Philosophy of Human Person

University of St. Thomas, Houston, TX
Fall 2015
Monday, Wednesday, 7:00 PM to 8:15 PM
Classroom: Malloy 017

Francisco E. Plaza, Adjunct Professor of Philosophy
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM (before class), or by appointment.

Course Summary:
As the first step into a student’s core education of Philosophy at the university, this course will serve partly as an introduction to the subject matter as such, focusing primarily on the study of the human person. This course will survey select primary philosophical texts from the Ancient, Medieval, and Modern periods, highlighting the key aspects of human nature: soul and body, sensation, thought, emotion, will, and habits. We shall also consider broader philosophical questions along these lines, such as: the unique place of the human person within the cosmos, the meaning of human existence, and the relation of Christian themes to our study of the human person. The primary texts considered will be those of Plato and Aristotle (5th Century B.C.), St. Thomas Aquinas (13th Century A.D.), and Rene Descartes (16th Century A.D.).

Primary Objectives:
The primary aim of the course is to explore the fundamental questions of human existence through key figures in the history of philosophy from Ancient to Modern times. Moreover, our goal is to intersect our present study of philosophy to our contemporary lives. Students will learn how to analyze philosophical texts directly, as well how to express themselves critically through articulating philosophical positions in writing.

Student Learning Outcomes:
In a writing assignment, students will correctly identify and explain the premises and conclusion of an argument imbedded in a text.

Required Texts:


Descartes, Rene. Meditations, Objections, and Replies, translated and edited by Donald A. Cress and Roger Ariew (Hackett).


Note: this syllabus is subject to revision at the discretion of the professor.


**Classroom Expectations:**

Philosophy cannot only be studied passively (through readings or lectures); it must be actively engaged. Accordingly, classes will consist in lectures and seminar style discussions. **Students are expected to participate in class dialogue by asking questions and posing solutions to philosophical inquiries.** Obviously, this will require regular classroom attendance.

If help is needed in further understanding the class, or in preparing for the exam, or in writing the papers, please do not hesitate to contact me during office hours, or by appointment. Students can also find help at the Tutoring Center, on the second floor of the Crooker center; they have a tutor specifically for Philosophy.

**Assignments and Examinations:**

Check class schedule page for assignment dates.

**Reading Assignments:** Reading assignments of primary texts are mandatory. If a student does not complete the assigned reading for a particular day, this will severely impact their ability to understand the class lecture or discussion.

**Daily Quiz:** There will be a brief quiz at the beginning of each class on the material covered in the previous class. Quizzes cannot be made up. If a quiz is missed (either due to tardiness or absence), it will result in a zero for the day. Quizzes will consist of five multiple-choice questions.

**Short papers:** There will be two short papers throughout the semester, the topics of which will be discussed in class at the appropriate time. These papers should be approximately 1500 words (about 5 pages), double spaced, Times New Roman font, size 12. The format of these papers should be in Chicago style. They should be **turned in electronically** (via email), **as well as printed at the beginning of class on each due date.**

**The cover page and works cited page are not part of the expected page count.**

**Examinations:** There will be a mid-term and final exam consisting of multiple-choice, along with short essay questions. The final exam will be cumulative.
Missing the final exam will result in failure of the final exam. If you cannot take the exam on the scheduled date, you are responsible for scheduling an alternate time to take the final before the end of the final exam period.

Grade Distribution and Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Short Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Short Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
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A: 93-100
A-: 90-92
B+: 87-89
B: 83-86
B-: 80-82
C+: 77-79
C: 73-76
C-: 70-72
D+: 67-69
D: 63-66
D-: 60-62
F: 59 or below

Attendance:

Students are required to attend class. Students are expected to be on-time each day to take the quiz. Examination questions on the mid-term and final will follow from what is dealt with in class. If you have a good reason for being absent, please let me know ahead of time if possible. If a student has an excused absence, they will not receive a quiz grade for the day. Instead, the quiz for that particular day would be dropped.

Suggestions for Class Readings:

Students are encouraged to take careful notes on each of the reading assignments. Clear, slow, patient reading is necessary to accomplish this. Students will find that their work in this regard will be indispensable for them for the mid-term and final exams. There will not be enough time to re-read texts; students will have to rely primarily on their notes (both class notes, as well as textual notes) for the purpose of study.
Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism and cheating in any form will result in failure of the assignment. All plagiarism will be reported. If a student is caught plagiarizing twice in his or her academic career, they will be expelled from the university.

Plagiarism means using another author’s work in part or in whole without attributing it to that author. This includes not quoting the author when using his words, or paraphrasing the author without proper citation. Another form of cheating is to copy another student’s work (be it in a paper or during the exam), or to have another person do your work.

If you are worried about inadvertent plagiarism, please visit http://campusguides.stthom.edu/plagiarism for suggestions about paraphrasing and when to cite a text to which you are referring.

Do not copy and paste from Wikipedia articles or other similar kinds of on-line summaries, or from papers posted by other students on-line. Wikipedia is not an academic source, SparkNotes is not one either, and neither are other students. Aside from the universally accessible tool of Google, your professor also has easy access to "Turn-it-in."

Disability Statement:

Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to speak with me as early as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact Counseling and Disability Services Office in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-6953 or 2169. If you have questions or concerns regarding the accommodation process, please call Debby Jones or Rose Signorello at ext. 6953 or 3162 at Counseling and Disability Services.

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