

Philosophy of the Human Person

Phil 1311

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Office and Hours: Monday 2:00pm-3:00pm, Wednesday 12:30pm-1:30pm, or by appointment

Course Description

What in the world is philosophy? And who are you, human being, to ask? Stick around, and, hopefully, we'll discover not only interesting, but accurate answers to these questions. This course is both introductory and topic-specific. As an introduction, the course will familiarize you with philosophical argumentation and the written work of influential philosophers, as well as provide a narrative of the development of philosophy from ancient times to contemporary. As topic-specific, the course will explore the subject of human nature. Are human beings bodies or do they *have* bodies? Does the soul exist, and, if so, what is it? What makes human beings different from other animals? Can any animal survive death? What exactly are the senses and how do they work? How do they differ from imagination, will, and thought? What sorts of necessities are involved in being human and in what sense can we say that we are free? What is human happiness and virtue, and why bother to live a virtuous life? What is the nature of evil, and what are its origins? All of these questions and more will be discussed in this course. Because the course does double duty as an intro and a detailed look at the human person, not everything we will read will have human nature as its immediate subject, but everything we will read will have some important connection to it. One of our tasks will be to discuss what exactly those connections are. Hopefully, we'll not only gain in knowledge of the history of philosophy, but in human wisdom. The English word "philosophy" is from the Greek word "φιλοσοφία"—"the love of wisdom." At the very least, I hope to lead you to possess a little bit of that love—to develop a taste for thinking carefully, for questioning things that have always seemed obvious to you, and for imagining different possibilities.

Required Texts

Plato: Five Dialogues (2nd Edition). Trans., G.M.A. Grube. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. (2002). ISBN13: 978-0872206335

All other reading materials—marked with an *—will be distributed to the class

Assignments and Academic Policies

Written Assignments: There will be two paper assignments over the course of the semester and a final exam, the length of which will be announced at the handing out of the paper prompt. Each paper and the final are weighted equally (20% each). They are graded for substance (understanding the prompt, answering the prompt, producing good arguments, etc.), as well as for the quality of writing (grammar, usage, organization, style, etc.). For the sake of fairness, do not exceed the length limit of any assignment. You should not need to make use of outside sources for any assignment. Papers are due at the beginning of class, in hard copy, on the Friday of the week that they are due. The final exam is due at the end of the examination period on the day of the final. **Late work will be penalized.**

Participation Assignments: There are two independent participation assignments each worth 20% of the final grade—viz. **1) Discussion Participation** and **2) Reading Participation**. Participation points are not free points, so read these two sections below carefully.

Discussion Participation: This participation assignment measures your engagement in terms of philosophical discussion. The best scores will go to students who show a sustained pattern of thoughtful contribution and questioning in class, especially if that contribution demonstrates that you have read the assigned material diligently. This can take the form of asking questions to me or other students, answering questions that I ask you by offering your interpretation of a text, producing or analyzing arguments, comparing different texts, etc. **You must bring to class the text we are reading each day to receive discussion participation credit.** If the assignment is from an electronic text that I distribute, you should print it out and bring it to class. Class attendance is an essential part of Discussion Participation. Only university required absences will be excused. You must bring me a hard copy of your absence note (i.e. no emailed notes) in order to receive an excused absence. Unexcused absences will result in Discussion Participation penalties.

Reading Participation: This participation assignment measures your engagement with the assigned readings. You are expected to read all of the assigned texts carefully and completely. As few as ten times this semester or as many as each class period, I will give you a quiz question(s) that you must answer in a short period of time. Your Reading Participation score will be based on your answers to these quizzes, which will receive standard letter grades (one point above the lowest score for a given grade). If you've done the reading carefully and completely you should not have too difficult a time offering good answers to the questions you'll be asked. These quizzes are not designed to test philosophical expertise, so much as whether you are doing the readings and understanding them at a basic level. There are no make-up quizzes. Your two lowest quiz scores will be dropped at the end of the semester. In general, think of the readings and class participation as an act of citizenship, through which each individual and the collective body is responsible for the class experience.

