Philosophy of Human Nature

PHIL 1001 Section 103

Spring 2016

M/W/F 9:-9:50am David Straz Hall 465

Instructor: Mr. Gregory Trotter

E-mail: [gregory.trotter@marquette.edu](mailto:gregory.trotter@marquette.edu)

Office: Marquette Hall 410

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 10-11:30am, and by appointment.

1. **Course Description**

In this course, we will investigate the complex, multi-faceted nature of what it means to be human. Specifically, we will focus on four main features of human being and the philosophical questions and problems that these features raise: (1) Human Choice (freedom vs. determinism), (2) Human Cognition (the possibilities and limits of human knowledge), (3) The Unity of the Human Being (the relation between mind and body), and (4) The Social and Affective Aspects of the Human Being (the importance of friendship, art production and appreciation, citizenship, etc.). In addition, we will consider the ways in which these four areas of philosophical inquiry contribute to living an “examined life” and what it means to lead such a life. This will be accomplished by reading works of many of the central figures of the Western philosophical tradition from the classical period to the present.

1. **Required Texts**
2. Plato, *Five Dialogues*, Second Edition, Hackett Publishing, 2002, ISBN: 0872206335
3. Saint Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, Hackett Publishing, 1993, ISBN: 0872201880
4. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions*, Citadel Press, 1985, ISBN: 0806509023
5. Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, W.W. Norton & Co., 1990, ISBN: 0393001423
6. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, Fourth Edition, Hackett Publishing, 1999, ISBN: 0872204200
7. Various other essays will be made available on Ares throughout the semester.

**Ares Password: Examined Life**

1. **Knowledge Area Outcomes**

PHIL 1001 is one of the two courses in the Human Nature & Ethics Knowledge area. The Learning Outcomes of this knowledge are the following: At the completion of the core studies the student will be able to:

1. Assess views of human nature in various philosophical traditions, including the classic Greek & Catholic philosophical traditions.
2. Argue for one of the major ethical theories over another in terms of philosophical cogency & practical outcome.
3. Use philosophical reasoning to develop the student’s own position on central issues in human nature & ethics, for example, the relation between mind & body, the problem of freedom & determinism, the spiritual & affective dimension of human life, the extent of human knowledge, the justification of moral judgments, & the elucidation of moral norms.
4. **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course:

1. The student will be able to state and provide reasons for basic positions concerning the relation between mind/soul and body, including the positions held by representative classical and Christian thinkers. This objective will be assessed by means of reading response quizzes, reflection papers, and an exam in which students must answer questions regarding mind/body dualism.
2. The student will be able to state and provide reasons for basic positions concerning the nature and possibility of knowledge, including positions held by representative classical and Christian thinkers. This objective will be assessed by means of reading response quizzes, reflection papers, and an exam in which students must answer questions regarding theories of knowledge.
3. The student will be able to state and provide reasons for basic positions concerning the nature and possibility of freedom as it relates to human choice, including positions held by representative classical and Christian thinkers. This objective will be assessed by means of reading response quizzes, reflection papers, and an exam in which students must answer questions regarding freedom of choice.
4. The student will be able to state and provide reasons for basic positions concerning fundamental features of human sociality, including positions held by representative classical and Christian thinkers. This objective will be assessed by means of reading response quizzes, reflection papers, and an exam in which students must answer questions regarding the social, affective, and spiritual dimensions of the human person.
5. The student will be able to state and provide reasons for the position held by a significant thinker from outside the Western tradition on one (or more) of the following problems: the relation between mind/soul and body; the nature and possibility of knowledge; the nature and possibility of free human choice; fundamental features of human sociality. This objective will be assessed by means of reading response quizzes, reflection papers, and an exam.
6. The student will be able to compare and contrast the philosophers’ positions studied in the course. This objective will be assessed by means of reading response quizzes, reflection papers, and exams.
7. **Relation between Course Objectives and Area Outcomes**
8. Although the six learning objectives are closely interconnected, numbers 5 and 6 above will mostly satisfy the first outcome. By reflecting on how human nature has been conceived and comparing these different views, students will be able to assess the views of human nature in various philosophical traditions.
9. In numbers 1 to 4 above, students analyze and criticize the basic components of human nature and this will mostly satisfy the third outcome: to use philosophical reasoning to develop the student’s own position on central issues in human nature.
10. Outcome 2 does not apply to this course.
11. **Grading Summary**

