PHIL 1311H: Philosophy of the Human Person  
Spring 2018 Syllabus  
Instructor: Dr. Stephen Striby  
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Course Content: We will begin the semester with a discussion of the nature of philosophy and its relation to theology. Next, we will enter the largest part of the course: a study of three dominant ways of viewing human nature: the dualistic, the materialistic, and the hylemorphic. We will examine texts of philosophers who represent each of these viewpoints, and discuss the merits of each way of thinking. I will defend the hylemorphic view as a mean between the two extremes of dualism and materialism, and thus as incorporating the merits of the two extremes. Following this examination, we will discuss death and immortality, free will and determinism, knowledge of the self, and happiness.

Course Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, the successful student will be able to:

1) Show an understanding of the relationship between our nature and personhood, including an understanding of arguments for, and criticisms of, three dominant ways of viewing human nature, and an understanding of the human person as fulfilled through relationships with other persons. This outcome advances Goal Four of the Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes, which calls for students to “affirm the dignity of the human person.”

2) Articulate various positions that are taken in the free will vs. determinism debate, and defend a sound position on that issue.
3) Articulate a basic understanding of the relationship between faith and reason and, more specifically, between philosophy and theology. This advances Goal Three of the Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes, which "encourages an ongoing dialogue between faith and reason.”

4) Show an understanding of Aquinas’s treatments of death and happiness. This outcome will help to advance Goal One of the Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes, which relates to “the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake,” the forming of “habits of mind through which knowledge can mature into wisdom,” and to the understanding that “loving God will lead to happiness while pursuing the attainment of mere creatures will not.”

5) Better articulate and defend, by both written and oral means, philosophical positions on a number of issues. Thus, the student should have developed their skills in writing argumentative essays, and be more competent in speaking clearly and intelligibly on philosophical matters. This outcome helps to advance Goal Five of the Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes, which calls students to “develop competence in critical thinking, critical reading, effective writing, and oral communication.”

**Grading and Attendance:** There will be two essay tests, each worth 15% of the final grade, and a comprehensive final exam worth 20% of the final grade. The student will complete two papers: one, a short essay worth 10% of the grade, and the other, a longer research paper worth 20% of the grade. There will be eight quizzes on the readings worth 20% of the final grade. These will occur at the beginning of class and will not be previously announced. There will be no makeup quizzes, but provisions can be made to make up a test if the student is excused for his or her absence. For the possibility of an absence being excused, the student must contact Dr. Striby by the end of the day of the absence, and have a sound reason for his or her absence. Students may gain or lose up to six percentage points based on their attendance and participation in class discussions. More than three unexcused
absences will cause the student to lose points on the final grade, with each unexcused absence causing a one percent reduction in the grade.

**Grading scale:** A: 94-100, A-: 90-93: A grade of A reflects excellent work on the part of the student. To earn a grade of A, the student must excel on all or most of the assignments and tests, show considerable understanding of concepts and arguments presented in class and in the readings, produce well written, diligently researched papers, and have good attendance and participation. B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82: To earn a grade in the B range, the student must complete all of the assignments and tests, show good understanding of the aforementioned concepts and arguments, produce well written papers, and have good attendance and participation. C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72: To attain a grade of C, the student must complete all of the assignments and tests, show some understanding of concepts and arguments, write a good paper, and consistently attend class. D+: 65-69, D: 60-64: To attain a grade of D, the student must complete the assignments and tests, show some understanding of concepts and arguments, and show some consistency in attending class. F: Below 60: A grade of F is given when the student fails to complete assignments, fails to show any consistency in attending class or in understanding the material, plagiarizes on a paper, or cheats on a test.

**Course Calendar**

**Week One (Jan. 22, 24):** What is philosophy; On philosophy and theology
**Week Two (Jan. 29, 31):** Plato’s *Phaedo* (9-28); Descartes’ *Discourse on Method* (155-65)
**Week Three (Feb. 5, 7):** Wilson’s *Consilience* (BB); Skinner (473-474)
**Week Four (Feb. 12, 14):** Marx (261-262); Aristotle’s *De Anima* (pp. 55-67)
**Week Five (Feb. 19, 21):** Aquinas on the soul (125-134); Review for test one
**Week Six (Feb. 26, 28):** TEST#1 (26th); Hume’s *Treatise* (191-201)
**Week Seven (Mar. 5, 7):** Pieper’s *Death and Immortality*; Unamuno’s *The Tragic Sense of Life* (583-586)

*Spring Break*
Week Eight (Mar. 19, 21): Becker’s *The Denial of Death* (587-595)
Week Nine (Mar. 26, 28): Freud on Happiness (375-383); Aquinas on Happiness
Week Ten (Apr. 2, 4): Sartre’s *Existentialism* (511-521); Skinner’s Behaviorism (473-488)
Week Eleven (Apr. 9, 11): Skinner, cont.; Review for test two
Week Twelve (Apr. 16, 18): TEST #2 (16th); Augustine on free will (95-106)
Week Thirteen (Apr. 23, 25): Augustine, cont.; Kierkegaard (221-233)
Week Fourteen (Apr. 30, May 2): Stein on male and female species (405-417); Review for Final Exam

**FINAL EXAM:** Monday, May 7th, 6:00pm

**PAPER DUE DATES:**
*Short Paper:* Mon., Feb. 12th;
*Research Paper:* Mon., Apr. 9th (Mon., Apr. 2nd +2 pts.)