

Philosophy for Coaches

Julian Humphreys PhD, PCC

Course Description

From Plato to today, philosophers have struggled with the really big questions, like

- Who am I?
- How should I live?
- What can I know?

In this course, we attempt to find our own answers to these timeless questions, so we can better help our clients find their own answers.

Focusing in particular on philosophers whose ideas and perspectives are relevant to coaching, this course helps coaches support client outcomes using tools, theories and frameworks drawn from the Western philosophical tradition.

The week-by-week course breakdown is as follows:

1. Introduction
2. **Plato** – The Republic (excerpt)
3. **Descartes** – Meditations (excerpt)
4. **Nietzsche** – Gay Science & Untimely Meditations (excerpts)
5. **Foucault** – History of Sexuality (excerpt)
6. **Rorty** – Contingency, Irony and Solidarity (excerpt)
7. **Taylor** – Ethics of Authenticity (excerpt)
8. **Butler** – Performative Acts and Gender Constitution (article)
9. **Nussbaum** - Professor of Parody (article), Philosopher of Feeling (article)
10. **West** – Cornel West’s Pragmatic Understanding of America (article), Examined Life (media), Brother West (media)
11. **Žižek** – How to Read Žižek (article), Getting a Grip on Žižek (article), Pervert’s Guide to Cinema (media), Examined Life (media)
12. Integration

On registration participants receive an electronic copy of all course readings. Participants in North America receive a hard copy at no additional cost.

This course is delivered over zoom, with weekly group coaching calls.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course participants understand the relevance of philosophy to coaching practice and are able to:

- Speak knowledgeably about different philosophers' theories and frameworks
- Tie specific philosophical tools, theories and frameworks to specific ICF core competencies
- Use philosophical tools, theories and frameworks in their coaching to support client outcomes

Course Requirements

In order to be eligible for ICF CCEUs students must complete the following:

- Submit and share with other group members at least 8 Weekly Reading Summary Forms prior to 8 of the 12 Weekly Group Calls.
- Attend at least 8 of the 12 Weekly Group Calls from beginning to end, via video conference
- Submit and share with other group members an integration paper of minimum 1000 words prior to the final group call, explaining how the student has integrated one or more philosophical theories, tools or frameworks into their own coaching practice.

Please note Weekly Group Calls are focused on the *application* of philosophical tools, theories and frameworks to coaching practice. Consequently, students are expected to have completed all assigned readings and the Weekly Reading Summary Form prior to each Weekly Group Call.

Course Readings

Week 1 – Introduction

Solomon, Robert & Higgins, Kathleen. (2013). *The big questions: A short introduction to philosophy*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

Week 2 – Plato

Plato. (1963). *The collected dialogues of Plato*. Hamilton, E., Cairns, H., & Cooper, L. (Eds.) New York, N.Y: Bollingen Foundation.

Week 3 – René Descartes

Descartes. Rene. (1984). *Meditations on first philosophy*. John Cottingham (trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 4 – Friedrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche, F. W., & Kaufmann, W. (1974). *The gay science*. New York: Vintage Books.

Nietzsche, F. W. (1997). *Untimely meditations*. R. J. Hollingdale (trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 5 – Michel Foucault

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Week 6 – Richard Rorty

Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 7 – Charles Taylor

Taylor, C. (1991). *The ethics of authenticity*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Week 8 – Judith Butler

Butler, J. (1988). 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory.' *Theatre Journal*, 40(4), 519-531.

Week 9 – Martha Nussbaum

Nussbaum, Martha (1999). 'The Professor of Parody: The Hip Defeatism of Judith Butler.' *The New Republic*, 22:37-45.

Aviv, Rachel (2016). 'The Philosopher of Feelings.' *New Yorker*. Accessed on 15th February, 2020 at <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/07/25/martha-nussbaums-moral-philosophies>

Week 10 – Cornel West

Conlon, James. (2017). 'Cornel West's Pragmatic Understanding of America.' *Journal of Black Studies*. 48(1), 26–42.

Week 11 – Slavoj Žižek

Kotsko, A. (2012). 'How to Read Žižek.' *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Accessed on 15th February, 2020 at <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/how-to-read-zizek/>

Bulajewski, M. (2018). Getting a Grip on Slavoj Žižek (with Slavoj Žižek). *JStor Daily*. Accessed on 15th February, 2020 at <https://daily.jstor.org/getting-a-grip-on-slavoj-zizek-with-slavoj-zizek/>

About the Instructor

Julian Humphreys is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) with a PhD in Education from the University of Toronto. He is the founder and former Editor-in-Chief of *Philosophy of Coaching: An International Journal*. He has taught at Boston University and Ryerson University, and presented his research at international conferences, including at UNESCO and Harvard.