**Class Assignments**

Exam I 20 Points

Exam II 20 Points

Exam III 20 Points

Response Paper I 10 Points

Response Paper II 10 Points

In Class Reading Quizzes 20 Points

100 Points

**Grading Scale**

A 100-94

AB 93-90

B 89-83

BC 82-79

C 78-72

CD 71-68

D 67-61

F Below 61

1. **Exams:** This course features three exams (20 points each). Each exam will be made up of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. These exams are designed to gauge your understanding of the readings, lectures, and class discussions. They are intended to encourage retention of and continued reflection upon the material covered in our course. Exams can be made up only under extraordinary circumstances. Unless it is impossible, these circumstances should be brought to my attention well before the date of the exam.
2. **Response Papers:** The response papers (10 points each) are independent, philosophical reflections on issues discussed in our course. They are 2-page papers (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins) in which you engage with a particular quote/passage or issue raised through your reading and reflection upon a particular text. The text and the issue or quotation on which you focus is to be chosen by you. If you have difficulty selecting a problem to work on, I’m happy to discuss options with you. Response I should be written on material covered up through March 2nd (our final discussion of Freud). Response II should be written on material covered up to the end of the semester (April 29th). Each paper is due at 11:59pm no later than ONE WEEK (7days) after our discussion of the material in class. For example, if you choose to write on Plato’s conception of the tripartite soul (discussed on February 19th), your response paper is due by 11:59pm on February 26th. These papers are intended to cultivate the independent thinking and critical writing skills which are crucial to doing philosophy. No late responses will be accepted.

The Ott Memorial Writing Center offers comprehensive writing assistance, including one-on-one sessions in which you can discuss many aspects of your particular writing assignment with a tutor. They can be reached by phone at (414)288-5542 or online here:

http://www.marquette.edu/english/writingcenter/

1. **Reading Quizzes:** Over the course of the semester, there will be twelve in-class reading quizzes, roughly one a week. Your two lowest scores will be dropped and the remaining ten quiz scores will constitute 20 points of your final grade (the equivalent of an exam). The reading quizzes are intended to gauge your understanding of the material. Each quiz will consist of two comprehension questions. The quizzes will not be announced in advance, and can only be made up with prior notice and a compelling reason for why you cannot be in class. The quizzes will be given at the start of class, so please be on time! Late arrival to class does not constitute a legitimate excuse for missing a quiz.

If you know you will be missing class for university sanctioned activities and related travel or jury duty and that day happens to be a day in which there is a reading quiz, you have the opportunity to earn quiz points by writing a one-page (double-spaced, 12 pt, Times New Roman font) summary of that day's reading. These summaries are due to me by email no later than 48 hours after the day of the in-class quiz.

IT WILL BE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO EMAIL ME TO ASK IF YOU HAVE MISSED A QUIZ.

If I do not receive an email from you by the end of the day that the quiz was missed, I will assume that you are forfeiting the points for that quiz.

1. **Extra Credit:** I will not be offering extra credit opportunities in this class. If you are concerned about your standing in the class, please come talk to me sooner rather than later.

