

# PHIL 1001: Philosophy of Human Nature

Spring 2018

Marquette University

**Section 117:** T,Th 8:00-9:15 (Emory Clark Hall 119)

**Instructor:** Robert K. Whitaker

**Office Hours:** Tuesday & Thursday: 9:30-11:00; or by appointment (Marquette Hall 449)

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## Course Description

The purpose of this course is to think very hard for a long time about what it means to be human. This is of course a very old question, and as this is an introductory philosophy course, we will be considering what several influential philosophers have had to say about it. The course deals with the following four problem areas: human choice, human cognition, the affective, social, and spiritual dimensions of the human person, and the unity of the human being. A substantive treatment of classical and Christian philosophical approaches will be included. To provide some structure, I have divided the course into a series of week-long units, each dealing with an issue that has been a major part of the philosophical discussion about human nature. These include questions such as: “What makes us human?”, “Is there a soul, and if so, does it survive the death of the body?”, “Are humans free?”, “Is knowledge possible?”, “Does God exist, and if so, what is humanity’s relation to God?”, and many others. Our primary purpose is to consider these questions, learn the answers and reasons for them that some philosophers have given, and develop the tools to articulate our own positions on them. A secondary purpose is to give students an idea of how philosophy as a discipline is structured, and what professional philosophers get up to on a daily basis. We will also be continually asking why it all matters and how it’s relevant to what real people value. A tertiary purpose is to learn how to think and write more clearly, and to learn to be critical and suspicious in a healthy, constructive way. We will do all this by examining the approaches to these questions taken by philosophers ranging from ancient Greece, through Christianity and non-Western traditions, into the present.

## Texts

§ There is no required textbook for this class. All required and recommended readings will be available on electronic reserve via Ares and/or on D2L.

## Knowledge Area Learning Outcomes

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

- (1) Assess views of human nature in various philosophical traditions, including classic Greek and Catholic philosophical traditions.
- (2) Argue for one of the major ethical theories over another in terms of philosophical cogency and practical outcome.

- (3) Use philosophical reasoning to develop the student's own position on central issues in human nature and ethics, for example, the relation between mind and body, the problem of freedom and determinism, the spiritual and affective dimensions of human life, the extent of human knowledge, the justification of moral judgments, and the elucidation of moral norms.

### **Course Objectives and Assessment**

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.
- (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.
- (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.
- (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.
- (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.
- (6) The student will be able to compare and contrast the philosophers' positions studied in the course.

Attainment of objectives (1) – (5) will be assessed primarily through reading responses, reading quizzes, and the midterm and final exams. Attainment of objective (6) will be assessed primarily through the critical paper, in-class video responses, and the midterm and final exams. All objectives will also be assessed via class participation.

### **Relation between Course Objectives and Area Outcomes**

- (1) 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.
- (2) 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.

(1) Outcome 2 does not apply to this course.

## Course Requirements

### Course Composition:

Reading Responses	20%
Reading Quizzes	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Critical Paper	20%
Video Responses	5%
Participation	5%

The grading scale is as follows:

A	94 – 100	C	73 – 76.9
A-	90 – 93.9	C-	70 – 72.9
B+	87 – 89.9	D+	67 – 69.9
B	83 – 86.9	D	60 – 66.9
B-	80 – 82.9	F	... – 59.9
C+	77 – 79.9		

**Reading Responses:** There will be 8 short reading responses assigned throughout the course of the semester (see readings in the schedule marked with an ‘R’), of which you are responsible for **5**. You may write up to **6** of these. If you write 6, I will drop your lowest grade. If you wish, you may write only 5, but you will be stuck with the grades you get. I highly recommend writing all 6. These are to be **no more than a half page** double spaced (this should be roughly 2-3 paragraphs—do not exceed this!), and are to be purely exegetical. You will **summarize the main arguments of the author; do not provide your own opinion**. The goal here is to develop the skills needed to read philosophy. Please cite the page number of the relevant reading for any quotations and major points; no outside sources will be necessary. Hand in a hard copy at the beginning of class on the day the reading is assigned. Reading responses will not be accepted after the class for which they are assigned, and you must be present for the whole class on the day you turn in a response (unless you have a valid excuse). Each response is worth **4%** of your final grade.

**Reading Quizzes:** Several times during the semester, I will assign a short reading quiz. The quizzes will be administered **via D2L** (see “Quizzes” tab). Each quiz is due by class time on the day the reading is assigned. Late quizzes will not be accepted. To ensure that you do not merely skim the readings for the answers, you will have **5 minutes** to complete each quiz (this will be plenty of time if you have completed the reading beforehand). Collectively, the reading quizzes constitute **10%** of your final grade.

