

Tutorial Letter 101/3/2025

Introduction to Western Philosophy PLS1501

Semesters 1 and 2

**Department of Philosophy, Practical &
Systematic Theology**

This tutorial letter contains important information about your module.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Dear Student

Welcome to the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology and to the module Introduction to Western Philosophy (PLS1501). We trust that you will find this module intellectually and philosophically stimulating. This module is offered on a semester basis and the tutorial letter contains information for Semester 1 and Semester 2. Assignments for the two Semesters are different and you must always refer to the correct Semester you are registered for. This tutorial letter is an important document which you must read and refer to for the entire duration of this module. It acts as your guide in the successful completion of this module. It outlines the study units to be covered and the estimated amount of time you may devote to each unit. However, you should remember that this is only a guide and your success in this module will depend on the amount of time you yourself set aside to study. As you plan your study program, you should always take into consideration important dates such as the due dates for assignments and of course the date for the final examination. At the end of each study unit, there are self-test questions you must attempt in order to measure your own understanding of the topic, but these should not be submitted for marking.

Unisa is a comprehensive open distance e-learning (CODEL) higher education institution. Our comprehensive curricula encapsulate a range of offerings, from strictly vocational to strictly academic certificates, diplomas and degrees. Unisa's "openness" and its distance eLearning character result in many students who may not previously have had an opportunity to enrol in higher education registering at the University. Our CODEL character implies that our programmes are carefully planned and structured to ensure success for students, ranging from the under-prepared but with potential to those who are sufficiently prepared.

Teaching and learning in a CODEL context involves multiple modes of delivery, ranging from blended to fully online learning. As a default position, all post-graduate programmes are offered fully online with no printed study materials, while undergraduate programmes are offered using a blended mode of delivery where printed study materials are augmented with online teaching and learning via the learner management system, myUnisa. In some instances, undergraduate programmes are offered fully online as well.

Furthermore, our programmes are aligned with the vision, mission and values of the University. Unisa's commitment to serving humanity and shaping futures – combined with a clear appreciation of our location on the African continent – means that Unisa's graduates have distinctive graduate qualities, which include:

- being independent, resilient, responsible and caring citizens able to fulfil and serve in multiple roles in their immediate and future local, national and global communities
- having a critical understanding of their location on the African continent and taking account of its histories, challenges and potential in relation to globally diverse contexts
- the ability to critically analyse and evaluate the credibility and usefulness of information and data from multiple sources in a globalised world with ever-increasing information and data flows and competing worldviews

- how to apply their discipline-specific knowledges competently, ethically and creatively to solve real-life problems
- an awareness of their own learning and developmental needs and future potential

This module is offered as a blended module.

Whether a module is offered either as blended (meaning that we use a combination of printed and online material to engage with you) or online (all information is available via the internet), we use myUnisa as our virtual campus. This is an online system that is used to administer, document and deliver educational material to you and support engagement with you. Look out for information from your lecturer as well as other Unisa platforms to determine how to access the virtual myUnisa module site. Information on the tools that will be available to engage with your lecturer and fellow students to support your learning will also be communicated via various platforms.

You are encouraged to log into the module site on myUnisa regularly (that is, at least twice per week).

The study material for this module comprises of the following:

1. **Tutorial Letter 101:** which is this Tutorial Letter you are reading now. It contains all the important information and guidelines on completing this module. Please read it carefully.
2. **Tutorial Letter 301:** It contains guidelines on writing a philosophical essay and referencing which is required for all assignments.
3. **Tutorial Letter 501:** This serves as the Study guide for this Module.
4. There is **no prescribed textbook for this module**. Read the Study Guide. Only additional readings are provided in the study units.
5. Other Tutorial Letters on assignment feedback and any other important information that may need to be communicated will be posted online once these are available and an announcement will be made on myUnisa to that effect.

Because this is a fully online module, you will need to use myUnisa to study and complete the prescribed learning activities. Visit the website for PLS1501 on myUnisa frequently. The website for your module is PLS1501-25-S1 or PLS1501-25-S2 depending on your Semester.

We wish you every success with your studies!

2 PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES

2.1 Purpose

To introduce you to philosophy and specifically to the history, figures, problems, and themes in Western philosophy.

To help you develop an awareness of philosophical issues in the academic environment.

To help you develop critical skills necessary for the systematic study, analysis, and evaluation of philosophical arguments.