**Student Responsibilities and Class Policies**

1. **Learning Expectations:** To succeed in this class, you will need to put in a good deal of effort. Merely studying for the exams will not suffice to do well. If you are having trouble understanding the texts or something we have discussed in class (or anything else you might be concerned about), please come talk to me as soon as possible. Please take advantage of my office hours! If those hours do not work for you, let me know so that we can work out an alternate time to meet.
2. **Attendance:** Regular attendance is expected. Attendance will be taken every day at the beginning of class. I will hand out an attendance roster for you to initial. With very few exceptions, there is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. For each absence beyond the sixth, 1 point will be deducted from your total points. I reserve the right to make exceptions to this penalty, but can do so only under the most serious of circumstances (e.g., serious illness). Punctuality is expected and greatly appreciated. I reserve the right to count you absent if you arrive more than five minutes late to a class or if you are repeatedly tardy. Please do not sign-in for a classmate. Doing so will result in the loss of 1 point.
3. **Reading:** This class requires a great deal of reading and writing. That is the nature of philosophy. The readings are not easy, but they are fascinating and deeply rewarding. Reading philosophy requires a different set of skills than many other types of reading. It’s a good rule of thumb to read a philosophical text at least twice. This will require more time and effort on your part, but I promise it will pay dividends in your understanding of the material. Unfortunately, we will not have time in our class sessions to cover all the reading material. But you will still be responsible for the reading that we don’t cover in class. This material will be tested by our exams. Also, please allow for a bit of flexibility in our reading schedule. I anticipate that certain readings will take more class time than expected and others will take less.
4. **Discussion:** This will be a discussion-heavy class. It is therefore important that we create an open and safe environment. Please be sure that you are objecting to views and positions, not attacking the person holding those views and positions. Since sensitive issues may be discussed, it is important that everyone is treated respectfully.
5. **Electronic Devices Policy:** I ask that you do not use electronic devices in the classroom, up to and including cellphones, tablets, and laptops. These devices won’t be necessary for class (PowerPoints will be posted on D2L), and they typically only serve to distract both you and your peers from fully participating in class. If you have a documented special need which requires the use of an electronic device, please come talk with me about it.
6. **Food and Drink Policy:** Please do not bring food to class, but you may bring any university sanctioned beverage along with you.
7. **Email:** I will respond to emails as soon as possible. However, as difficult as it is, I try to avoid allowing technology to consume my life. I check my email only a few times a day, so please allow me twenty-four hours to respond to any email messages you might send. I will not use email to catch anyone up on material they may have missed in class or respond to messages inquiring about material you may not remember going over in class. I am more than happy to go over material you may have missed during office hours.
8. **Bring Your Books to Class:** Please bring the texts we are discussing to class every day. We will be doing a lot of close reading and textual analysis, and therefore, having your own copy of the texts is essential. Please do not rely on sharing books with a partner. The texts I have selected for this course are relatively inexpensive. If, for some reason, you are unable to purchase the texts, please come talk to me as soon as possible.
9. **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** I expect students to take responsibility for their work and their actions. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Ignorance is not an excuse. I recommend that you familiarize yourself with the university’s academic honesty policy, which will be enforced, so that we may avoid any such problems. This policy can be found at the following website: <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#academicintegrity>

**The Honor Pledge**

I recognize the importance of personal integrity in all aspects of life and work. I commit myself to truthfulness, honor and responsibility, by which I earn the respect of others. I support the development of good character and commit myself to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity as an important aspect of personal integrity. My commitment obliges me to conduct myself according to the Marquette University Honor Code.

Student Obligations Under the Honor Code:

1. To fully observe the rules governing exams and assignments regarding resource material, electronic aids, copying, collaborating with others, or engaging in any other behavior that subverts the purpose of the exam or assignment and the directions of the instructor.
2. To turn in work done specifically for the paper or assignment, and not to borrow work either from other students, or from assignments for other courses.
3. To give full and proper credit to sources and references, and to acknowledge the contributions and ideas of others relevant to academic work.
4. To report circumstances that may compromise academic honesty, such as inattentive proctoring or premature posting of answers.
5. To complete individual assignments individually, and neither to accept nor give unauthorized help.
6. To accurately represent their academic achievements, which may include their grade point average, degree, honors, etc., in transcripts, in interviews, in professional organizations, on resumes and in the workplace.

7. To report any observed breaches of this honor code and academic honesty.

1. **Special Needs:** There are different ways students can learn. This course attempts to use several means in order to assess students’ knowledge: written and verbal, reflection and critique, reformulation of others’ positions, and articulation of one’s own views. Students are encouraged to discuss what can make their learning experience more successful and enjoyable.Students with disabilities who require accommodations should let me know as soon as possible so that their learning needs may be met. If you require special accommodations for testing, you must notify me prior to the day of the exam. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Services Office in AMU 317.