**Midterm Exam:** There will be a midterm exam on **Thursday, March 8**. The exam will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

**Final Exam:** There will be a (non-comprehensive) final exam on **Friday, May 11 from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**. The exam will include multiple choice, short answer, short essay, and a longer essay.

**Critical Paper:** The critical paper consists of an articulation and assessment of at least one of the philosophical views considered during the course of the semester. This does not have to be a direct response to one of the readings, though it should be conversant with at least one of the authors we've covered. As with the reading responses, you will need to identify and explain the argument or position you are responding to, but the bulk of the paper should be your own argumentation. This may take the form of critiquing the argument of an author, critiquing a philosophical position taken by one or more authors, critiquing an entire style of approach to a type of philosophical problem, and/or making a positive case for your own view over and against the view of one or more of our authors. I will provide a list of potential topics for this paper, and I encourage you to choose something that interests you. You may also suggest something that is not on the list (pending my approval). You will submit the paper (PDF or Word files only please) **in the D2L dropbox by Thursday, April 12, at 11:59 pm**. There is no need to turn in a hard copy.

*Specifications:* 3-4 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins, correct grammar, and proper citation.\* See "Critical Paper Rubric" on D2L for further detail.

\* I do not care what citation style you use, so long as whatever style you choose is consistent throughout, and so long as all sources, quotations, and borrowed ideas are properly cited (see below regarding academic honesty). No cover page is necessary. Footnotes are preferred over endnotes.

**Video Responses:** Five times throughout the course of the semester, I will assign short videos for you to watch before class (see places in the schedule marked with a "V"). The videos will typically feature some thought-provoking content relevant to the unit we are in at that time. You will prepare a question about the video(s), and bring it to class, typed and printed. **Handwritten questions will not be accepted.** We will watch the video(s) again together in class, and then split into groups to discuss your questions. You will turn in your questions at the end of class. To receive credit, you must be present for the whole class on the day you turn in a response (unless you have a valid excuse). These will not be graded for content, but you will receive **one participation point** for each question you turn in, which together will constitute **5%** of your final grade.

**Participation:** Participation involves two things: 1. class involvement, and 2. at least one 1-on-1 meeting with me outside of class. **Class involvement:** your involvement is essential to the success of this class and to your success in this class. This means that a) active listening and note-taking, b) open questioning, and c) creative discussion are expected of you. Note that all of these things require attendance; thus, if your attendance drops below the required minimum, your participation grade will suffer. Class involvement constitutes **4%** of your final grade (though excessive absences will result in a greater than 4% grade reduction—see below under "Attendance"). **Individual meeting:** you are responsible for meeting with me at least once during office hours or by appointment **on or before May 3**. This meeting may be in relation to your paper or another class assignment, but this is not necessary. A 10-15 minute chat about questions you might have had in class or anything philosophical fulfills this requirement. Please do not delay in scheduling this meeting, as I cannot guarantee extra appointments towards the end of the semester. The individual meeting constitutes **1%** of your final grade.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. From the University Attendance Policy:

“Students are responsible for attending all class meetings for courses in which they are registered. Any absence, regardless of the reason, prevents students from getting the full benefit of the course and as such, no distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences, with the following exceptions:

1. Absences resulting from legal obligations (such as jury duty).
2. Absences due to religious observances.
3. Absences resulting from university sanctioned activities and related travel.”

For more info, see: <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>.

For a 2 day/week course such as this, **any unexcused absences beyond five will result in a lowering of your grade.** 6 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 2 participation points; 7 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 4 participation points. More than 7 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 4 participation points, plus a further 4 percentage points off the **final course grade** per absence over 7. Please discuss any planned absences with me long in advance. Additionally, punctuality is expected; if you come to class late, it is your responsibility to make sure I know you are there, preferably by seeing me at the end of class so I can mark you on the attendance sheet.

**Late Work Policy:** Five percentage points will be deducted from the student’s assignment grade for each late day (including weekends). For example, a student who has earned an 85% (B) on a paper but who has turned it in a day late may receive a maximum grade of 80% (B-).

**Extra Credit:** I have included several **recommended readings** in the schedule. These are clearly marked as “Recommended” and appear in a slightly smaller font size. You are not required to read these for class, but if you choose, you may read one and write a short (2-3 paragraph) response summarizing the main argument of the article. These should be similar in style to a normal reading response, and each will be worth a maximum of **2 final percentage points**. You may write a maximum of **two** extra credit reading responses during the semester. These may be turned in (hard copy please) any time up to and including **May 3**.

**Grading:** Grading rubrics for the critical paper and the reading responses will be posted on D2L.

**Writing:** Good writing is a basic skill in any professional field, and I expect you to put in the necessary effort to make sure that your paper, reading responses, and exam essays are lucid and well organized. A **“Tips for Writing Philosophy Papers”** document will be posted on D2L. Please use it. If you need additional help with this, the Ott Memorial Writing Center, located on the second floor of Raynor Library, offers comprehensive guidance in writing for the entire Marquette community. In one-on-one sessions, tutors assist writers in identifying topics, revising, and creating final drafts. Appointments can be made by calling (414) 288-5542 or visiting <https://marquette.mywconline.com/>.