To help you apply these reflective skills to real life situations in the world in which we live.

2.2 Outcomes

Once you have completed this module, you will have the theoretical competence necessary for undertaking more advanced philosophical studies.

More specifically, you will

- a) Understand the basic theoretical frameworks and dimensions of philosophical thinking.
- b) Develop skills to think systematically and to construct philosophical arguments and counter arguments.
- c) Develop a critical philosophical attitude which will give you the skills to assess various philosophical positions.
- d) Be able to deal with arguments of increasing complexity.

3 CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

Unisa has implemented a transformation charter that places curriculum transformation high on the teaching and learning agenda. Curriculum transformation includes student-centred scholarship, the pedagogical renewal of teaching and assessment practices, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and the infusion of African epistemologies and philosophies. All of these are being phased in at both programme and module levels. As a result of this, you will notice a marked change in the teaching and learning strategy implemented by Unisa, together with the way in which the content is conceptualised in your modules. We encourage you to embrace these changes during your studies at Unisa, responsively and within the framework of transformation.

4 LECTURER(S) AND CONTACT DETAILS

4.1 Lecturer(s)

Prof P Mungwini

Email: mungwp@unisa.ac.za

Phone: 0124296317

Office 9-102 Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Building

Muckleneuk Campus, Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge

Pretoria

4.2 Department

You can contact our administrative officer.

Ms. Petronela Sekhukhune

Office: 9-51 Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Building

Muckleneuk Campus, Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge

Pretoria, South Africa

PO Box 392, UNISA, 0003, South Africa

Phone: +27 12 429 6888

Email: sekhunp@unisa.ac.za

4.3 University

University of South Africa

Contact addresses of the various administrative departments appear on the Unisa website:

<http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Contact-us/Student-enquiries>.

Please include your student number in all correspondence.

5 RESOURCES

5.1 Prescribed book(s)

There is no prescribed book for this module.

5.2 Recommended book(s)

There are recommended books for the module.

5.3 Electronic reserves (e-reserves)

There are no e-reserves for this module.

5.4 Library services and resources

The Unisa Library offers a range of information services and resources and has made numerous library guides available at <http://libguides.unisa.ac.za>


Recommended guides:

- For brief information on the library, go to <https://www.unisa.ac.za/library/libatglance>
- For more detailed library information, go to <http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Library>
- For Frequently Asked Questions, go to <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Library/Frequently-Asked-Questions>
- For research support and services such as the Personal Librarian service and the Information Search Librarian's Literature Search Request (on your research topic) service, go to <http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Library/Library-services/Research-support>
- For library training for undergraduate students, go to <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Library/Library-services/Training>

- For Lending Services, go to <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Library/Library-services/Lending-services>
- For Services for Postgraduate students, go to <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Library/Services-for-Postgraduates>
- For Support and Services for students with disabilities, go to <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Library/Services-for-students-with-special-needs>
- For Library Technology Support, go to <https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/techsupport>
- For information on finding and using library resources and tools, go to http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/Research_skills
- For an A–Z list of library databases, go to <https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/az.php>

Important contact information:

- Technical problems encountered in accessing library online services: Lib-help@unisa.ac.za
- General library-related queries: Library-enquiries@unisa.ac.za
- Queries related to library fines and payments: Library-fines@unisa.ac.za
- Interlibrary loan service for postgraduate students: libr-ill@unisa.ac.za
- Literature Search Service: Lib-search@unisa.ac.za
- Social media channels: Facebook: UnisaLibrary and X Twitter: @UnisaLibrary

To view the Library orientation video – please click here :  [Unisa Library and Information Services Video 1_1 \(2\).mp4](#)

6 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The *Study @ Unisa* brochure is available on myUnisa at www.unisa.ac.za/brochures/studies

This brochure contains important information and guidelines for successful studies through Unisa.

If you need assistance concerning the myModules system, you are welcome to use the following contact details:

- Toll-free landline: 0800 00 1870 (Select option 07 for myModules)
- E-mail: mymodule22@unisa.ac.za or myUnisaHelp@unisa.ac.za

You can access and view short videos on topics such as how to view your calendar, how to access module content, how to view announcements for modules, how to submit assessments and how to participate in forum activities by visiting <https://dtls-ga.unisa.ac.za/course/view.php?id=32130>

Registered Unisa students receive a free myLife e-mail account. Important information, notices and updates are sent exclusively to this account.

