

**Duquesne University**  
**McAnulty College of the Liberal Arts**  
Spring 2020

**Basic Philosophical Questions**  
**UCOR132-15**  
TR 10:50-12:05  
346 College Hall

Mr. Aaron Higgins-Brake  
[higginsbrakea@duq.edu](mailto:higginsbrakea@duq.edu)  
Office: College Hall 318

Almost all philosophical questions may be roughly reduced to three: (1) What can I know? (2) What ought I to do? (3) For what can I hope? In this course we will attempt to develop some answers to these questions by examining the writings of some of the great philosophers, both past and present, including Plato, Descartes, Arendt, Appiah, and others.

Course Objectives

One of the primary goals of this course is to become acquainted with some of the defining philosophical ideas of the present era, and then to uncover some of the roots of these ideas, as well as alternatives to them, in pre-modern philosophy. No one period of the history of thought—neither the old nor the new—is guaranteed to be correct, but it is important to know how ideas have reacted to one another if one is to understand the concepts at stake in our own time.

The other main goal of this course is to develop the analytical, critical, and speculative skills to philosophize on one's own, that is, to make use of the resources in the history of philosophy to reflect on one's own experiences and the issues of contemporary life.