“The Chain”: The Chain is a string of emails that I'll send you throughout the semester (chained together so as not to gum up your inbox—hence the name). Each email in The Chain will have three parts—1) the Afterthought: a brief summary of the latest reading—think of this as my way of handing out notes—which should be very handy when it comes time to review ideas before writing a paper, 2) the Forethought: a few guiding comments or questions for the next reading, and 3) a Funny Thought: a place for me to post philosophical memes, videos, articles, and, in all likelihood, pictures of my cat, Alice. If there are readings to be handed out, they will be attached to The Chain. Reading/viewing the Chain is optional, but reading the attached assignments is not optional. If you find yourself struggling with the readings, consider at least reading the Forethought. **Additionally, asking questions about the readings or commenting intelligently on them by replying to the Chain (reply, not reply all) will increase your discussion participation score.** Make sure your email box is not full, so that you are able to receive the chain when it is sent. If you forward email from your stthom account to a non-stthom email address, make sure to empty your stthom account so that it does not become full, or it will not forward email to your second account.

Summary and Rubric: Papers count for 40% of your grade (20% each), the final for 20%, discussion participation for 20%, reading participation for 20%.

A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92.99
B+	87 – 89.99
B	83 – 86.99
B-	80 – 82.99
C+	77 – 79.99
C	73 – 76.99
C-	70 – 72.99
D+	67 – 69.99
D	60 – 66.99
F	0 – 59.99

Disabilities: If you have a disability that may require special assistance, please contact Counseling Services/Disability Services, which is located on the second floor of Crooker Center. You may also call Debby Jones or Rose Signorello at (713) 525-6983 or (713) 525-3162.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to comply with the University of St. Thomas's Academic Integrity policy (A.02.11). The penalty for academic dishonesty regarding a paper or final is a failing grade for the paper or final in which the infraction occurred. The penalty for academic dishonesty regarding a quiz is a failing grade added to your quiz score that is worth 5 times the value of a standard quiz, so don't cheat on little things because they are little, because the penalty is still big. The instructor will determine the numeric value of a failing grade at the time of assigning it. Be especially careful to know the definition of plagiarism and avoid all forms of it, including having others do your work for you or merely syntactically or terminologically altering the work of others (e.g. plugging in a few different words into a paragraph written by someone else). I am not married, nor do I have children, which means that I have extra time to catch those who are up to no good. Don't be up to no good!

Laptop and Mobile Device Policy: Laptops and Mobile devices should **not** be used during class. The results are in: scientific studies show that screens mean less glean. Science giveth the iPhone, and science taketh it away!

Recording Policy: Do not produce recordings of any kind (e.g. video, audio, etc.) of classroom lectures or discussions, unless you have written permission from the university or permission from me. If you are allowed to make recordings, do not put the content online, or you may be subject to university discipline.

Schedule:

Week 1: Intro; An Argument for a Radical Thesis; Parmenidean-Inspired Materialism

Class 1 (8/19) Introduction to the Course; Argumentation: an Ongoing Discussion

Class 2 (8/21) Parmenides: Fragments*

Class 3 (8/23) Anaxagoras: Fragments and Testimonies*

Week 2: Materialism Cont.; Definitions; The Search for Wisdom

Class 4 (8/26) Democritus/Leucippus: Fragments and Testimonies*

Class 5 (8/28) Plato: *Euthyphro*

Class 6 (8/30) Plato: *Apology 17a-30b*

Week 3: Wisdom Cont.; The Categories of Being

Labor Day (no class) (9/2)

