Philosophy
Victorian Certificate of Education

The images shown above represent a cross section of works covering sculpture, textiles, assemblage, drawing, photography, prints, painting and electronic media as exhibited in VCE Top Arts.
Latoya BARTON
The sunset (detail)
9.0 x 9.0 cm each, oil on board

Tarkan ERTURK
Visage (detail)
201.0 x 170.0 cm
synthetic polymer paint, on cotton duck

Liana RASCHILLA
Teapot from the Crazy Alice set
19.0 x 22.0 x 22.0 cm
earthenware, clear glaze, lustres

Nigel BROWN
Untitled physics (detail)
90.0 x 40.0 x 70.0 cm
composition board, steel, loudspeakers,
CD player, amplifier, glass

Kate WOOLLEY
Sarah (detail)
76.0 x 101.0 cm, oil on canvas

Chris ELLIS
Tranquility (detail)
35.0 x 22.5 cm
gelatin silver photograph

Christian HART
Within without (detail)
digital film, 6 minutes

Kristian LUCAS
Me, myself, I and you (detail)
56.0 x 102.0 cm
oil on canvas

Meryn ALLEN
Japanese illusions (detail)
centre back: 74.0 cm, waist (flat): 42.0 cm
polyester cotton

Ping (Irene VINCENT)
Boxes (detail)
colour photograph

Lucy McNAMARA
Precariously (detail)
156.0 x 61.0 x 61.0 cm
painted wood, oil paint, egg shells, glue, stainless steel wire

Cover artwork was selected from the Top Arts exhibition. Copyright remains the property of the artist.
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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Accreditation period
Units 1–4: 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2018
Implementation of this study commences in 2014.

Other sources of information
The *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET* is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The Bulletin, including supplements, also regularly includes advice on VCE studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to refer to each issue of the Bulletin. The Bulletin is available as an e-newsletter via free subscription on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority’s website at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

To assist teachers in assessing School-assessed Coursework in Units 3 and 4, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

The companion document to the assessment handbook ‘Administrative Procedures for Assessment in VCE Studies’ is available on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority’s website at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/generaladvice/index.aspx

The current *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* contains essential information on assessment processes and other procedures.

VCE providers
Throughout this study design the term ‘school’ is intended to include both schools and other VCE providers.

Copyright
VCE schools may reproduce parts of this study design for use by teachers. The full Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Copyright Policy is available at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/aboutus/policies/policy-copyright.aspx
Introduction

SCOPE OF STUDY

Philosophy is the oldest academic discipline. It is broadly concerned with ethics, epistemology (philosophy of knowledge) and metaphysics. It is the founding discipline of logic, and continues to develop and refine the tools of critical reasoning, influencing approaches in mathematics, science and the humanities. Philosophers grapple with the most profound questions, such as: What is the nature of reality? Is it possible to attain certainty about anything? Is there a common human nature? What is it to live a good life? Philosophy is thus not only concerned with issues of public debate such as artificial intelligence, justification for a charter of human rights or censorship of speech or art, but with the problems that lie at their foundation. Philosophers are concerned with thinking rigorously and rationally about ideas, and exploring their meaning, context, coherence and implications. The nature of the questions studied, together with the techniques of reasoning and argument used to study them, can in turn help to create new ideas and insights through learning to think differently.

VCE Philosophy contains a broad introduction to philosophy, exploring themes and debates within metaphysics, epistemology and value theory as well as techniques of reasoning and argument drawn from formal and informal logic. It investigates human nature through the mind/body debate and questions regarding personal identity, leading to an examination of the good life.

Prescribed primary texts by significant philosophers are used to develop a critical appreciation of key questions and contemporary debates. While western analytical philosophy informs most of the study, there are opportunities to draw in perspectives from other traditions of thought. Where religious concepts and traditions of thought are discussed, they are considered from a philosophical rather than theological point of view.

RATIONALE

VCE Philosophy explores some of the most enduring and influential ideas that underpin some of society’s greatest achievements in ethics, science and the arts. This, together with learning to think critically and with an open mind, fosters the reflection necessary for deep insights and ethical decision-making at all levels of society.

VCE Philosophy is a challenging and stimulating study, which nurtures curiosity, problem-solving skills, open-mindedness and intellectual rigour. Doing philosophy involves explicitly developing the
habits of clarifying concepts, analysing problems, and constructing reasoned and coherent arguments. It encourages students to reflect critically on their own thinking and helps them to develop a sophisticated and coherent world view.

The ability to think philosophically is highly regarded in careers where conceptual analysis, strategic thinking, insightful questioning and carefully reasoned arguments are needed. At the same time exploring the big philosophical questions and the ideas of some of history’s greatest thinkers can promote a more satisfying intellectual life and offer inspiration to guide human existence into the future.

AIMS

This study enables students to:
- understand the nature of philosophy and its methods
- identify and articulate philosophical questions
- understand and analyse significant philosophical ideas, viewpoints and arguments, in their historical contexts
- explore ideas, responding to central philosophical questions, viewpoints and arguments with clarity, precision and logic
- understand relationships between responses to philosophical questions and contemporary issues
- cultivate open-mindedness, reflecting critically on their own thinking and that of others, and exploring alternative approaches to philosophical questions.

STRUCTURE

The study is made up of four units.
- Unit 1: Existence, knowledge and reasoning
- Unit 2: Questions of value
- Unit 3: Minds, bodies and persons
- Unit 4: The good life

Each unit deals with specific content contained in areas of study and is designed to enable students to achieve a set of outcomes for that unit. Each outcome is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills.

ENTRY

There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3. Students must undertake Unit 3 prior to undertaking Unit 4. Units 1 to 4 are designed to a standard equivalent to the final two years of secondary education. All VCE studies are benchmarked against comparable national and international curriculum.

DURATION

Each unit involves at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction over the duration of a semester.
CHANGES TO THE STUDY DESIGN

During its period of accreditation minor changes to the study will be announced in the *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET*. The Bulletin is the only source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to monitor changes or advice about VCE studies published in the Bulletin.

