PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN PERSON: SYLLABUS SPRING 2015
PHIL 1311 D

Instructor: Dr. T. Rebard; Office: Sullivan Hall #103; campus telephone: 713-525-3593; e-mail: Rebard@stthom.edu. Office hours: Tu & Th: 1:00-4:30, M & W 2:00-3:00. (and by appointment)

Texts: Summa of the Summa, Peter Kreeft; Man’s Search for Meaning, Viktor Frankl, Philosophy of the Human Person, James Reichmann; The Abolition of Man; That Hideous Strength, C. S. Lewis.

Objective: To introduce the beginning student to philosophy by the exercise of philosophical thinking. A representative spectrum of philosophical questions will be raised and addressed; these include questions about the origin, nature, and purpose of human life. The questions that are most typical of philosophy are those most relevant to human living itself: for example, ‘who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? How ought I choose?’ The most crucially important answers will be reached, at least in a preliminary way. (Further development must await further courses.) Our exemplars will be Socrates, St. Thomas Aquinas, and other major thinkers who will also be introduced as pertinent.

Method: The course will consist principally of lectures by the instructor, but ample opportunity will be given and encouraged for questions, comments, and discussion. The student is advised that discussion and question have truth as their aim, and are not to be undertaken in a spirit of animosity or competition; neither is argument to be indulged for its own sake, but only for the sake of reaching the truth. (‘There are a thousand “sides” to every question, until you know the truth; then there is only one.’ C.S. Lewis) What is most important throughout the course is the real-life impact of the questions we ask and the ideas we consider.

Examinations: There will be two examinations, each of which will have an essay component and a component to test for exact knowledge of terms, definitions, principles, and the like. essay-format examinations, a final ten-page essay, to be prepared in advance is also required. Every student is expected to be prepared every day as that day pertains to previous study and assignments; a small part of each class will consist of ‘oral recitation,’ in which one or more randomly selected student(s) will be quizzed orally about the day’s assignment. Each examination, and also the essay will be weighted at 30% of the grade, and the remaining 10% depends on oral recitation.

Grading: 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; <60 = F.

Class attendance is mandatory; any unexcused absence will represent a reduction of the final grade by one-half of a mark; three or more unexcused absences obviate all other considerations and will yield an F for the course.