Course description. Most college students have never had a philosophy course, but they began asking themselves philosophical questions even before they entered elementary school. What kind of world do I live in? What is the purpose of life? What constitutes a good life? Throughout history philosophers have revisited these questions, and their answers have shaped our civilization as dramatically as the world’s political, military, and economic leaders. "Philosophical Perspectives" offers a broad survey of philosophical ideas, using the methods students are already familiar with from their history and literature courses: examining the writings of major philosophers in their historical context, and the way one idea led to another. This course satisfies the University of Texas at Arlington core curriculum requirement in Language, Philosophy & Culture.

Learning outcomes. Students who attend all classes and study properly will: (1) understand the nature of reasoning and argumentation; (2) understand the ways in which history and culture have a bearing on philosophy and vice versa; (3) be able to identify various philosophical themes and influences and specify their relation to the contemporary world; (4) demonstrate competency in oral and written communication; and (5) work effectively in a collaborative environment.

Core curriculum objectives.

- Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information;
- Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication;
- Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities; and
- Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Signature assignments. The following assignments (among others) will be used to assess the student’s level of achievement of the Core Curriculum Objectives:

1. Each student will analyze an argumentative passage to determine which proposition functions as the conclusion of the argument and which propositions function as the
premises. (Critical Thinking Skills)

2. Each student will participate in a group project in which the objective is (a) to take a position on a matter of personal or social responsibility (such as voting or recycling) and support that position with reasons; and (b) write a collaborative essay setting forth the argument. (Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility)

[The remainder of the syllabus will be filled in by the instructor.]