Please claim your e-mail account immediately after registering at Unisa by following this link: <https://www.unisa.ac.za/static/myunisa/Content/Announcements/Documents/Claim-myUnisa-myLife-Nov-2017.pdf> Note that it can take up to 24 hours for your account to be activated after you have claimed it.

Your myLife account is the **only** e-mail account recognised by Unisa for official correspondence between you and the University and it will remain your official primary e-mail address on record at Unisa.

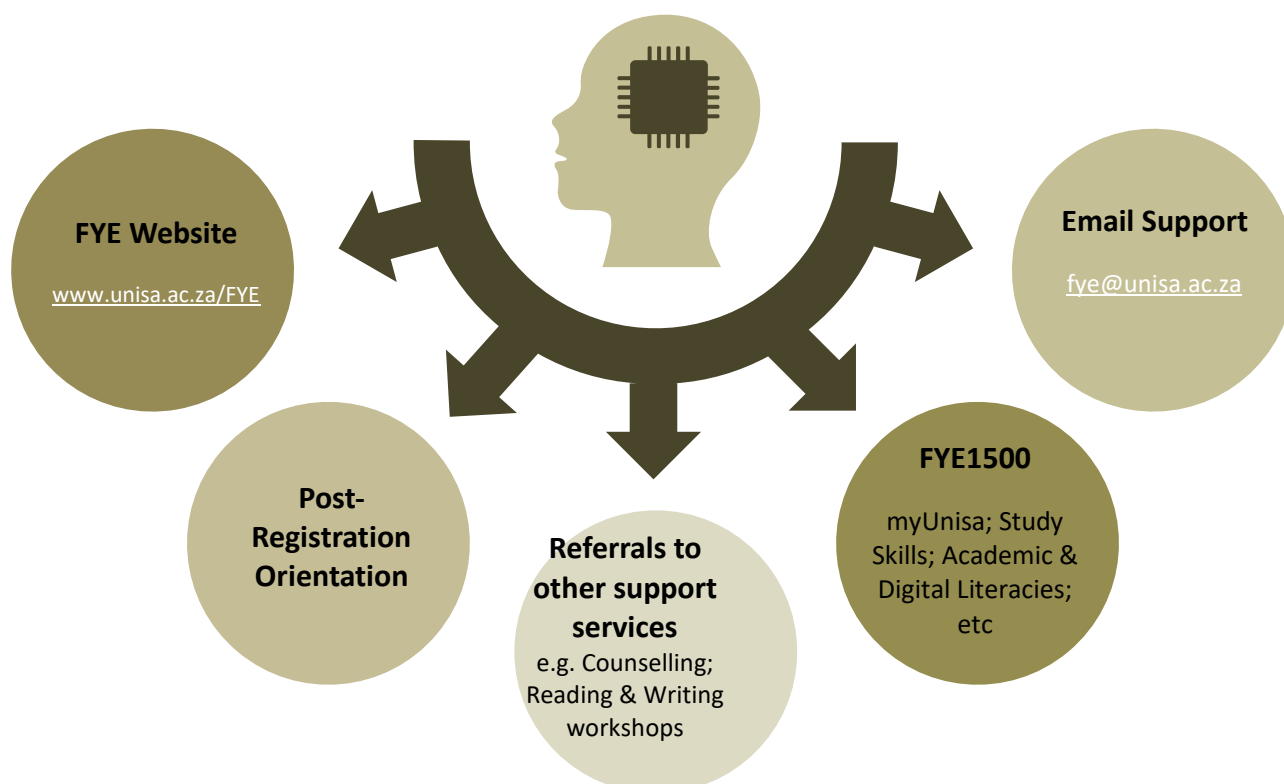
You remain responsible for the management of this e-mail account.

6.1 The Unisa First-Year Experience Programme

Many students find the transition from school education to tertiary education stressful and this is often true for students enrolling at Unisa for the first time. Unisa is a dedicated open distance and e-learning institution and is very different from face-to-face/contact institutions. It is a mega university, and all its programmes are offered through either blended learning or fully online learning. For these reasons, we offer first-time students additional/extended support to help them navigate the Unisa teaching and learning journey seamlessly and with little difficulty and few barriers.