Class 7 (9/4) Plato: *Apology* 30b-42a

Class 8 (9/6) Aristotle: *Categories*, Chapters 1-5*

Week 4: Against Parmenides and Anaxagoras; Hylomorphism; Nature and the 4 Causes

Class 9 (9/9) Aristotle: *Physics* Book 1, Chapters 1-4*

Class 10 (9/11) Aristotle: *Physics* Book 1, Chapters 5-9*

Class 11 (9/13) Aristotle: *Physics* Book 2, Chapters 1, 3*

Week 5: Chance, Telos, The Necessity of Matter; Immortality of the Soul; The Harmony and Cloak Objections

Class 12 (9/16) Aristotle: *Physics* Book 2, Chapters 4-6, 8-9*

Class 13 (9/18) Plato: *Phaedo* 57a-77a

Class 14 (9/20) Plato: *Phaedo* 77a-95a

Week 6: The Death of Socrates; Predecessors' Accounts of Soul; A Hylomorphic Account of Soul

Class 15 (9/23) Plato: *Phaedo* 95a-118a

Class 16 (9/25) Aristotle: *De Anima*, Book 1, Chapters 1-2*

Class 17 (9/27) Aristotle: *De Anima*, Book 2, Chapters 1-3*

Week 7: Happiness; The function Argument: Virtue

Class 18 (9/30) Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 1, Chapters 1-6*

Class 19 (10/2) Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 1, Chapters 7-13*

Class 20 (10/4) Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 2*

Week 8: The Sin of the Devil; The (Un)nature of Evil; The Reality of Virtue

Class 21 (10/7) St. Anselm: *On the Fall of the Devil* Chapters 1-8*

Class 22 (10/9) St. Anselm: *On the Fall of the Devil* Chapters 9-16*

Class 23 (10/11) St. Anselm: *On the Fall of the Devil* Chapters 17-28*

Week 9: How to Read the Summa/The First Two Ways; The Subsistence of the Soul

Fall Break (no class) (10/14)

Class 24 (10/16) How to Read the Summa; St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.2, prologue, A.1-3*

Class 25 (10/18) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.75, prologue, A.1-3*

Week 10: The Incorruptibility of the Soul; Soul as the Form of the Body; Internal and External Senses

Class 26 (10/21) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.75, A.4, 6-7*

Class 27 (10/23) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.76, prologue, A.1, 8*

Class 28 (10/25) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.78, prologue, A.3-4*

Week 11: Passive and Active Intellect; Sentient and Intellective Appetite; Irascible and Concupiscent Powers

Class 29 (10/28) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.79, prologue, A.1-3, 6*

Class 30 (10/30) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.80, prologue, A.1-2*

Class 31 (11/1) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.81, prologue A.1-3*

Week 12: Will and Necessity; Free Choice; Intellectual Cognition of Bodies

Class 32 (11/4) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.82, prologue, A.1-4*

Class 33 (11/6) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* I, Q.83, prologue, A.1-4*

Class 34 (11/8) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* 1, Q.84, prologue, 1-2, 6*

Week 13: Doubting Everything; Cogito, Cartesian Dualism; The Origin of Ideas and Sceptical Doubts

Class 35 (11/11) Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 1 and Objections*

Class 36 (11/13) Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 2 and Selected Objections*

Class 37 (11/15) Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* Sections 2-4*

Week 14: Skepticism about Personal Identity; St. Thomas on Killing; Violinists and Abortion?

Class 38 (11/18) Hume: *A Treatise on Human Nature* 1.4.6 "Of Personal Identity"*

Class 39 (11/20) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologiae* 2-2, Q.64*

Class 40 (11/22) Judith Jarvis Thomson: *A Defense of Abortion**

Week 15: An Argument in Favor of the Permissibility of Abortion

Class 41 (11/25) Mary Warren: *On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion**

Thanksgiving break (no class) (11/27)

Thanksgiving break (no class) (11/29)

Week 16: An Aristotelian Argument Against the Permissibility of Abortion

Class 42 (12/2) Patrick Lee and Robert George: *The Wrong of Abortion**