Philosophy of the Human Person

PHIL 1311NA: MW 5:30-6:45; Strake 201

Instructor:
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Office: Math Building, 109
Office Phone: 713-831-7268
Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:00, TTH 1:00-2:00, or by appointment

Course Description: This course is both a general introduction to philosophy and to the philosophical study of the human person, taught primarily though not exclusively in keeping with the principles of the Thomistic-Aristotelian tradition. Pursuant to the aims of an introductory philosophy course, we will begin the semester with a crash course in logic and philosophical method. Our study of the human person will be designed around the essential formula, “man is a rational animal,” with our readings focusing alternatively on what it means to say that “man is an animal,” and “man is rational.” So, we will begin our philosophical study of the human person by considering those powers which he has in common with other animals, followed by his distinctly human, rational powers. Next, we will challenge our presuppositions from the third and fourth sections of the course by considering an influential philosophical alternative. Finally, we will draw upon the principles articulated in the foregoing sections and some recent advances in the natural sciences to address the challenge.

Class Structure: Class will begin with a brief group discussion about the truth or falsity of a philosophical quotation or passage from the reading. We will then work through the assigned readings as a class. Small writing assignments will be given at the end of class to be collected at the beginning of the next class. These assignments should be completed while reading the assigned texts and may only be submitted during the next class period. As such, regular attendance will be an integral part of success in the course. Because much of our class time will be spent in discussion, the use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, and other electronic devices with screens is prohibited (unless the student has a documented need).
**Learning Objectives:** Students will learn to correctly identify and explain the premises and conclusion of an argument imbedded in a text and articulate the basics of Thomistic-Aristotelian philosophical anthropology.

**Required Texts:**


**Evaluation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Grades</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage Value (of Final Grade)</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questions/Written Responses</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Paper</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>October 26</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Second Paper</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>November 21</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>October 5</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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**Scale for Final Grade**

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<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>91-94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>87-90</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>79-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>75-78</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>71-74</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>68-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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Attendance Policy: The “Course Grades,” section above presumes perfect attendance. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your “Class Participation,” and “Questions/Written Responses,” grades. Absences may be excused at the discretion of the professor on a case-by-case basis and only for serious reasons. The professor must be notified before the beginning of class for the absence to be eligible for excuse.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism will result in an automatic “F” for the writing assignment and may result in an “F” in the entire course. Cheating on an exam will result in an automatic “F” for the course. For information on other punishable forms of academic dishonesty, their penalties, and resources for helping you to avoid them, see: http://libguides.stthom.edu/plagiarism

Disability: If you have a disability which may require special assistance, please contact Counseling and Disability Services, located on the second floor of the Crooker Center. You may contact them via phone at 713-525-2169.

Course Schedule:¹

1. Course Introduction
   
   Monday, August 22: Introductions, Syllabus review, General remarks

   Wednesday, August 24: Man is a Monster
   Reading: Selections from The Everlasting Man, G.K. Chesterton [Blackboard]

2. Logical Arguments and Philosophical Method
   
   Monday, August 29: Logical Arguments, Philosophical Method
   Reading: A Rulebook for Arguments, Weston, Chapters 1 and 2

   Wednesday, August 31: Logical Arguments, Philosophical Method
   Reading: A Rulebook for Arguments, Weston, Chapters 6 and 7 and Appendix I

   Monday, September 5: Labor Day (no classes; university closed)

   Wednesday, September 7: Logical Arguments, Philosophical Method
   Reading: Review of A Rulebook for Arguments, Chapters 1, 2, 6, 7 and Appendix I

3. Man is an animal

   Monday, September 12: Natural Philosophy
   Reading: Feser, 8-23; Excerpts from Aristotle’s Physics [Blackboard]

   Wednesday, September 14: Life

¹ This course schedule is tentative and subject to adjustment and revision at the discretion of the professor.
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 2

Monday, September 19: Soul
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 3; Feser 132-142; Excerpts from the *Summa Theologicae* of St. Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Wednesday, September 21: The Living Body
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 4

Monday, September 26: Faculties and Powers
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 5

Wednesday, September 28: External Senses
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 6

Monday, October 3: Review

Wednesday, October 5: **Mid-Term Exam**

Monday, October 10: Fall Break

4. Man is rational

Wednesday, October 12: Internal Senses
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 7

Monday, October 17: Man is a Political Animal, The Common Good
Reading: Excerpts from Aristotle and St. Thomas [Blackboard]

Wednesday, October 19: Intellect
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 8; Feser 142-149

Monday, October 24: Intellect
Reading: Excerpts from Aristotle and St. Thomas [Blackboard]

Wednesday, October 26: Will
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 9; Feser 149-151; Excerpts from St. Thomas [Blackboard]

**First Paper Due**

Monday, October 31: Passions
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 10
Wednesday, November 2: Sexuality  
   Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 11

Monday, November 7: Death and Immortality  
   Reading: Feser, 151-162

Wednesday, November 9: Death and Immortality  
   Reading: Excerpts from St. Thomas [Blackboard]

5. Modern Challenges

Monday, November 14: The Disintegrated Body  
   Reading: Excerpts from Descartes’s Meditations [Blackboard]

Wednesday, November 16: Man is a Thinking Thing  
   Reading: Excerpts from Descartes’s Meditations [Blackboard]

6. Challenging Challenges
Monday, November 21: Dualism, Materialism, Hylomorphism  
   Reading: Feser, 162-173; Excerpts from Descartes and St. Thomas [Blackboard]  
   Second Paper Due

Wednesday, November 23: Thanksgiving Break

Monday, November 28: Can Machines Think?, The Computational Model of the Mind

Wednesday, November 30: Modeling a Concept: Universal or Particular?, Prototypes, Exemplars, and Theories

Monday, December 5: Review

Final Exam: TBA