Unisa's First-Year Experience (FYE) Programme has been specially designed to provide you with prompt and helpful information about the services that the institution offers.

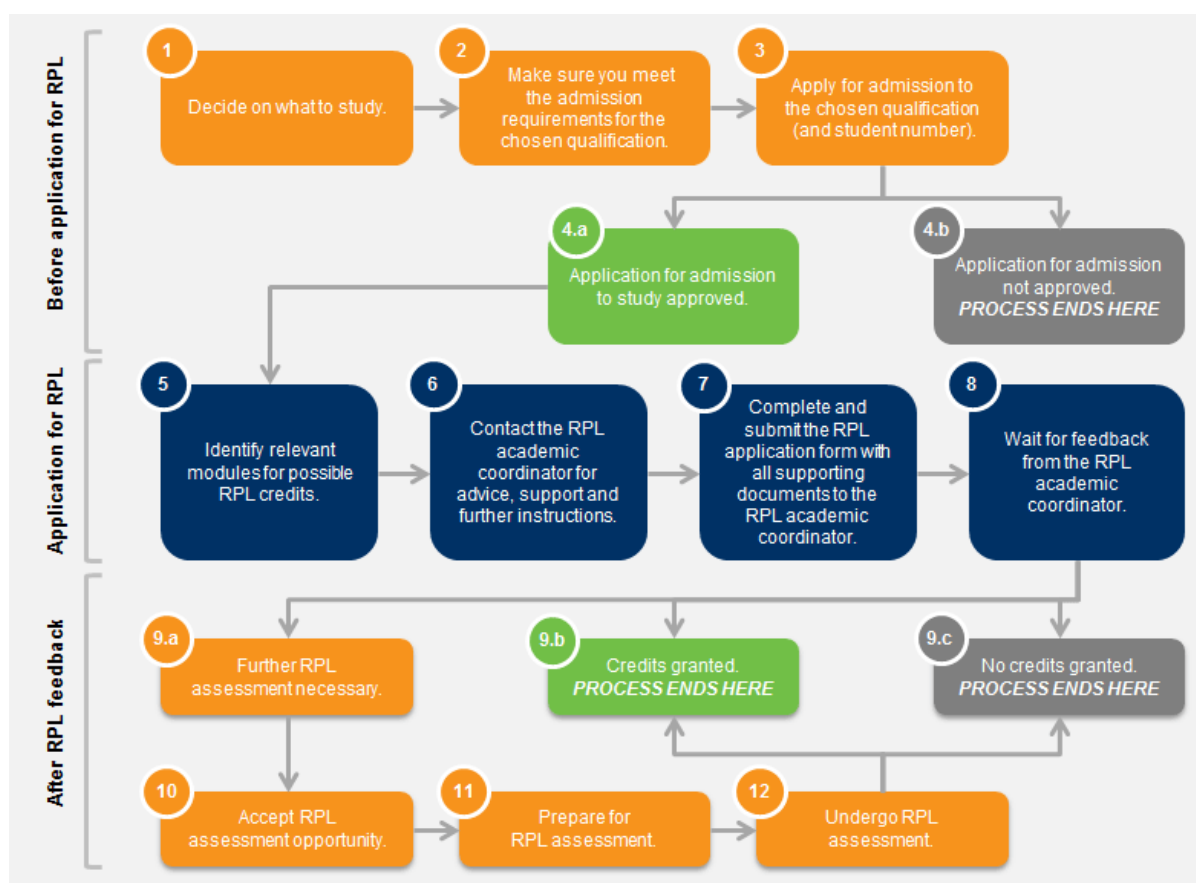
The following FYE services are currently available:



To ensure that you do not miss out on important academic and support communication from the SRU, please check your myLife inbox regularly.

