Department of Philosophy

PHIL 1311B: Philosophy of the Human Person
MWF 10:10-11:00 AM, Strake 206

Instructor:
Evan R. Williams, Adjunct Professor of Philosophy
Email: erwillia@stthom.edu
Office: Math Building, 109
Office Hours: MW 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.” 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:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage Value (of Final Grade)</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions/Written Responses</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Paper</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>March 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Paper</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>April 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>March 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<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>
<td></td>
</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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>75-78</td>
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<tr>
<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>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>65-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<td>61-64</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
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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**
   Friday, January 20: Introductions, Syllabus review, General remarks

   Monday, January 23: Man is a Monster
   Reading: Selections from *The Everlasting Man*, G.K. Chesterton [Blackboard]

2. **Logical Arguments and Philosophical Method**
   Wednesday, January 25: Logical Arguments, Philosophical Method
   Reading: *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Weston, Chapters 1 and 2

   Friday, January 27: Logical Arguments, Philosophical Method
   Reading: *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Weston, Chapters 6 and 7

   Monday, January 30: Logical Arguments, Philosophical Method
   Reading: *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Weston, Appendix I

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

   Friday, February 3: 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, February 6: Natural Philosophy
   Reading: Feser, 8-23

¹ This course schedule is tentative and subject to adjustment and revision at the discretion of the professor.
Wednesday, February 8: Natural Philosophy  
Reading: Excerpts from Aristotle’s *Physics* [Blackboard]

Friday, February 10: Life  
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 2

Monday, February 13: Soul  
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 3

Wednesday, February 15: Soul  
Reading: Feser 132-142; Excerpts from Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Friday, February 17: The Living Body  
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 4

Monday, February 20: Faculties and Powers  
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 5

Wednesday, February 22: Faculties and Powers  
Reading: Excerpts from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Friday, February 24: External Senses  
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 6

Monday, February 27: Internal Senses  
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 7

Wednesday, March 1: Review

4. Man is rational

Friday, March 3: **Mid-Term Exam**

Monday, March 6: Intellect  
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 8; Feser 142-149

Wednesday, March 8: Intellect  
Reading: Excerpts from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Friday, March 10: Will  
Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 9

Monday, March 13—Friday, March 17: Spring Break
Monday, March 20: Will
   Reading: Feser 149-151; Excerpts from Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Wednesday, March 22: Libertarianism, Compatibilism, and Determinism
   Reading: Excerpts from Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Friday, March 24: Man is a Political Animal
   Reading: Excerpts from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

**First Paper Due**

Monday, March 27: The Common Good; Happiness
   Reading: Excerpts from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Wednesday, March 29: Passions
   Reading: Lombo/Russo, Chapter 10

Friday, March 31: Passions
   Reading: Excerpts from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Monday, April 3: Reason and the Passions; Virtue
   Reading: Excerpts from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Wednesday, April 5: Death and Immortality
   Reading: Feser, 151-162

Friday, April 7: Death and Immortality
   Reading: Excerpts from Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

5. Modern Challenges

Monday, April 10: Doubting the Senses
   Reading: Excerpts from Descartes’s *Meditations* [Blackboard]

Wednesday, April 12: The Disintegrated Body
   Reading: Excerpts from Descartes’s *Meditations* [Blackboard]

Friday, April 14: Easter Break

Monday, April 17: Knowledge and Infinity
   Reading: Excerpts from Descartes’s *Meditations* [Blackboard]

Wednesday, April 19: Man is a Thinking Thing
Reading: Excerpts from Descartes’s *Meditations* [Blackboard]

6. Challenging Challenges

Friday, April 21: Dualism, Materialism, Hylomorphism  
   Reading: Feser, 162-173  
   **Second Paper Due**

Monday, April 24: Dualism, Materialism, Hylomorphism  
   Reading: Excerpts from Descartes and Thomas Aquinas [Blackboard]

Wednesday, April 26: Descartes’s Legacy: Materialisms

Friday, April 28: Can Machines Think? The Computational Model of the Mind

Monday, May 1: Modeling a Concept: Universal or Particular?

Wednesday, May 3: Prototypes, Exemplars, and Theories

Friday, May 5: Review

**Final Exam**: TBA