

COURSE INFORMATION & SYLLABUS

I. This course will offer an investigation into the structures of human existence, focusing on freedom, rationality, sociality, affectivity, embodiment and intersubjectivity. We will also examine the character of philosophical inquiry, focusing on its styles of questioning and conceptual and argumentative analysis. The course will proceed through examining various conflicting interpretations of human existence offered by philosophers and other thinkers.

II. Texts:

Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett)

The majority of readings as well as class notes are contained in a course packet or my academic website. You should download and print this material.

III. Assessment

A. University Knowledge Area Outcomes for Human Nature and Ethics (2 courses)

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. [Phil 050] [All of the course learning objectives are related to this knowledge area outcome]. This outcome is assessed through three in-class exams comprising short answer and essay questions that require students state, explain, and compare and contrast the various theories studied in the course.

2. Argue for one of the major ethical theories over another in terms of philosophical cogency and practical outcome. [Phil 104] [None of the objectives objectives below are related to this item since it is covered in Phil 104].

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. [Phil 050 and 104] [Students will write a paper in which they take and defend their own position on a particular topic from a range of specified topics. Which particular learning objective below is related to this knowledge area outcome depends upon the topic the student chooses.] This outcome is assessed through a position paper in which students have to take and defend a position on a specified topic.

B. 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.

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.

IV. Requirements:

There will be three non-cumulative exams and one position paper (about 1 page).. The paper will be worth 30 points. Each exam will be worth 100 points. Exams are graded on a curve in the sense that I generally set the cutoff for a BC at the median score for an exam and adjust the other grade cutoff points with respect to the BC cutoff. The position paper will be worth 30 points and will be graded on this scale: A/29, AB/27, B/25, BC/23, etc. The cutoffs for grade levels on the final grade are set as the sum of the cutoffs for the grade level on the individual assignments. So, if the cutoff points for an A on the exams are 94, 90, and 91, then the cutoff point for an A on the final grade is: 94+90+91+29= 304 points. I will consider quality class participation as a factor in deciding whether to raise borderline final grades.

The exams will be a mixture of short answer, definitions and essay questions. The exams are designed for you to show me that you have a critical and detailed understanding of the readings and of material covered in class. Some of the short answer questions will be drawn strictly from readings. The position paper, on the other hand, will require you to take a philosophical position on a selected topic.

IV. Tentative Course Schedule (See the next section, Course Units and Readings, for more detail.)

1. Jan. 15-29: Unit I
2. Jan. 31-14: Unit II
3. Feb. 19: EXAM 1
4. Feb. 21- Mar 11 Unit IIIA
4. March 13, 18, 20 – Spring & Easter Break
4. Mar. 25-27 -- Unit IIIB
5. April 1: EXAM 2
6. April 3-15: Unit IIIC
7. April. 17-22: Unit IV
8. April 24-May 1 Unit V

COURSE UNITS AND READINGS (All material in course packet unless otherwise noted.)

For each unit, you will find a set of notes on my website. You should download and print them.

UNIT 1: HUMAN LIFE AS A QUEST FOR MEANING

Plato's *Apology* (*Five Dialogues*); Ralph Ellison, "Preface" (from *The Invisible Man*)

UNIT 2: FREEDOM

Notes for Unit 2 (Jjones Website), Jacques Theroux, "Freedom versus Determinism" from *Ethics Theory and Practice* (C, 14-25); Aquinas (Text on the Freedom of the Will).

UNIT 3: RATIONALITY

A. Classical Distinction Between Mind and Body

Notes for Unit 3A (Jjones Website). Readings: Plato, selections from *Phaedo* (*Five Dialogues*), Aristotle, and Aquinas (Handouts); Paul Churchland, "Dualism and Materialism" from *Matter and Consciousness*

B. Rationalism and Empiricism

Notes for Unit IIIB and reading by Brandt, *The Truths of Reason*

C. The Role of Reason in Human Life

Notes for Unit 3 C (Jjones Website). Plato, selection from *Five Dialogues* TBA ; D.T. Suzuki, selections from "The Doctrine of Enlightenment" and Kallistos Ware, "How Do We Enter the Heart, and What Do We Find When We Enter?"

UNIT 4: SOCIALITY

Notes for Unit 4. (Reading TBA)

UNIT 5: AFFECTIVITY AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Notes for Unit 5 for entire unit (Jjones Website).

A. The Nature of Love

W. Luijpen, "Love" from *Introduction to Existential Phenomenology*

B. Anxiety, Stigmatization and Marginalization

E.Jones, et. al., "The Peril of Stigma" from *Social Stigma*

VI. SOME GENERAL COMMENTS:

(A) My Office is in Coughlin Hall 137; tele. Ext is 5938. My EMAIL john.jones@marquette.edu. My academic website is at: <http://academic.mu.edu/phil/jones/>. Office hours will be TTh 10:15-10:45 PM and TTh 12:20-1:20. I am available at other times during the week for appointments. If my office hours are not convenient for you, please let me know in person or by E-MAIL and we can set up an appointment.

(B) You are expected to take exams and turn in assignments on the due dates. No makeup exams will be given except for serious reasons such as illness, a death in the family, etc. If your position paper is submitted late, it will incur a 5 point penalty.

(C) It will be necessary for you to complete readings in a timely manner. Remember that in philosophy, we are very concerned with defining and justifying positions through careful argumentation and precise use of language. It is not enough to know just what positions people hold; you must also know why they hold those positions and how and for what reasons one position differs from others. You cannot understand this without reading the material; you will not get it if you only read the material on time.

(D) Please, if there is some good reason why you cannot take an exam, such as illness, make certain to contact me before the exam is given. I cannot make accommodations for special situations AFTER you have taken an exam.

(E) The use of cell phones in class is prohibited in class. ***NO portable electronic communication devices are permitted in class during examinations.*** I follow the College and Dept procedures on Academic Dishonesty. For department procedures see: <http://www.marquette.edu/phil/pdfs/academicdishonesty.pdf>

(F) Attendance is required.