6.2 Using Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to apply for module credit within a qualification.

Now that you are a registered student, you are advised to familiarise yourself with the learning outcomes of the module or modules you have chosen. If you have been exposed to those learning outcomes for three years or more – either through work experience or other involvement – you can apply to be exempted from completing assignments and writing examinations. As part of your application for this exemption, you will be required to compile a portfolio of evidence substantiating how your experience is equivalent to the learning outcomes. The diagram below shows the steps involved in obtaining recognition of prior learning (RPL) for module credit. For more information on the process, RPL fees, and the contact details of your college RPL coordinator, visit the Unisa website: www.unisa.ac.za/rpl



7 STUDY PLAN

Semester 1

Study Unit 1: Conquest and the history of Western philosophical education in South Africa. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501. Activity: Attempt the Self-test questions in the unit.	10 notional hours January 30 - 3 February
Study Unit 2: The Pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.	20 notional hours

Reading: Tutorial Letter 501 Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	6 February -17 February
Study Unit 3: Medieval Philosophy- Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501 Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	20 notional hours 20 February - 2 March
Study Unit 4: Greeks II Plato and Aristotle's Ethical Theories. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501. Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	20 notional hours 5 March -16 March
Study Unit 5: Medieval Ethics- Augustine and Aquinas. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501. Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	20 notional hours 2 April - 13 April
Study Unit 6: The Greeks III- Political Philosophy. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501. Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	20 notional hours 16 April - 27 April
Revision and Preparation for Examinations.	

Semester 2

Study Unit 1: Conquest and the history of Western philosophical education in South Africa. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501. Activity: Attempt the Self-test questions in the unit.	10 notional hours 2 July - 6 July
Study Unit 2: The Pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501 Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	20 notional hours 9 July - 20 July

Study Unit 3: Medieval Philosophy- Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501 Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	20 notional hours 23 July - 3 August
Study Unit 4: Greeks II Plato and Aristotle's Ethical Theories. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501. Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	20 notional hours 6 August - 17 August
Study Unit 5: Medieval Ethics- Augustine and Aquinas. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501. Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	20 notional hours 20 August - 31 August
Study Unit 6: The Greeks III- Political Philosophy. Reading: Tutorial Letter 501. Activity: Attempt the self-test questions in the unit.	20 notional hours 3 Sept - 14 September
Revision and Preparation for Examinations.	

Remember that this is only a suggested study plan, the assignment questions and their due dates must also guide you on which topics to read first so that you can be able to respond adequately to the questions.

8 PRACTICAL WORK

There is no practical work.

9 ASSESSMENT

9.1 Assessment criteria

During the semester, you will be required to write and submit two assignments which will be assessed following the criteria outlined below. This will be followed by a written examination at the end of each semester. Your essay in philosophy should comprise of the following:

Introduction	Is there an introduction? Does it spell out the aims of the essay? Does it shed light on the critical aspects of the question and key concepts-typical of philosophy?
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Body	Is the philosophical theme, concept, or problem adequately explained? Are the arguments clearly presented and supported? Does the presentation satisfy the philosophical tenets of coherence, clarity, and consistency? Has the student demonstrated a good knowledge of the reading material? Does the student make use of scholars to support his/her own ideas? Has appropriate content been covered and communicated properly? Analysis and evaluation of arguments: has the student made any effort to go beyond the text and make his/her own meaningful philosophical contribution and or analysis?
Conclusion	Is there a conclusion that sums up the major argument in the essay?
Referencing	Are all materials that have been consulted properly referenced? Is the referencing system chosen being used consistently throughout the essay (whether endnotes; footnotes or in-text referencing) and bibliography?
Overall impression	The essay's overall impression, from well thought out sub-headings, paragraphing, pagination, and font size. Has the student adhered to the prescribed essay length?

9.2 Assessment plan

- To complete this module, you will be required to submit Two assignments. Both assignments contribute to the year mark and are therefore **mandatory**. If a student fails to submit a mandatory assignment, no mark is awarded and the year mark is calculated accordingly. The student will therefore forfeit the marks attached to this assignment when the final mark for the module is calculated. The weight of assignment 1&2 is the same.
For example, if you get in Assignment 1- 60% + Assignment 2- 80% = 70% (final mark).
If you submit only one assignment, then the calculation will be as follows:
Assignment 1- 60% + 0% (for assignment 2) = 30% (final mark).
Therefore, make sure that you submit both assignments.
- All information about when and where to submit your assignments will be made available to you via the myModules site for your module.
- Due dates for assignments, as well as the actual assignments, will be available on the myModules site for this module.
- To gain admission to the examination, you will be required to submit one assignment.
- The assignment weighting for the module is 40%.
- You will receive examination information via the myModules sites. Please watch out for announcements on how examinations for the modules for which you are registered will be conducted.
- The examination will count 60% towards the final module mark.

9.3 Assessment/assignment due dates

- There are no assessment/assignment **due dates** included in this tutorial letter.

