

AQA PHILOSOPHY SYLLABUS: USEFUL WEB LINKS

These websites could be used by you as teachers to help deepen your knowledge of the various topics on the 'A' level syllabus. Many of them are too detailed to give to students directly, but others you will probably judge to be suitable for this purpose. I have made much use of three sources in particular: the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy and (for religious topics) the Philosophy of Religion website. I find the second of these is usually more accessible than the first, so I usually prefer its articles—it is, however, currently less complete.

One or two of the sites are rather polemical in their approach. If these are used by students themselves, you will probably want to help them put the arguments into perspective, discussing how the material might be incorporated into writing that uses a more objective, philosophical tone.

Though I have tried to find links for as many of the topics in the syllabus as I can, the list is not completely comprehensive.

Unit 1: An Introduction to Philosophy 1

Reason and experience

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rationalism-empiricism/>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/apriori/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/apriori/>

Why should I be governed?

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/poli-obl/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/political-obligation/>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/hobmoral/>

An article about Hobbes' moral and political philosophy.

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/locke-po/>

An article about Locke's political philosophy.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civil-disobedience/>

Why should I be moral?

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/soc-cont/>

An article on social contract theory.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/egoism/#2>

This section from the Stanford article on egoism would help in covering the material on self-interest.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/>

Useful for understanding different conceptions of what morality is.

The idea of God

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/god-west/>

An article on western concepts of God, including discussion of each of the major divine attributes.

<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/theistic-proofs/the-ontological-argument/>

<http://www.angelfire.com/mn2/tisthammerw/rlgnphil/ontological.html>

Presents and criticizes Anselm's version of the ontological argument. Uses some symbolic logic, but much of the article is not dependent on this.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/eternity/>

Covers idea of God's existence as eternal.

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/descarte/#SH5a>

This deals with Descartes' idea that the concept of God is innate within us and his argument for the existence of God based on this.

<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/arguments-for-atheism/the-psychogenesis-of-religion/>

Considers attempts to use the social sciences to explain the existence of religion.

Persons

http://www.mind.ilstu.edu/curriculum/what_is_a_person/what_is_a_person.php?modGUI=206&compGUI=1882&itemGUI=3284

An accessible essay on what constitutes a person, including a discussion of whether Commander Data in Star Trek is a person!

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-animal/>

This article covers the discussion about whether any non-human animals possess any of the properties that would give them moral status.

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/person-i/>

Concepts of personal identity

Unit 2: An Introduction to Philosophy 2

Knowledge of the external world

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/sense-da/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sense-data/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idealism>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/berkeley/>

Tolerance

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/tolerati/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/toleration/>

The value of art

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/aestheti/>

This includes a useful discussion of representation.

<http://www.unc.edu/~jbrady/Essays/arttruth.html>

An interesting article discussing the concept of truth in art.

God and the world

<http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/religion/re0019.html>

A catholic philosopher's take on the problem of evil.

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~shil0124/mystuff/evil.html>

A highly readable dialogue.

<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/arguments-for-atheism/the-problem-of-evil/>

A clear account that distinguishes different versions of the problem.

<http://www.skeptdic.com/design.html>

Arguments against the argument from design

<http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/apologetics/ap0158.html>

In support of the argument from design.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/fideism/#2.2.4>

This is about Wittgenstein's views on religion. It may help with the last part of this topic on whether religion deals in 'facts about the world'.

Free will and determinism

www.philosophyadvice.net/DETERMINISM_VS.ppt

(An introductory presentation about the problem.)

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctytho/dfwIntroIndex.htm>

(The 'DETERMINISM AND FREEDOM PHILOSOPHY WEBSITE', edited by Professor Ted Honderich.)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A776117>

A clear and lively account of the main issues.

http://www.believmag.com/issues/200303/?read=interview_strawson

An interview with Galen Strawson in which he defends an argument for free will that does not depend on determinism in the strict sense.

Unit 3: Key Themes in Philosophy

Philosophy of mind

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/dualism/>

http://users.ecs.soton.ac.uk/harnad/Papers/Py104/searle_prob.html

A reasonably accessible discussion by John Searle.

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7799171063626430789#>

A video of a provocative and visually exciting lecture by Peter Russell.

Political philosophy

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/polphil/>

An article on political philosophy covering Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, Anarchism, and Environmentalism.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberty-positive-negative/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberalism/>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/hum-rts/>

An article on human rights.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights/>

A fairly technical article.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-distributive/>

A comprehensive treatment of the topic of distributive justice.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/justwar/>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/war/against/pacifism_1.shtml

A very readable discussion of issues connected with the justifiability of war.

Epistemology and metaphysics

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/skepcont/>

A good account of contemporary scepticism.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/belief/>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/int-ext/>

Covers the difficult issue of internalist versus externalist conceptions of knowledge

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/universa/>

Universals and particulars

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/metaphysics/#MetPos>

A general account of metaphysics, including discussions of anti-metaphysical positions and responses to them.

<http://www.archive.org/details/AlfredAyer>

Free download of A.J. Ayer's classic attack on metaphysics, *Language, Truth and Logic*.

http://www.stephenjaygould.org/ctrl/popper_falsification.html

A lucid lecture by Karl Popper about the difference between science and pseudo-science—it focuses on 'falsifiability' as the basis of this distinction.

Moral philosophy

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/moralrea/>

Moral realism and its alternatives

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-relativism/#MorDisRatRes>

A comprehensive discussion of moral relativism.

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/conseque/#SH5a>

An article about consequentialism. (Note that the terms 'utilitarianism' and 'consequentialism' are almost interchangeable.)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism/>

Includes act and rule utilitarianism and preference utilitarianism.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-deontological/>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/virtue/>

A very thorough account of virtue ethics

<http://listverse.com/2007/10/21/top-10-moral-dilemmas/>

A site presenting a series of very 'raw' moral dilemmas. It could be useful when choosing the practical issue(s) that the students will work on to fulfil the last requirement of this unit.

Philosophy of religion

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmological-argument/>

<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/theistic-proofs/the-argument-from-religious-experience/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/fideism/>

'fideism' is the view that faith is a way of knowing that operates independently of reason.

<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/theistic-proofs/pascals-wager/>

Includes discussion of whether we can choose our beliefs.

<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/theistic-proofs/the-argument-from-miracles/>

<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/arguments-for-atheism/the-psychogenesis-of-religion/>

Considers attempts to use the social sciences to explain the existence of religion. Also referenced above under 'The idea of God'.

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/rel-lang/>

This article about religious language includes discussion of the verificationist attack on meaningfulness.

<http://instruct.westvalley.edu/lafave/flew.html>

Includes discussion of some very accessible ideas from Flew, Hare and Mitchell about verifiability/falsifiability and meaningfulness.

Unit 4: Philosophical Problems

This unit prescribes five major philosophical texts for students to study. There are online 'Spark Notes' for each one, which provide very useful summaries and analyses. Here are their locations.

Hume's *Enquiry*

<http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/understanding/>

Plato's *Republic*

<http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/republic/>

Mill's *On Liberty*

<http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/onliberty/>

(In addition the following article may be found useful for the issue of free speech:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/freedom-speech/> .)

Descartes' *Meditations*

<http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/meditations>

Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*

<http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/beyondgood>