

**EUROPEAN SCHOOLS**

**Ref.: 90-D-168/1**

**Orig: En**

**PHILOSOPHY SYLLABUS**

**Compulsory course - 2 periods  
6th and 7th years**

**Approved by the Board of Governors  
29 & 30 january 1991**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The syllabus is composed, on the one hand, of **five fields of study**, each of which provides the material for a question in the written Baccalaureate, and on the other, of **central themes** which the teacher can regroup, divide or complete depending on available opportunity. The aim of this is to avoid the compartmentalization which might be entailed in a breakdown centred on traditional philosophic disciplines.

The teacher is free in regard to the order and methods of dealing with the themes, but he should, in every case, take care to develop the critical sense of the pupils, to perfect their techniques in reasoning and expression, and to further their personal reflection.

## **II. FIELDS OF STUDY**

The philosophy course will allow to go deeper into the following fields:

### **Anthropology**

a study of man in his multiple relationships with his environment (physical, biological, social), with others, and in his psychological reality;

### **Epistemology**

a study of the problems of knowledge (scientific, aesthetic) and of truth and objectivity, taking into account the range of methods and their limits;

### **Ethics**

an investigation into the basis of ethical values which could be adopted with reference to different philosophical traditions and trends, free from all dogmatic constraint, and taking into account the diversity of the individual;

### **Politics**

an understanding of the philosophical implications of political confrontations and the problems of society, and by these means an assessment of the evolution of human society throughout history;

### **Metaphysics**

a study of what philosophy is and what one can expect from it in dealing with the problem of metaphysics in general and particular metaphysical problems.

### **III. CENTRAL THEMES**

#### **- Nature and culture**

- Man, a natural being?

- Man, a cultural being?

Relations between individual and society. Communication with others.

- Man, conscious and unconscious.

#### **- Knowledge**

- Ignorance. Learning. Knowledge (e.g. Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave").

- The role of language in learning.

- Three sources in traditional concepts of knowledge.

. Idea (e.g. Plato)

. Experience (e.g. Hume)

. Transcendentalism (e.g. Kant)

#### **- Aesthetic Sensibility**

- Aesthetic perception.

- The specificity of aesthetic judgement.

- Aesthetic judgement faced with the natural and the artificial.

#### **- The Individual and the State**

- Three concepts of the State: absolutism, anarchism, democracy (justice and equality).

- Justifications of state power.

- The functions of political utopias.

#### **- Justification of Ethical Norms**

- Values and norms of moral action (definitions).

- Moral conscience, the origin of or a consequence of values and norms?

- Some foundations of ethics: pleasure, happiness, utility, categorical imperative.

#### **- Scientific Truth**

- The concept of Truth.

- Truth in the experimental sciences (observation, hypothesis, verification, etc., probability).

- Mathematical truth (axiomatic).

- Liberty
  - Liberty, an illusion?
  - Liberty, a liberation from constraints (natural, material, social, etc.)?
  - Liberty and responsibility.
  
- Metaphysics
  - The idea of the Absolute.
  - For or against Metaphysics.
  
- The value of Philosophy
  - Philosophical reflection.
  - The significance of philosophy.