MONITORING FOR QUALITY

As part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will periodically undertake an audit of VCE Philosophy to ensure the study is being taught and assessed as accredited. The details of the audit procedures and requirements are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*. Schools will be notified if they are required to submit material to be audited.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students undertaking the study. Sensitivity to religious and cultural beliefs should be exercised when selecting themes for study in Units 1 and 2.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

This study offers a number of opportunities for students to develop employability skills. The ‘Advice for teachers’ companion document provides specific examples of how students can develop employability skills during learning activities and assessment tasks.

LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

When collecting and using information, the provisions of privacy and copyright legislation, such as the Victorian *Information Privacy Act 2000* and *Health Records Act 2001*, and the federal *Privacy Act 1988* and *Copyright Act 1968*, must be met.
Assessment and reporting

SATISFACTORY COMPLETION

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on a decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. This decision will be based on the teacher’s assessment of the student’s performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment for Units 3 and 4.

Teachers must develop courses that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. Examples of learning activities are provided in the ‘Advice for teachers’ companion document.

Schools will report a result for each unit to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory). Completion of a unit will be reported on the Statement of Results issued by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory). Schools may report additional information on levels of achievement.

AUTHENTICATION

Work related to the outcomes of each unit will be accepted only if the teacher can attest that, to the best of their knowledge, all unacknowledged work is the student’s own. Teachers need to refer to the current VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook for authentication procedures.

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Units 1 and 2

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.
Units 3 and 4
The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will supervise the assessment of all students undertaking Units 3 and 4.

In VCE Philosophy students’ level of achievement will be determined by School-assessed Coursework and an end-of-year examination. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will report students’ level of performance on each assessment component as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded). To receive a study score, students must achieve two or more graded assessments and receive S for both Units 3 and 4. The study score is reported on a scale of 0–50; it is a measure of how well the student performed in relation to all others who took the study. Teachers should refer to the current *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* for details on graded assessment and calculation of the study score. Percentage contributions to the study score in VCE Philosophy are as follows:

- Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
- Unit 4 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
- End-of-year examination: 50 per cent.

Details of the assessment program are described in the sections on Units 3 and 4 in this study design.
Unit 1: Existence, knowledge and reasoning

What is the nature of reality? How can we acquire certain knowledge? These are some of the questions that have challenged humans for millennia and underpin ongoing endeavours in areas as diverse as science, justice and the arts. This unit engages students with fundamental philosophical questions through active, guided investigation and critical discussion of two key areas of philosophy: epistemology and metaphysics. The emphasis is on philosophical inquiry – ‘doing philosophy’ – and hence the study and practice of techniques of logic are central to this unit. As students learn to think philosophically, appropriate examples of philosophical viewpoints and arguments, both contemporary and historical, are used to support, stimulate and enhance their thinking about central concepts and problems. Students investigate relevant debates in applied epistemology and metaphysics, and consider whether the philosophical bases of these debates continue to have relevance in contemporary society and our everyday lives.

AREA OF STUDY 1

Metaphysics

Metaphysics is the study of the basic structures and categories of what exists, or of reality. It is the attempt to work out a logical account of everything that we know or believe about existence, including all our scientific knowledge.

This area of study introduces students to metaphysical problems through a study of questions associated with selected themes.

Metaphysical themes

Students study at least two of the following five themes. A range of questions for study are to be selected from the list under each theme. Appropriate questions outside the list can also be included for study. For at least one of the themes selected, students must study one or more primary text/s from the thinkers listed.
1. **On the material mind**

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:

- What is the mind? What are thoughts? What is consciousness?
- What ontological commitments are made by dualism, materialism, and idealism, respectively?
- In materialist philosophies of mind, what is meant by the following labels: behaviourism, identity theory, functionalism, the computational theory of mind, eliminativism, anomalous monism, realistic monism?
- Can reasons be causes?
- Does experience add anything to propositional knowledge?
- If we knew everything there was to know about the physics and physiology of colour, would we know everything there is to know about colour?
- What must the physical universe be like for it to include experiences such as pain?
- What kinds of things are propositional attitudes such as beliefs and desires, especially given they cannot be located in any specific part of the brain?
- Are mindless but animate human bodies conceivable? If so, are they therefore metaphysically possible?
- Might computers have minds?

Thinkers: Rene Descartes, George Berkeley, David Armstrong, David Chalmers, Daniel Dennett, Donald Davidson, Frank Jackson, Thomas Nagel

2. **On the existence and nature of God**

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:

- What are the arguments for the existence of God?
- To what extent have developments in science and philosophy undermined or reinforced traditional arguments for the existence of God?
- Is religious faith different from other kinds of faith?
- What can philosophy say about the attributes of God?
- Is human thought equal to the task of discussing the attributes of God?
- Is the concept of God consistent with traditional theistic beliefs (for example, divine compassion, divine intervention in human life)?
- Does the existence of suffering constitute a refutation of the existence of God?

Thinkers: Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal, William Paley, David Hume, Simone Weil, John Mackie

3. **On materialism and idealism**

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:

- Are material/physical objects the only things that exist?
- Does the world consist of ideas?
- To what extent does the mind make its world?
- What are secondary qualities? To what extent do they exist in the world?
- Can there be a materialist or physicalist account of conscious experience?
- Can idealism account for the apparent objectivity and persistence of physical objects?
- In what ways is the contemporary realism/anti-realism debate distinct from the historical materialism/idealism debate?
- How real is virtual reality?

