

OULDI project

Narrative 8

'Socratic Investigations' (SI) is a PhD student at the Faculty of Divinity. Primarily a researcher, his teaching activities are currently limited to small group teaching. He has been asked to start lecturing next year and so is eager to learn more about Curriculum Design in order to prepare. He studies Divinity which he determines requires one to question everything in life, including teaching and educational technologies.

In terms of his technical comfort level and background, SI will only use email and the 'University Imposed' systems as a result of other people choosing to use them. Outside of work he doesn't use systems like Facebook and so on; he is satisfied using only email.

Although SI has not yet set up a new curriculum, he anticipates he will shortly be involved with such and, in any case, considers it to be an important topic for all those involved in education. SI does have experience supervising students, and so already has some ideas, expectations, and developed opinions regarding curriculum design.

SI has a vexed relationship with online tools for teaching and "sees no use in digitalisation", particularly when it addresses the structuring of thought. With a strong distrust of metaphors which suggest reductive, functional, structural, economic or ideological perspectives, none of the tools engaged significant interest. He sought, but failed to find "quality over quantity" and "organic" teaching. However SI offered a number of interesting suggestions of incremental improvements, for example for Pedagogy Profile he writes "perhaps a coloured pie---shaped graph could be used instead".

We are grateful that SI remained passionately engaged with our process and generously offered his heartfelt perspective. It is remarkable that he chose to remain engaged despite his essential and fundamental misgivings as to the worth of the field of endeavour, and which provided us with a valuable alternative perspective. Illustrative quotes regarding the correspondent's anxiety over the use of these tools in his teaching include:

"The value of the tool is supposed to be assigned, not merely by the virtue of its user, but by the number of users or the degree to which the tool succeeds in connecting the greatest number of users (likewise, the 'meaning' of the tool is supposed to be determined by the 'power'-----impact, relevance, etc.-----of the audience, rather than by the 'quality' or inherent worth of the audience)."

"Cloudworks would be helpful to me as a platform for raising and discussing antidotes to the failure of contemporary education 'systems' to educate (lit. to lead upward, not forward) Socratically - and thus to illuminate our common problems - rather than instruct ideologically, i.e. to lead us away from what is common in the service of special agendas (no matter how 'universalised')."

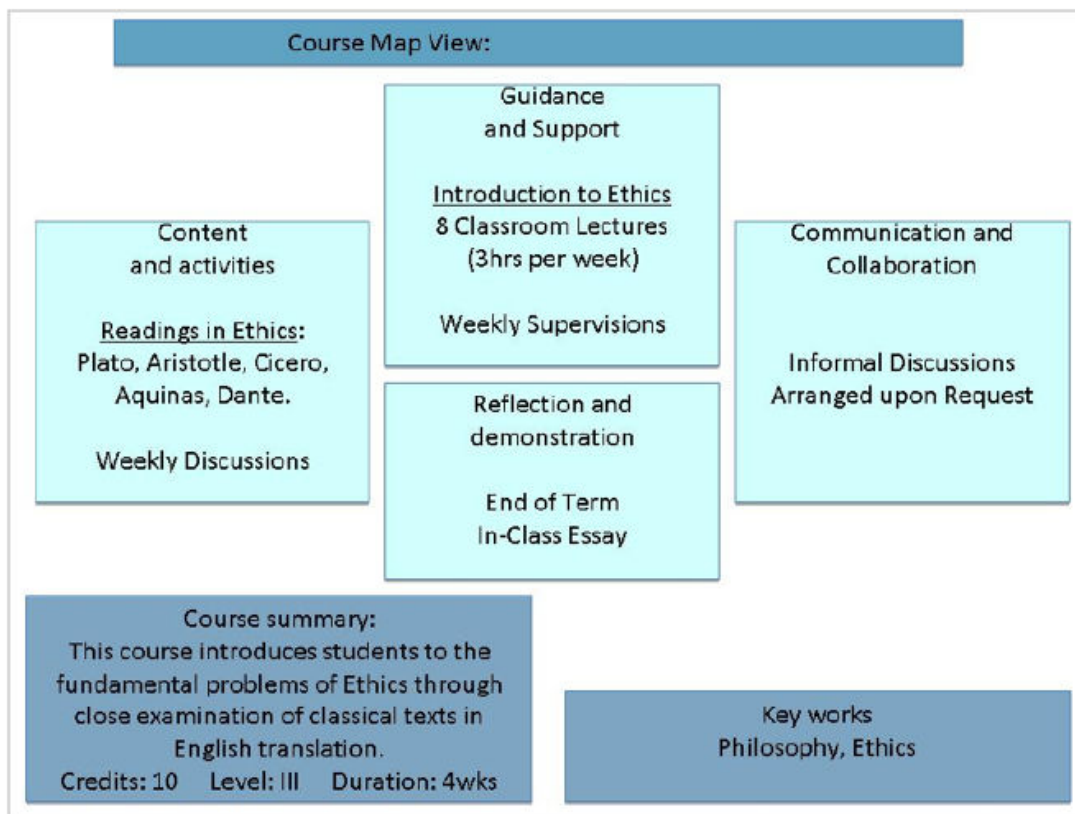
“Genuine learning resists digitalising/marketing devices, just as an honest course of learning discourages the habit of approaching subjects of learning piecemeal as merchandise.”

“a system of pre---emptive responses to students' doubts concerning assessment criteria... [serving] to mask, rather than reveal, the real Art of Assessment ... I would find it more helpful to ask: is the student really thinking?”

“the type of courses I would ever teach are aimed at helping students escape the confines of flow-charts, questioning the belief that thought is a labyrinth ... I would change the charts by replacing them altogether with something that does not feed students a ‘visualisation’ of the course, but that encourages students to think their own way to the course objective.”

“If I were teaching children with severe learning disabilities (LAS, autism, etc.) [Compendium LD] might come in handy. Probably, many technology/computer students will find themselves at home with the charts.”

We do not anticipate he will take forward use of these tools.



Socratic Investigations' Course Map