**Reading:** The reading for this course is difficult. Despite this, it is crucial that you keep up with the reading schedule and engage the material (especially since the lectures and all assignments are based on the readings). This means setting aside adequate time to engage the material *before class*. I have tried to keep the assigned readings to a length that allows you to wrestle with the material without getting overwhelmed. If something from the reading is unclear, you may always bring it up in class, or in a meeting with me.

**Academic Dishonesty:** The College of Arts and Sciences and the Philosophy Department policies on academic dishonesty will be enforced. *Ignorance is not an excuse*. Please refer to these policies for more details or contact me with particular questions in order to avoid any problems. The College’s policies can be found in

the Undergraduate Bulletin and online here:

<http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#academichonestypolicy>.

More information on what counts as academic dishonesty as well as tips on how to avoid it can be found here: <http://libguides.marquette.edu/plagiarism>, and here: <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism/>.

\*A useful, but not foolproof, rule of thumb: When in doubt, err on the side of over-citing.

In this course you will be required to submit written assignments in electronic form to a plagiarism detection website called Turnitin (this is done automatically via the D2L dropbox). Your assignments become a permanent part of the Turnitin database, but will not be used for any other purpose than checking for plagiarism.

**Disabilities:** Students with documented physical or learning disabilities wishing to have special accommodations should contact me as soon as possible. In addition, the Office of Disability Services is available to assist you. They can be reached by phone at (414) 288-1645 or online here: <http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services/>.

**Phones and Computers:** Unless a legitimate reason is provided, mobile phones and computers are to be off and put away for the duration of the class. Texting, or any other form of electronic communication, is strictly prohibited. Use of phones, computers, tablets, etc., will lower your participation grade.

**Food and Drink:** Please try to avoid bringing food into the classroom. However, in the exceptional case, choose being engaged in class while eating a snack over not eating and being unable to focus. Beverages in closed containers are welcome.

**Conduct:** Disagreement is a basic feature of philosophy and all other academic discourse. In this class, we will be discussing important and controversial issues. We may be engaging in discussions which challenge some of our most deeply held beliefs, and disagreement is sure to arise. For this reason, it is vital for each student, and myself, to always conduct ourselves with the utmost generosity and sensitivity toward one another and our authors. I reserve the right to steer discussions in whatever way I deem most appropriate to the day's lesson, and I will not tolerate rude, disrespectful, or offensive comments. If you are unsure whether something you plan to say or do could possibly be offensive, always talk to me before sharing it with the class.

# Tentative Schedule

\*All readings should be completed by the date assigned.\*

“R” indicates a Reading Response assignment

“V” indicates a Video Response assignment

Date	Text	Page #
<b>What Is Philosophy?</b>		
<b>Week 1</b> (1/16 - 1/18)	Intro to Course	
	What Is an Argument? (No Reading)	
	Bertrand Russell: <i>Philosophy for Laymen</i>	1-10
<b>Death and the Soul</b>		
<b>Week 2</b> (1/23 - 1/25)	Plato: <i>Apology</i>	1-17
	<i>Recommended:</i> Plato: “The Allegory of the Cave”	63-70
	Plato: <i>Phaedo</i>	127-133
	Aristotle: <i>On the Soul</i>	134-138
<b>Mind and Body</b>		
<b>Week 3</b> (1/30 - 2/1)	Alvin Plantinga: “Against Materialism”	3-15
	Peter van Inwagen: “Dualism and Physicalism”	224-240
	<i>Recommended:</i> David Armstrong: “The Nature of Mind”	270-277
	Plantinga (Continued)	17-22
	van Inwagen (Continued)	240-245
<b>Mind and Body (Continued) / Personal Identity</b>		
<b>Week 4</b> (2/6 - 2/8)	Plantinga (Continued)	
	van Inwagen (Continued)	<b>V</b>
	Gilbert Ryle: “The Myth of the Ghost in the Machine”	<b>R</b>
	John Perry: “A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality”	176-181
	<i>Recommended:</i> John Locke: “Of Identity and Diversity”	1-23
	<i>Recommended:</i> David Hume: “On Identity and Personal Identity”	124-134
		140-148
<b>Consciousness</b>		
<b>Week 5</b> (2/13 - 2/15)	Thomas Nagel: “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?”	421-427
	<i>Recommended:</i> John Searle: “Reductionism and the Irreducibility of Consciousness”	312-320
	Frank Jackson: “Epiphenomenal Qualia”	<b>R</b>
		427-433
<b>Consciousness (Continued) / Free Will</b>		
<b>Week 6</b> (2/20 - 2/22)	Alva Noë: “An Astonishing Hypothesis”	<b>V</b>
	Peter van Inwagen: “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will”	3-24
	<i>Recommended:</i> G.E. Moore: “Free Will”	267-285
		396-401
<b>Free Will (Continued) / Evolution</b>		