Thinkers: Plato, John Locke, Rene Descartes, George Berkeley, David Papineau, Democritus
4. On free will and determinism
Questions that may be explored in this theme include:
• Can we be free if there are causes for all our actions?
• Is everything we do determined by forces beyond our control?
• What is indeterminism in nature? Does it help us to understand free will?
• Do theories of compatibilism or soft determinism successfully reconcile freedom and determinism?
• How is determinism linked to materialism and freedom to dualism?
• How is freedom linked to notions of agency, responsibility, reward and punishment?
Thinkers: Daniel Dennett, Bernard Williams, David Hume, Baron D’Holbach, Arthur Schopenhauer, William James, Peter Strawson, Peter van Inwagen

5. On time
Questions that may be explored in this theme include:
• What is time?
• Does it make sense to speak of time having a beginning or an end?
• Can there be a coherent time-travel story?
• What paradoxes arise when considering the possibility of time travel?
• On what basis could time travel be physically possible?
• What would have to be the nature of time for time travel to be possible?
Thinkers: Aristotle, Augustine, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, David Lewis, J.J.C. Smart, J.L. Borges, Albert Einstein, Paul Davies

Outcome 1
On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse metaphysical problems, evaluate viewpoints and arguments arising from these, and identify philosophical problems in relevant contemporary debates.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge
• central viewpoints and arguments associated with the chosen metaphysical questions as represented in at least one primary text
• debates and questions that arise from exploration of at least two metaphysical themes as outlined above
• definitions of key terms and concepts associated with the chosen metaphysical problems
• reasons for the diversity of metaphysical viewpoints
• viewpoints and arguments central to the chosen metaphysical problems
• the relationship between metaphysical problems and relevant contemporary debates, such as punishment, the treatment of animals, issues of life and death and artificial intelligence.

Key skills
• formulate philosophical questions arising from metaphysical problems
• identify key philosophical concepts and questions related to metaphysical problems in the context of contemporary debates
• outline philosophical viewpoints and arguments associated with metaphysical problems
• analyse viewpoints and arguments presented in a primary philosophical source and the implications of these
• offer justified critical responses to viewpoints and arguments associated with metaphysical problems
• reflect critically on their own viewpoints and arguments relating to metaphysics
• formulate informed responses to metaphysical problems, and explain, defend and refine those ideas in philosophical exchanges with others.

AREA OF STUDY 2

Epistemology
The word epistemology derives from two Ancient Greek words: episteme meaning ‘knowledge’ and logos meaning ‘what is said about something’. In the ancient world, episteme was contrasted with doxa meaning ‘belief’, or something falling short of genuine knowledge. This ancient contrast points to one of the basic problems in epistemology: the difference between belief/opinion, and the certainty associated with knowledge.

This area of study introduces students to basic epistemological problems through a study of questions associated with selected themes. Students also consider philosophical problems in contemporary debates, including the implications of accepting particular views about knowledge; for example, what are the implications for the authority of science from a position that knowledge, belief and truth are relative to different cultures? Does considering this implication lead to a revision of the initial position?

Epistemological themes
Students study Theme 1 ‘On knowledge’ and at least one other theme. A range of questions to study are to be selected from the list under each theme. Appropriate questions outside the list can also be included for study. For at least one of the themes selected, students must study one or more primary text/s from the thinkers listed.

1. On knowledge
Questions that may be explored in this theme include:
• Is justified true belief the same as knowledge?
• Is certainty necessary for knowledge?
• What is the difference between knowledge and belief?
• If one of your firmly held beliefs is challenged, should you go about justifying or modifying it, and, if so, how?
• What are the sources of our knowledge in areas such as history, the law, forensics, evolutionary biology and the media? How reliable are they?
Thinkers: Plato, Rene Descartes, Edmund L. Gettier

2. On the possibility of a priori knowledge
Questions that may be explored in this theme include:
• What are the sources of our knowledge (for example, do sources include deductive argument, induction, scientific method, testimony or intuition)?
• How reliable are sources of knowledge?
• Should we trust our senses?
• Is it possible to attain knowledge purely through the senses?
• Is it possible to attain knowledge through the use of reason alone?
• Is there any knowledge with which we were born?
• Is reason superior to experience in giving us knowledge of the world?
• What are the differences between rationalism and empiricism, a priori and a posteriori knowledge, and necessary and contingent truths?

Thinkers: Rene Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, A.J. Ayer

3. On science
Questions that may be explored in this theme include:
• What is the scientific method?
• Should the methods of observation, experiment and measurement be trusted?
• What is the problem of induction? Can induction be justified?
• What is the reductionist view of scientific knowledge?
• What is falsificationism?
• Does science provide an objective account of the world?

Thinkers: David Hume, J.S. Mill, Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, Ernest Nagel, Bernard Williams, Paul Davies

4. On objectivity
Questions that may be explored in this theme include:
• Are knowledge, belief and truth relative to different individuals or cultures?
• Is truth subjective?
• Is objective truth possible or attainable by humans?
• Does mathematics offer a way to obtain truth?
• Does science offer objective truths?
• What is the role of emotion in knowledge?
• What is the status of knowledge from different sources such as mythology, religion, the arts, sciences or mathematics? How should we compare such knowledge?

Thinkers: William James, Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, Simon Blackburn, Antonio Damasio, Nussbaum

Outcome 2
On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse epistemological problems, evaluate viewpoints and arguments arising from these, and analyse philosophical problems in relevant contemporary debates.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge
• debates and questions that arise from exploration of the theme ‘On knowledge’ and at least one other epistemological theme as outlined above
• central viewpoints and arguments associated with the chosen epistemological questions as represented in at least one primary text
• definitions of key terms and concepts associated with the chosen epistemological problems
• reasons for the diversity of epistemological viewpoints
• viewpoints and arguments central to the chosen epistemological problems
• criticisms that can be raised in response to the viewpoints and arguments central to the chosen epistemological problems
• the relationship between viewpoints and arguments on epistemological questions and relevant contemporary debates such as the authority of science, the weight of legal evidence or truth in the media
• the implications of adopting a particular epistemological position for relevant contemporary debates, such as the authority of science, the weight of legal evidence, or truth in the media.

