develop it further based on the inquiry, and refine its general quality. Treat this as a reasonably formal piece of reflective writing or get creative and do it as a video or audio narration. You must answer your big question, by referring to the inquiry. Cite evidence to support your explanation / argument. Ensure your explanation has depth. Ultimately this is your final chance to answer your question so take the chance to bring some final thoughts together.

This is an important opportunity to ensure you cover the following areas in depth, especially if you feel you haven't in the inquiry itself.

- *Explain a range of philosophical perspectives on the big question and break them down into components and essential features*
- *Explain religious perspectives (breaking down into components and essential features) on the big question and /or ideas that have been developed*
- *Critically evaluate ideas / theories / arguments*
- ***Draw final conclusions***



If written, an in depth synthesis will usually be around four pages.

Utopia Group: Those who are part of the Utopia Inquiry group can choose to explain what their utopian (or protopian or ideal) society would look like, rather than write a synthesis. How would it function? What social structures? Political structures? How would the economy work? Outline the various aspects, based on your inquiry. Do refer to the inquiry, and cite evidence from it to support your explanation.

Portfolio: Return to your portfolio and complete final reflections in each of the key competencies, citing any further evidence from your posts. Treat this as a tidy up process. It shouldn't take a long time, especially if you did it well the first time round. Don't include the following competencies: Argument, Discussion,

Critical Evaluation of the Inquiry: In your portfolio ensure you include a two paragraph evaluation of the process of inquiry. Think about the strengths of weaknesses of the process, what the group could have done differently, limitations of the process etc.

This is due Friday 9 July