COURSE & INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

PHL 3320: Philosophy of Nature          Catherine Peters
St. Mary’s Seminary                     petersej@stthom.edu (preferred)
Tuesdays & Thursdays                    713-831-7268
8:30am—9:45am                           Office hours by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will examine the fundamental question: “What is nature?” It begins with a general overview of logic and demonstration, a necessary precursor to scientific philosophy. It then treats the subject, principles, and conclusions of the “general science of nature.” Consideration should also be given to the comparison of ancient and modern perspectives on science and modern critiques/rejections of nature and causality (especially efficient and final causality).

GENERAL TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

2. Discovery & Definition of “Nature.”
3. Principles of Nature (Matter, Form, Privation)
4. Causality & Chance
5. The Soul
6. Place & Time
7. Motion & The Unmoved Mover
8. Modern critiques/rejections of “nature” and causality.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


2. Additional readings provided by instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Reading & Participation*  10%**

These are of central importance to the course and all reading should be completed before class. Good participation includes asking questions about the readings. *Please note:* no recording (either for yourself or for others) is permitted.

*Might include short in-class quizzes. Any disruptive use of technology during class can be counted against participation grade up to and including a mark of “absent.” Instructor reserves the right to ban the use of laptops, iPads, or other technology during class unless required in writing by disability services or St. Mary’s Seminary.
2. **Midterm Exam** 30%

To be held on Thursday, **October 8** following a review on Tuesday, **October 6**. The format of the exam will be announced in class.

3. **Final Exam** 30%

Cumulative final exam to be held during the UST exam period following a review day. The format and date of the exam will be announced in class. Completing readings, outlining texts, asking questions, and reviewing terminology/arguments will help you to prepare for this exam throughout the semester.

4. **Term Paper** 30%

Due Tuesday November 24. The body of your paper must be 5-7 pages long and will be evaluated on 1) thesis, 2) argumentation, 3) style and expression. Philosophy and writing tutors are available at the University of St. Thomas. I will provide further information on the topic of the paper later in the semester.

**Grading**

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**Academic Honesty**

Any form of academic dishonesty cannot and will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to (1) cheating on any examination or test, (2) plagiarism, (3) participating in another’s academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty will result in notification of all appropriate authorities, receiving an automatic failing grade on the assignment, and possible failure in the course as a whole.

Do not hesitate to contact me or the tutoring center at UST with any questions on academic honesty, particularly what constitutes plagiarism.

**Counseling and Disability Services**

If you have a disability that may affect your ability to learn the material in this course, please contact Counseling and Disability Services and feel free to speak to me in private about assistance and accommodation.

_Syllabus subject to change at discretion of the instructor._