Key skills
• formulate philosophical questions arising from epistemological problems
• analyse definitions of key philosophical concepts related to epistemological problems
• analyse definitions of key philosophical concepts in the context of relevant contemporary debates
• outline philosophical viewpoints and arguments associated with epistemological problems
• analyse viewpoints and arguments presented in a primary philosophical source and explore the implications of these
• offer justified critical responses to viewpoints and arguments associated with epistemological problems
• reflect critically on their own viewpoints and arguments relating to epistemology
• formulate informed responses to epistemological problems, and explain, defend and refine those responses in philosophical exchanges with others
• explain the relationship between an epistemological position and a relevant contemporary debate.

AREA OF STUDY 3

Introduction to logic and reasoning
Philosophy is an activity as much as it is a body of thought, and students of philosophy benefit not just from attaining new knowledge, but through the development of their reasoning faculties. Philosophy is the activity of considering central, contestable problems, and attempting to develop good reasons for holding one position rather than another. In analysing concepts and clarifying positions, philosophers also discover how ideas are logically and conceptually connected with each other. Precise use of language is essential to these processes as a means of supporting coherence and the rigorous testing of ideas.

This area of study introduces students to the distinctive nature of philosophical thinking and a variety of approaches to philosophical inquiry. They practise some basics of formal and informal logic and other techniques of critical thinking, such as analogy, that are essential to the study of problems in metaphysics and epistemology. They explore cognitive biases and consider any implications for approaching problems in epistemology and metaphysics, for example the relation between confirmation bias, science and pseudo-science, and attribution bias and questions of causality.

Outcome 3
On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply methods of philosophical inquiry to the analysis of philosophical viewpoints and arguments, including those in metaphysics and epistemology.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.
Key knowledge

• the roles of reasoning and argument, intuition, imagination, metaphor, emotion and experience in philosophical thinking about metaphysical and epistemological problems
• key terms associated with philosophical reasoning, including argument, deduction, induction, reason, premise, conclusion, validity, invalidity, soundness, unsoundness, consistency, contradiction, implication, entailment, assumption, standard form, syllogism, analogy, example, counterexample, counterargument, objection, refutation, proposition, claim, assertion, definition, probability, criteria
• techniques of reasoning and argument
• cognitive biases that undermine reasoning and investigation, such as gamblers’ fallacy, attribution bias, confirmation bias, Dunning-Kruger effect and any implications of these for approaching debates in epistemology and metaphysics.

Key skills

• analyse the roles of reasoning and argument, imagination, emotion and experience in examples of philosophical thinking
• apply philosophical thinking, including techniques of reason and argument and knowledge of cognitive biases, to analysis of philosophical viewpoints and arguments, including those in metaphysics and epistemology and related debates
• analyse simple arguments to identify the premises and conclusions, and the relationships between the premises and conclusion, including ‘standard form’ presentation
• identify and describe errors in reasoning such as cognitive biases
• use appropriate terminology when analysing and evaluating arguments.

ASSESSMENT

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on a decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. This decision will be based on the teacher’s assessment of the student’s overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit.

The key knowledge and key skills listed for each outcome should be used for course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes.

Assessment tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. Teachers should select a variety of assessment tasks for their assessment program to reflect the key knowledge and key skills being assessed and to provide for different learning styles.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate achievement of three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass all areas of study.

Demonstration of achievement of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 must be based on the student’s performance on a selection of assessment tasks. Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.
Assessment tasks for this unit are selected from the following:

- essay
- written analysis
- short-answer responses
- test
- written reflection
- written exercises
- presentations (oral, multimedia)
- dialogue (oral, written).
Unit 2: Questions of value

What are the foundations of our judgments about value? What is the relationship between different types of value? How, if at all, can particular value judgments be defended or criticised?

This unit invites students to explore these questions in relation to different categories of value judgment within the realms of morality, political and social philosophy and aesthetics. Students also explore ways in which viewpoints and arguments in value theory can inform and be informed by contemporary debates.

AREA OF STUDY 1

Ethics and moral philosophy

What should I do? What is right? On what basis can we choose between different courses of action? These are ongoing fundamental questions. In this area of study students are introduced to key debates in moral philosophy that stretch back thousands of years. The laws of our society reflect a position that murder and theft are wrong, but a philosopher is interested in the justifications for these convictions. Is morality a matter of personal prejudice or can we give good reasons for holding particular moral beliefs? Are there fundamental moral beliefs which should be universally binding, or are they preferences that develop in response to particular cultural contexts?

In this area of study students are concerned with discovering if there are basic principles and underlying ideas of morality and assessing ethical viewpoints and arguments according to standards of logic and consistency. Philosophical methods may be used to address everyday dilemmas, as well as issues debated in the media and important moral challenges of our times.

Ethics and moral philosophy themes

Students study at least two of the following three themes. A range of questions for study are to be selected from the list under each theme. Appropriate questions outside the list can also be included for study. For at least one of the themes selected, students must study one or more primary text/s from the thinkers listed.

1. On the foundations of morality

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:

• Where does morality come from?
• Is morality subjective or objective?
• What is the ‘is-ought gap’ and can it be bridged?
• What is the relationship between religious belief and morality?
• What is the relationship between nature and morality?
• Is it possible to speak of moral progress?
• What is nihilism?
• Do moral principles exist? Are they universal or relative to particular situations?

Thinkers: J.L. Mackie, Bernard Williams, Peter Strawson, Simon Blackburn

2. On moral psychology

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:

• What is the relationship between reason and action?
• What is ‘weakness of will’ and what are its causes and moral implications?
• Is it possible to act without a reason? Is it possible to act against your own interests?
• Is pure altruism possible, or are all acts essentially based on self-interest?
• What role should reason, emotion, duty and self-interest have in ethical decision-making?
• Is moral behaviour found only in human beings?
• Should our own pleasure-seeking be our primary motivation when making ethical decisions?
• Does it make sense to speak of acting well out of habit?
• Should we focus on cultivating our own character and virtues to ensure sound ethical decision-making?