Website: <http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services/contact.shtml>

Phone Number: (414)288-1645

**Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

**Week 1** 1/18 **No Class Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

1/20 Introduction and Overview

1/22 Plato, Selection from *Republic*, “The Allegory of the Cave” (Ares)

**Week 2** 1/25 Plato, *Apology*, pp. 22-30, 17a-26a

1/27*Apology*, pp. 30-40, 26a-37a (**Deadline to drop without grade of W**)

1/29 *Apology* cont’d., pp. 40-44, 37a-42a */Crito* pp. 45-51, 43a-48a

**Week 3** 2/1 Plato, *Phaedo*, pp. 94-106, 57a-69e

2/3 *Phaedo* cont’d., pp. 107-123, 70a-84d

2/5 *Phaedo* cont’d., pp. 123-134 , 84e-95e

**Week 4** 2/8 *Phaedo* cont’d., pp. 134-145, 96a-107d

2/10 Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Parts 1&2, pp. 1-13

2/12 Dewey, Selection from *Experience and Nature*, “Experience and Philosophic Method,” pp. 1a-8 (Ares)

**Week 5** 2/15 “Experience and Philosophic Method” cont’d., pp. 8-17, 36-39 (Ares)

2/17 **Exam I**

2/19 Plato, Selection from *Republic*, “Tripartite Soul” (Ares)

**Week 6** 2/22 Descartes, *Meditations* 1&2, pp. 59-69

2/24 *Meditations* 6, pp. 92-103

2/26 Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, pp. 3-10

**Week 7** 2/29 Freud, *The Ego and the Id* cont’d., pp. 11-21

3/2 *The Ego and the Id* cont’d., pp. 22-36

3/4 Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, pp. 1-10

**Week 8** 3/7 *On Free Choice of the Will* cont’d., pp. 10-20

3/9 *On Free Choice of the Will* cont’d., pp. 21-28, 69, 74-83

**(Response Paper I Due by this Date)**

3/11 Dostoyevsky, Selection from *The Brothers Karamazov*, “The Grand Inquisitor” (Ares)

**Week 9** 3/14 “The Grand Inquisitor” cont’d. (Ares)

3/16 Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions* pp. 9-20

3/18 **No Class Spring Break**

**Week 10** 3/21 **No Class Spring Break**

3/23 **No Class Spring Break**

3/25 **No Class Spring Break**

**Week 11** 3/28 **No Class Easter Break**

3/30 *Existentialism and Human Emotions* cont’d., pp. 20-40

4/1 *Existentialism and Human Emotions* cont’d., pp. 40-51

**Week 12** 4/4 Film: *Crimes and Misdemeanors*

4/6 Film: *Crimes and Misdemeanors*

4/8 Adina Roskies, “Neuroscientific Challenges to Free Will and Responsibility” (Author’s Website)

**Week 13** 4/11 **Exam II**

4/13 Locke, Selection from *Second Treatise of Government* (Ares)

4/15 *Second Treatise of Government* cont’d. (Ares)

**(Deadline to withdraw with grade of W)**

**Week 14** 4/18 Mills, Selection from *The Racial Contract* (Ares)

4/20 Mills, *The Racial Contract* cont’d.

4/22 Aristotle, Selection from *Nichomachean Ethics*, “On Friendship” (Ares)

**Week 15** 4/25 “On Friendship” cont’d. (Ares)

4/27 Hegel, Selection from *Lectures on Fine Art* (Ares)

4/29 *Lectures on Fine Art* cont’d. (Ares)

**Week 16** 5/2 *Lectures on Fine Art* cont’d. (Ares)

5/4 *Lectures on Fine Art* cont’d. (Potential trip to the Haggerty Museum)

5/6 Review **(Response Paper II Due by this Date)**

**Final Exam: May 12th, 1-3pm**