<b>Week 7</b> (2/27 - 3/1)	Harry Frankfurt: "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" Charles Darwin: from <i>The Descent of Man</i>		408-414 34-69
	Edouard Machery: "A Plea for Human Nature"	<b>R</b>	64-69
<b>Evolution (Continued) / God / Midterm Exam</b>			
<b>Week 8</b> (3/6 - 3/8)	"Does Evolution Explain Human Nature?" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frans de Waal: "Obviously, Says the Monkey."</li> <li>• Simon Conway Morris: "Except Where It Matters."</li> <li>• Jeffrey Schloss: "Totally, for a Martian."</li> </ul>		1-2 1-2 1-2
	William Rowe: "The Idea of God"	<b>V</b>	4-15
<b>*Midterm Exam*</b>			
<b>Spring Break</b>			
<b>Week 9</b> (3/13 - 3/15)	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK		
<b>God</b>			
<b>Week 10</b> (3/20 - 3/22)	William Rowe: "The Idea of God" (Continued) William Lane Craig: "Five Arguments for God – the Cosmological Argument from Contingency, and the Kalam Cosmological Argument" <i>Recommended:</i> William Rowe: "The Cosmological Argument"		4-15 1-10 16-28
	CLASS CANCELLED		
<b>God and Evil</b>			
<b>Week 11</b> (3/27 - 3/29)	Arguments for God's Existence (Continued) Augustine: "Evil Is Privation of Good" Fyodor Dostoevsky: "The Problem of Evil" (from <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> ) <i>Recommended:</i> Anselm: "The Ontological Argument" <i>Recommended:</i> Bruce Russell & Stephen Wykstra: "The 'Inductive' Argument from Evil: A Dialogue" <i>Recommended:</i> John Hick: "Soul-Making and Suffering"	<b>R</b>	251-255 3-13 709-710 495-511 168-188
	NO CLASS: EASTER BREAK		
<b>Knowledge and Skepticism</b>			
<b>Week 12</b> (4/3 - 4/5)	Sextus Empiricus: "The Five Modes" René Descartes: Meditations 1 & 2 (from <i>Meditations</i> ) <i>Recommended:</i> Hilary Putnam: "Brains in a Vat"	<b>V</b>	372-374 513-523 433-443
	G.E. Moore: "Proof of an External World" G.E. Moore: "Hume's Theory Examined"	<b>R</b>	602-605 606-611
<b>Knowledge and the A Priori</b>			
<b>Week 13</b> (4/10 - 4/12)	Plato: from <i>Meno</i> Immanuel Kant: "The Nature of Knowledge"		131-141 27-31

	Bertrand Russell: "How A Priori Knowledge Is Possible" (from <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i> ) <b>*Critical Paper Due*</b>	<b>R</b>	152-165
<b>State of Nature</b>			
<b>Week 14</b> <b>(4/17 - 4/19)</b>	Thomas Hobbes: "The Social Contract" Jean-Jacques Rousseau: from "Discourse on Inequality" & a Selection from <i>Emile</i> <i>Recommended:</i> John Stuart Mill: "The Limits of Majority Rule"		1-6 6-10 110-113 516-522
	John Rawls: "The Original Position and the Principles of Justice" Robert Nozick: "A Libertarian Critique of Rawls"	<b>R</b>	684-693 694-702
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Week 15</b> <b>(4/24 - 4/26)</b>	<i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> : "Topics in Feminism," § 2 Mary Wollstonecraft: "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" John Stuart Mill: from <i>The Subjection of Women</i>	<b>R</b>	1-9 397-408 153-161
	Wollstonecraft & Mill (Continued) Phyllis Rooney: "Gendered Reason: Sex Metaphor and Conceptions of Reason" <i>Recommended:</i> Nancy Holmstrom: "Is Human Nature Important for Feminism?"		77-98 543-554
<b>Race</b>			
<b>Week 16</b> <b>(5/1 - 5/3)</b>	Sally A. Haslanger: "A Social Constructionist Analysis of Race" <i>Recommended:</i> Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Letter from Birmingham Jail"	<b>V</b>	377-384 1-6
	Lawrence Blum: "Can Blacks Be Racist?" from <i>I'm Not a Racist But...</i> <b>*Grill the Instructor</b>		33-52
<b>Final Exam</b>			
<b>Week 17</b> <b>(5/11)</b>	<b>Friday, 5/11, 1:00 - 3:00 pm</b>		