Thinkers: Bernard Williams, Donald Davidson, Alasdair MacIntyre, Aristotle, A.J. Ayer

3. On right and wrong

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:

• What are the major theories philosophers have offered about what makes an action morally right?
• Does the motive or character of the person performing an action matter to the morality of that action?
• Are acts right or wrong to the extent that they maximise pleasures or minimise suffering? What are the relative merits of various versions of utilitarianism, such as positive, negative, preference, act, rule, ideal or hedonistic?
• Are there certain acts which should be considered right or wrong in themselves independently of their consequences? Why and to what extent?
• Is religious authority a legitimate source of moral principles (for example, principles derived from the Ten Commandments, the Eightfold Path, the Golden Mean)?

Thinkers: Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Bernard Williams, Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel, J.J.C. Smart

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse problems in ethics and moral theory and related contemporary debates, evaluate viewpoints and arguments in response to these problems, and discuss the interplay between philosophical thinking and contemporary ethical and moral debates.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge
• debates and questions that arise from exploration of two of the ethical and moral themes listed above
• central viewpoints and arguments associated with the chosen ethical and moral questions as represented in at least one primary text
• definitions of key terms and concepts associated with the chosen ethical and moral themes
• viewpoints and arguments central to the core problems within the chosen ethical and moral themes
• criticisms that can be raised in response to the viewpoints and arguments central to the chosen ethical and moral themes
• philosophical concepts, viewpoints and arguments related to selected ethical and moral debates
• the interplay between viewpoints and arguments informed by value theory and relevant contemporary debates.

Key skills
• analyse definitions of key philosophical concepts related to problems in ethics and moral philosophy
• analyse definitions of key philosophical concepts in the context of relevant contemporary debates
• formulate philosophical questions arising from the problems central to the chosen themes
• outline philosophical viewpoints and arguments associated with the problems central to the chosen themes
• analyse viewpoints and arguments presented in a primary philosophical source and explore the implications of these
• offer justified critical responses to viewpoints and arguments associated with problems central to the chosen themes
• reflect critically on their own viewpoints and arguments relating to ethics and moral philosophy
• formulate informed responses to problems in ethics and moral philosophy and explain, defend and refine those responses in philosophical exchanges with others
• explain the relationship between relevant contemporary debates and viewpoints and arguments arising in ethics and moral philosophy.

AREA OF STUDY 2

Further problems in value theory
In addition to discussing ethical and moral value, philosophers consider a range of other types of values, including social, political and aesthetic value.

Often philosophers concern themselves with questions regarding the foundations of particular forms of value. They consider whether these various forms of value are grounded in the nature of things or whether are they human creations. If they are human creations, they consider whether these forms of value might yet appeal to commonly held or universal standards. How these questions are approached may depend upon the type of value considered.

At other times, philosophers set aside these foundational questions and consider particular questions relating to social, political or aesthetic value. Is democracy the only justifiable form of government? What are the obstacles to freedom? How are conflicts between rights to be resolved? What is the point of art?

This area of study provides students with an introduction to some of these questions and the ways in which philosophers have addressed them. Students explore how philosophical methods can be brought to bear on a range of questions regarding value.
Value theory themes

Students study at least two of the following four themes. A range of questions for study are to be selected from the list under each theme. Appropriate questions outside the list can also be included for study. For at least one of the themes selected, students must study one or more primary text/s from the thinkers listed.

1. **On rights and justice**

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:
- What is the basis and justification of rights?
- If there are human rights, then there are certain acts which should be considered right or wrong in themselves independently of their consequences. What determines the content and extent of human rights?
- To what extent are there and should there be constraints on our rights?
- Can an individual, for example, infants, have a right without knowing about it?
- How are conflicts between rights to be resolved?
- What is the relationship between law and morality?
- How are rights related to responsibilities?
- Are we justified in punishing criminals?
- Is the state justified in enforcing moral norms?
- Do only human beings have rights? Do animals have rights? Do communities, cultures or environments have rights?

Thinkers: Mary Woolstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, John Rawls, James Griffin

2. **On liberty and anarchy**

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:
- Is democracy the only justifiable form of polity?
- Is freedom a fundamental human right?
- What are the threats to freedom in the modern world and to what extent should freedom be protected?
- What is the social contract?
- What is the distinction between positive and negative liberty?
- What is the relationship between free markets and free societies?

Thinkers: John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Robert Nozick, Adam Smith, Isaiah Berlin

3. **On aesthetic value**

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:
- What is art?
- What is beauty? Is beauty necessary or even desirable in art?
- What defines the aesthetic? (for example, exploration of such concepts as ‘taste’, ‘aesthetic properties’, ‘aesthetic experience’, ‘aesthetic appreciation’, and their relationship)
- To what extent does art transcend everyday moral categories?
- What is the purpose and value of art?
- Is there a legitimate distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art?
- Is there an interesting distinction to be made between art and craft?
- Can an aesthetic judgment be wrong? Are some aesthetic judgments better or worse than others?

Thinkers: Plato, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, R.G. Collingwood, Arthur Danto, George Dickie
4. On the interpretation of artworks

Questions that may be explored in this theme include:

- What is the relationship between art and philosophy?
- What is the relationship between the meaning of a work and the intentions of its artist?
- What is the relationship between the meaning of an artwork and its context?
- What is the intentionalist fallacy? To what extent is it a fallacy?
- To what extent is a society justified in censoring art?
- How important is originality in the arts? Should we condemn forgeries or even honest copies?
- In what sense can we speak of meaning in non-representational art (for example, music)?
- What is a metaphor? Can we say that a metaphor is ‘true’?
- What is the relationship between a work of art and what it represents?