- Assessment/assignment due dates will be made available to you on the myUnisa landing page for this module. We envisage that the due dates will be available to you upon registration.
- Please start working on your assessments as soon as you register for the module.
- Log on to the myUnisa site for this module to obtain more information on the due dates for the submission of the assessments/assignments.

9.4 Submission of assessments/assignments

- Unisa, as a comprehensive open distance e-learning institution (**CODEL**), is moving towards becoming an online institution. You will see, therefore, that all your study material, assessments and engagements with your lecturer and fellow students will take place online. To facilitate this, we use myUnisa as our virtual campus.
- The myUnisa virtual campus offers students access to the **myModules site**, where learning material is available online and where assessments should be completed. Together, myUnisa and myModules form an online system that is used to administer, document, and deliver educational material to students and support engagement between those students and Unisa's academics.
- The myUnisa platform can be accessed via <https://my.unisa.ac.za>. Click on the myModules 2025 button to access the online sites for the modules that you are registered for.
- The University undertakes to communicate clearly and as frequently as is necessary to ensure that you obtain the greatest benefit from your use of the myModules learning management system. Please access the Announcements on your myModules site regularly, as this is where your lecturer will post important information to be shared with you.
- When you access your myModules site for the module/s you are registered for, you will see a welcome message posted by your lecturer. Below the welcome message you will see the assessment shells for the assessments that you need to complete. Some assessments may be multiple choice, some may be tests and others may be written assessments/assignments, while some may be forum discussions and so on. All assessments must be completed on the assessment shells available on the respective module platforms.
- To complete quiz assessments, please log on to the module site where you need to complete the assessment. Click on the relevant assessment shell (Assessment 1, Assessment 2, etc.). There will be a date recorded there telling you when the assessment will open for you. When the assessment is open, access the quiz online and complete it within the time available to you. Quiz assessment questions are not included in this tutorial letter (Tutorial Letter 101) and are made available online only. You must therefore access and complete the quiz online where it has been created.
- It is not advisable to use a cellphone to complete quizzes and you should please use a desktop computer, tablet or laptop for this task. Students who use cellphones find it difficult to navigate the **Online Assessment** tool on the small screen and often struggle to navigate between questions and successfully complete the quizzes.

In addition, cellphones are more vulnerable to dropped internet connections than other devices. **If at all possible, please do not use a cellphone for this assessment type.**

- For written assessments/assignments, please note the due date by which your work must be submitted. Ensure that you follow the guidelines given by your lecturer to complete the assessment/assignment. Click on the submission button on the relevant assessment shell on myModules. You will then be able to upload your written assessment to the myModules site for the modules that you are registered for. Before you finalise the upload, double-check that you have selected the correct file for uploading. Remember, no marks can be allocated for incorrectly submitted assessments/assignments.

9.4.1 Types of assignments and descriptions

All assignments are defined as either optional, mandatory, compulsory, or elective.

- **Elective assignments**
 - If not submitted, the student gets no mark for this item.
 - The best of the required submissions will count.
- **Mandatory assignments**
 - If not submitted, the student gets no mark for this item.
- **Optional assignments** – You are encouraged, as a student, to do optional assignments in order to benefit your learning.

I. Elective assignments

- a. The student is given a choice of which assignments within an identified group to submit and only the best result/s, the number of which is specified in advance, will contribute towards the year mark.
- b. Elective assignments must be grouped into an elective group.
- c. For the student to select which assignment to submit, the elective assignments must be grouped together. For such an elective group, relevant information (such as how many of the assignments must be submitted and how many of the assignment marks should be combined into the year mark) will be supplied to you.
- d. The selection criteria define how marks received for assignments in an elective group are to be combined into the year mark. Three different criteria may be used for calculating the year mark:
 - The best mark should be used, or
 - If the student submits fewer than the required number of assignments per group, or no assignment in a group, a mark of 0% will be used.
 - 0% is awarded to all non-submitted or unmarked assessments. A best mark is then calculated from all the qualifying items submitted.

II. Mandatory assessments/assignments

- a. Mandatory assessments/assignments contribute to the year mark.
- b. If a student fails to submit a mandatory assignment, no mark is awarded and the year mark is calculated accordingly. The student will therefore forfeit the marks attached to such an assignment when the final mark for the module is calculated.

- iii. **Optional assessments assignments** – You are encouraged, as a student, to do optional assessments/assignments in order to benefit your learning.