Thinkers: W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, Arthur Danto, Susan Sontag, Nelson Goodman, Jacques Derrida, Donald Davidson

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse selected problems in value theory, evaluate viewpoints and arguments in response to these problems, and discuss philosophical issues in the context of relevant contemporary debates.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

- debates and questions that arise from exploration of two of the value theory themes listed above
- central viewpoints and arguments associated with the chosen value theory questions as represented in at least one primary text
- definitions of key terms and concepts associated with the chosen value theory themes
- viewpoints and arguments central to the core problems within the chosen value theory themes
- criticisms that can be raised in response to the viewpoints and arguments central to the chosen value theory themes
- the implications of adopting a particular position for relevant contemporary debates associated with the chosen value theory themes.

Key skills

- analyse definitions of key philosophical concepts and questions related to problems in value theory and in the context of relevant contemporary debates
- formulate philosophical questions arising from the problems central to the chosen themes
- outline philosophical viewpoints and arguments associated with the problems central to the chosen themes
- analyse viewpoints and arguments presented in a primary philosophical source and explore the implications of these
- offer justified critical responses to viewpoints and arguments associated with problems central to the chosen themes
- reflect critically on their own viewpoints and arguments relating to value theory
- formulate informed responses to problems in value theory and explain, defend and refine those responses in philosophical exchanges with others
- explain the relationship between relevant contemporary debates and viewpoints and arguments arising in value theory.
AREA OF STUDY 3

Techniques of reasoning
In this area of study students develop their abilities to analyse philosophical arguments, apply techniques of logic, construct and manipulate chains of reasoning, identify and describe reasoning errors, including common fallacies, and analyse and develop analogies in response to philosophical problems.

Outcome 3
On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply methods of philosophical inquiry to the analysis of philosophical viewpoints and arguments, including those in value theory.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge
• techniques of reasoning and argument
• the roles of reasoning and argument, analogy, imagination, emotion and experience in philosophical thinking about ethical and other philosophical problems
• the role of reflective equilibrium as a technique for developing a philosophical position
• key terms associated with philosophical reasoning, including argument, deduction, induction, reason, premise, conclusion, validity, invalidity, soundness, unsoundness, consistency, contradiction, implication, entailment, assumption, standard form, fallacy, syllogism, analogy, metaphor, example, counterexample, counterargument, objection, proposition, claim, assertion, definition, probability, criteria, necessary, sufficient, modus ponens, modus tollens, thought experiment, chained argument, denying the antecedent, affirming the consequent
• recognised patterns of good and bad reasoning including some common syllogisms, and common fallacies such as begging the question/circularity, slippery slope, ad hominem, genetic fallacy, excluded middle, affirming the consequent, is/ought, undistributed middle, and fallacies of ambiguity.

Key skills
• analyse arguments to identify the premises and conclusions, and the relationships between the premises and conclusion, including ‘standard form’ presentation and chains of reasoning
• apply philosophical thinking, including techniques of reason and argument, to analysis of philosophical viewpoints and arguments including those in value theory and related debates
• identify and describe errors of reasoning including the identification of some common fallacies
• use appropriate terminology when analysing and evaluating arguments.

ASSESSMENT
The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on a decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. This decision will be based on the teacher’s assessment of the student’s overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit.

The key knowledge and key skills listed for each outcome should be used for course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes.
Assessment tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. Teachers should select a variety of assessment tasks for their assessment program to reflect the key knowledge and key skills being assessed and to provide for different learning styles.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate achievement of three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass all areas of study.

Demonstration of achievement of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 must be based on the student’s performance on a selection of assessment tasks. Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Assessment tasks for this unit are selected from the following:

- essay
- written analysis
- short-answer responses
- test
- written reflection
- written exercises
- presentations (oral, multimedia)
- dialogue (oral, written).
Unit 3: Minds, bodies and persons

This unit considers basic questions regarding the mind and the self through two key questions: Are human beings more than their bodies? Is there a basis for the belief that an individual remains the same person over time? Students critically compare the viewpoints and arguments put forward in set texts from the history of philosophy to their own views on these questions and to contemporary debates.

It is important for students to understand that arguments make a claim supported by reasons and reasoning, whereas a viewpoint makes a claim without necessarily supporting it with reasons or reasoning. Philosophical debates encompass philosophical questions and associated viewpoints and arguments within other spheres of discourse such as religion, psychology, sociology and politics.

TEXTS FOR UNITS 3 AND 4

In this study the term ‘text’ refers to a complete text or extract/s from a philosophical work.

Texts for Units 3 and 4 will be prescribed annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and are referred to in Units 3 and 4 as ‘set texts’. The prescribed texts for each unit will be published annually in the VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET.

Set texts for Units 3 and 4 will present a range of philosophical viewpoints and arguments. No single set text will cover all the key concepts, viewpoints and arguments, but the set texts as a whole will cover that range.

AREA OF STUDY 1

Minds and bodies

Philosophers often argue over whether everything ultimately can be explained by the laws of physics or whether there are mental events that fall outside physical and causal explanation. In this area of study students explore the ways in which ancient and modern thinkers have deployed the concepts of ‘psyche’ (usually translated as ‘soul’) and ‘mind’ in the context of these debates. From the 6th and 5th centuries BCE, the term psyche was used by ancient thinkers to speak of the distinguishing mark of living things, that is, when exploring what it is that distinguishes a living from a non-living thing. It is not equivalent to modern concepts of the mind nor to what is today commonly thought of as the soul. Students explore the concept of psyche and its relationship to body as found in ancient texts, and the concept of mind and its relationship to body in modern texts.
Students examine the views of those who deny the existence of anything that falls outside the scope of physics, as well as those who have argued that the psyche or the mind is something quite different from the physical body, and can exist independently of it. The set texts are used to provide students with a comparison of viewpoints and arguments and differing interpretations. Students apply their understanding of key concepts and arguments to an investigation of contemporary debates, such as whether there can be artificial intelligence or what the implications of a materialist/physicalist position are for the existence of free will.

**Outcome 1**

On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss concepts relating to the mind, psyche and body, and analyse and evaluate viewpoints and arguments concerning the relationship between the mind and body, and psyche and body, found within and across the set texts and in contemporary debates.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

**Key knowledge**

- what is meant by the concepts mind, psyche and body as they occur within viewpoints and arguments in the set texts
- what is meant by concepts related to mind or psyche and body and their relationship, as they occur in viewpoints and arguments in the set texts
- arguments for and against the notion that the mind or psyche is to be identified with the body and that mental events can be explained as physical events
- historical and contemporary debates related to the concepts of mind or psyche and body and their relationship, and the impact of the development of science on these debates
- implications of different positions on mind or psyche and body for relevant contemporary debates.

**Key skills**

- outline philosophical viewpoints and arguments using appropriate terminology, and identify the premises and conclusions of arguments and the relationships between the premises and conclusions of each argument
- situate the set texts and their viewpoints and arguments in the contexts of relevant historical and contemporary debates and scientific developments
- justify critical responses to philosophical viewpoints using clear and precise language
- offer relevant criticisms of arguments by assessing the plausibility of premises, revealing any assumptions made, showing whether the conclusions follow from the premises, and analysing the potential consequences for positions on the relationship between mind or psyche and body
- critically compare philosophical viewpoints and arguments by assessing the plausibility of the premises or viewpoints, revealing any assumptions made, and examining reasoning used and the potential consequences for debates concerning mind or psyche and body
- apply an understanding of philosophical concepts to the analysis and evaluation of historical and contemporary debates
- critically respond to philosophical viewpoints and arguments in the contexts of relevant historical and contemporary debates and scientific developments.
AREA OF STUDY 2

Personal identity
Starting with John Locke, modern philosophers have explored the question of the continuity of the self. They have attempted to identify the basis on which we say, for example, that an individual is the same person at 80 as they were at 8 years old. Self, in this sense, refers to the way an individual experiences the ‘I’ and in this area of study is referred to as personal identity.

In this area of study students explore selected theories of personal identity and the arguments for and against them, including theories that the continuity of self is illusory. In doing so, students consider the convergences in thinking on this issue between some Western philosophers and thinkers in the Buddhist tradition and the ethical implications of such scepticism about personal identity. Students will consider how thought experiments can be used to explore and challenge theories of personal identity. A range of relevant thought experiments are to be sourced from within the set texts where possible and beyond the set texts as appropriate. Students apply their understanding of philosophical concepts and problems related to personal identity to analyses of contemporary debates such as organ transplants and cloning.

Outcome 2
On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse, compare and evaluate theories of personal identity in the set texts and discuss related contemporary debates.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge
• understanding of key concepts in the set texts relating to discussions of personal identity
• viewpoints, arguments and assumptions made in the set texts concerning the basis of our sense of personal identity
• objections and criticisms that can be raised in response to the viewpoints and arguments proposed in the set texts in relation to personal identity
• a range of thought experiments used by philosophers to explore positions on personal identity
• Western and Buddhist arguments for scepticism about personal identity and the implications of these arguments for questions of moral responsibility
• similarities and differences between viewpoints and arguments on personal identity in the set texts
• contemporary debates related to issues of personal identity
• implications of different positions on personal identity for relevant contemporary debates.

Key skills
• outline philosophical viewpoints and arguments using appropriate terminology and identifying the premises and conclusions of arguments, and the relationships between the premises and conclusions of each argument
• situate the set texts and their viewpoints and arguments in the contexts of historical and contemporary debates relating to personal identity
• justify critical responses to philosophical viewpoints using clear and precise language
• explore the consequences of thought experiments for philosophical positions on personal identity
• offer relevant criticisms of arguments by assessing the plausibility of premises, revealing any assumptions made, showing whether the conclusions follow from the premises, and analysing the potential consequences for positions on personal identity
• critically respond to philosophical viewpoints and arguments in the context of relevant historical and contemporary debates and scientific developments
• critically compare viewpoints and arguments in the set texts
• apply an understanding of philosophical concepts to analysis and evaluation of contemporary debates.

ASSESSMENT

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on a decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. This decision will be based on the teacher’s assessment of the student’s overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook for this study that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

The key knowledge and key skills listed for each outcome should be used for course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 3 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework and an end-of-year examination.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 25 per cent.

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 50 per cent.

School-assessed Coursework

Teachers will provide to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority a score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement.

The score must be based on the teacher’s rating of performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table and in accordance with the assessment handbook published online by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The assessment handbook also includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

Assessment tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. Where teachers provide a range of options for the same assessment task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand. Teachers should select a variety of assessment tasks for their program to reflect the key knowledge and key skills being assessed and to provide for different learning styles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Marks allocated*</th>
<th>Assessment tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Outcome 1** | 50 | The student’s performance on each outcome is assessed by:  
  - at least one essay  
  - and at least one of the following:  
    - short-answer responses  
    - test  
    - written analysis  
    - written exercises  
    - written reflection  
    - dialogue (oral, written)  
    - presentation (oral, multimedia). |
| **Outcome 2** | 50 | Analyse, compare and evaluate theories of personal identity in the set texts and discuss related contemporary debates. |
| **Total marks** | **100** | |

*School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 contributes 25 per cent.*
Unit 4: The good life

This unit considers the crucial question of what it is for a human to live well. What does an understanding of human nature tell us about what it is to live well? What is the role of happiness in a well lived life? Is morality central to a good life? How does our social context impact on our conception of a good life? In this unit, students explore texts by both ancient and modern philosophers that have had a significant impact on contemporary western ideas about the good life.

Students critically compare the viewpoints and arguments in set texts from both ancient and modern periods to their own views on how we should live, and use their understandings to inform their analysis of contemporary debates.

It is important for students to understand that arguments make a claim supported by reasons and reasoning, whereas a viewpoint makes a claim without necessarily supporting it with reasons or reasoning. Philosophical debates encompass philosophical questions and associated viewpoints and arguments within other spheres of discourse such as religion, psychology, sociology and politics.

TEXTS FOR UNITS 3 AND 4

In this study the term ‘text’ refers to a complete text or extract/s from a philosophical work.