9.5 The assessments/assignments

As indicated in section 9.2, you need to complete Two assessments/assignments for this module. Details of the tasks set will appear on the assessments/assignments themselves.

There are no assignments included in this tutorial letter. Assignments and due dates will be made available to you on myModules for this module. We envisage that the due dates will be available to you upon registration.

9.6 Other assessment methods

There are no other assessment methods.

9.7 The examination

Examination information and details on the format of the examination will be made available to you online via the myUnisa site. Look out for information that will be shared with you by your lecturer and e-tutors (where relevant), as well as for communication from the University.

9.7.1 *Invigilation/proctoring*

Since 2020, Unisa has conducted all its assessments online. Given the stringent requirements imposed by professional bodies, as well as increased solicitation of Unisa's students by third parties to unlawfully assist them with the completion of assignments and examinations, the University is obliged to assure the integrity of its assessment integrity by using various proctoring tools: Turnitin, Moodle Proctoring, the Invigilator App and IRIS. These tools authenticate the student's identity and flag suspicious behaviour to assure the credibility of their responses during assessments. The description below is for your benefit as you may encounter any or all of these in your registered modules:

Turnitin is plagiarism software that facilitates checks for originality in students' submissions against internal and external sources. Turnitin assists in identifying academic fraud and ghostwriting. Students are expected to submit **typed** responses when using the Turnitin software.

The **Moodle Proctoring tool** is facial recognition software that authenticates students' identities during their Quiz assessments. This tool requires access to a student's **mobile or laptop camera**. Students must ensure that their cameras are activated in their browser settings prior to starting their assessments.

The Invigilator is a mobile application-based service that verifies the identity of an assessment participant. The Invigilator app detects student dishonesty-by-proxy and ensures that the assessment participant is the student registered for the module concerned. This invigilation tool requires students to download the app from the Google Play Store (Android devices), the Huawei AppGallery (Huawei devices) or the Apple App Store (Apple devices) on their **camera-enabled** mobile devices prior to their assessment.

The **IRIS Invigilation** software verifies the identity of a student during assessment and provides for both manual and automated facial verification. It can record and review a student's assessment session and it flags suspicious behaviour by the student for review by an academic administrator. The IRIS software requires installation on students' **webcam-enabled laptop devices**.

Students who are identified and flagged for suspicious or dishonest behaviour arising from the invigilation and proctoring reports will be referred to the disciplinary office for formal proceedings.

Please note:

Students must refer to their module assessment information on their myModule sites to determine which proctoring or invigilation tool will be used for their formative and summative assessments.

PLEASE NOTE: Turnitin will be activated for assignments in PLS1501. As a result, all assignments must be submitted as typed assignments and not handwritten.

10 ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

10.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of taking the words, ideas and thoughts of others and presenting them as your own. It is a form of theft. Plagiarism includes the following forms of academic dishonesty:

- Copying and pasting from any source without acknowledging that source.
- Not including references or deliberately inserting incorrect bibliographic information.
- Paraphrasing without acknowledging the source of the information.

10.2 Cheating

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Completing assessments on behalf of another student, copying the work of another student during an assessment, or allowing another student to copy your work.
- Using social media (e.g. WhatsApp, Telegram) or other platforms to disseminate assessment information.
- Submitting corrupt or irrelevant files. (This matter is addressed in the examination guidelines.)
- Buying completed answers from so-called “tutors” or internet sites (contract cheating).

10.3 For more information about plagiarism, follow the link below:

<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Study-@-Unisa/Student-values-and-rules>

11 STUDENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

The Advocacy and Resource Centre for Students with Disabilities (ARCSWiD) provides an opportunity for staff to interact with first-time and returning students with disabilities.

If you are a student with a disability and would like additional support, or if you need additional time for assignments/assessments, you are invited to contact your lecturer Prof P Mungwini, Email: mungwp@unisa.ac.za to discuss the assistance that you need.

12 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The *Study @ Unisa* website provides you with relevant study information.

13 SOURCES CONSULTED

Refer to the reference list in the Study guide.

14 IN CLOSING

This tutorial letter contains important information for the successful completion of this module, refer to it always. We would like to thank you for choosing Philosophy. It is our hope that the module will improve your ability to engage critically and to contribute meaningfully to society.

15 ADDENDUM

There is no addendum.