Texts for Units 3 and 4 will be prescribed annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and are referred to in Units 3 and 4 as ‘set texts’. The prescribed texts for each unit will be published annually in the VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET.

Set texts for Units 3 and 4 will present a range of philosophical viewpoints and arguments. No single set text will cover the full range of key concepts, viewpoints and arguments, but the set texts as a whole will cover that range.

AREA OF STUDY 1

Conceptions of the good life

This area of study exposes students to philosophical debates and perspectives on the nature of the good life through a study of philosophical texts from ancient, modern and contemporary sources. As they reflect on the implications of accepting the views and arguments presented by these thinkers, they develop their own critical responses to the authors’ viewpoints and arguments.
Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse, compare and evaluate the philosophical viewpoints and arguments in the set texts in relation to the good life.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

**Key knowledge**

- concepts used in discussion of the good life generally, including morality, happiness, human nature, values, hedonism, egoism, freedom, pleasure, pain, teleology, virtue, altruism, wisdom, ontology, self-restraint, justice, equality, duty, praise and blame
- concepts used in the set texts in discussion of the good life
- the influence of the social, historical and philosophical context on the viewpoints and arguments in the set texts
- assumptions made and viewpoints and arguments proposed in the set texts relating to these general questions:
  - What, if anything, does an understanding of human nature tell us about the good life?
  - What does the good life have to do with being morally good?
  - What is the nature of happiness and what is its role in the good life?
  - What is the relationship between the good life for an individual and for broader society?
- objections and criticisms that can be raised in response to the viewpoints and arguments proposed in relation to questions on the good life in the set texts
- similarities and differences between the viewpoints and arguments on the nature of the good life in the set texts
- objections and criticisms that can be raised when critically comparing the viewpoints and arguments on the good life in the set texts.

**Key skills**

- outline philosophical viewpoints using appropriate terminology
- recognise arguments, identifying the premises, conclusions, and any assumptions made
- identify and evaluate the relationship between the premise and conclusion of each argument
- justify critical responses to philosophical viewpoints on the good life using clear and precise language
- critically compare viewpoints and arguments offered in the set texts
- offer relevant criticisms of arguments by assessing the plausibility of premises, revealing any assumptions made, showing whether the conclusions follow from the premises, and analysing the potential consequences for the good life.

**Area of Study 2**

**Living the good life in the twenty-first century**

An important aspect of the study of philosophical texts is the light that they can shed on contemporary questions and debates.

In this area of study students develop and justify responses to debates on consumerism, technology and our obligations to others in relation to the good life. They explore the interplay between the changing conditions of contemporary life and our ability to live a good life, considering how the strength of the interplay is dependent not only on the nature of developments in contemporary life but on the conception of the good life.
For the purposes of this area of study, the term technology can be interpreted broadly to refer to current or potential technologies in the public discourse and go beyond information and communications technology to consider, for example, bio-enhancements and other potential developments in medical science, the use of robotics or other technological developments. Similarly, an exploration of consumerism provides an opportunity to consider affluenza, conspicuous consumption or other contemporary debates. In developing their responses, students apply any relevant concepts, viewpoints and arguments from Area of Study 1 and can also draw on other philosophical sources on the good life.

Outcome 2
On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss contemporary debates related to the good life and the interplay between social and technological developments and conceptions of the good life.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge
• philosophical concepts, viewpoints and arguments, and objections and criticisms relating to these interrelated debates:
  – To what extent does consumerism support or undermine our ability to live a good life?
  – To what extent must our conception of the good life be responsive to the needs and claims of others individually, locally, nationally and globally?
  – To what extent does technology enhance or undermine our ability to live a good life?
• influences that social and technological developments and conceptions of the good life may have and ought to have on each other.

Key skills
• locate viewpoints and arguments on the nature of the good life in a range of sources
• identify the philosophical assumptions underlying viewpoints and arguments
• outline philosophical viewpoints and arguments found in and related to contemporary debates on the good life
• evaluate viewpoints and arguments proposed in contemporary debates regarding the good life
• evaluate the interplay between conceptions of the good life and social and technological developments
• apply concepts, arguments and examples drawn from philosophical sources to support critical reflection
• interpret and synthesise source material
• formulate and defend a reasoned philosophical response using precise language.

ASSESSMENT
The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on a decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. This decision will be based on the teacher’s assessment of the student’s overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook for this study that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

The key knowledge and key skills listed for each outcome should be used for course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes.
Assessment of levels of achievement

The student’s level of achievement for Unit 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework and an end-of-year examination.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 25 per cent.

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 50 per cent.

School-assessed Coursework

Teachers will provide to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority a score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement.

The score must be based on the teacher’s rating of performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table and in accordance with the assessment handbook published online by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The assessment handbook also includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

Assessment tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. Where teachers provide a range of options for the same assessment task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand. Teachers should select a variety of assessment tasks for their program to reflect the key knowledge and key skills being assessed and to provide for different learning styles.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>The student’s performance on each outcome is assessed by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse, compare and evaluate the philosophical viewpoints and arguments in the set texts in relation to the good life.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>• at least one essay</td>
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<td>and at least one of the following:</td>
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<td>• short-answer responses</td>
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<td>• dialogue (oral, written)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcome 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss contemporary debates related to the good life and the interplay between social and technological developments and conceptions of the good life.</td>
<td>40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total marks 100

*School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 contributes 25 per cent.
End-of-year examination

Description
The examination will be set by a panel appointed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.

Conditions
The examination will be completed under the following conditions:

• Duration: two hours.
• Date: end-of-year, on a date to be published annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
• Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook.
• The examination will be marked by assessors appointed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Contribution to final assessment
The examination will contribute 50 per cent.

Further advice
The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes specifications for all VCE examinations on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority website. Examination specifications include details about the sections of the examination, their weighting, the question format/s and any other essential information. The specifications are published in the first year of implementation of the revised Units 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.