

PHILOSOPHY R122: PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Loyola University of New Orleans, Fall 2016, Dr. Ben Bayer

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION AND POLICIES

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to be a human being? This is one example of a philosophical question, and one that connects to a great many cultural and political controversies. In this course, we will begin by examining two such controversies (about abortion and inequality), which to resolve we would have to answer crucial questions about the nature of humanity. After illustrating the variety of philosophical questions that intersect with these everyday disputes, we will proceed to examine some of those major questions in greater depth. These will include questions about the relationship between morality and the self, questions about freedom of the will, and questions about the relationship between views of the human person and view of a divine person.

COURSE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

1. To cultivate student competence in philosophical inquiry through the reading of primary texts in the history of philosophy and the understanding and evaluation of philosophical argumentation.
2. To cultivate student inquiry into fundamental philosophical issues and their relation to the history of philosophy through the understanding and evaluation of philosophical argumentation and the comprehension of basic issues in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.

Learn more about Loyola's learning objectives for this course here: <http://goo.gl/dhSg5t>

GRADING

Quizzes	15%
Online participation	15%
Paper #1	20%
Paper #2	20%
Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	15%
In-class participation	Extra credit up to an extra 5%

REQUIRED TEXTS

- All texts are public domain/royalty free readings available on Blackboard.

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

NOTE: All materials on Blackboard are either public domain and no longer under copyright protection, freely offered by their copyright holders on the public internet, or reproduced and stored on Blackboard with the permission of the copyright holders. When stored on Blackboard, their status is indicated under the title and source of the piece. I do not use or link to any materials that have been placed on the internet without the permission of the copyright holder. This is important to maintain moral and academic integrity.

Introduction: the value of philosophy

Monday, August 22nd

Introduction

Wednesday, August 24th

The practical value of philosophy

- (1) Ayn Rand, "Philosophy: Who Needs It" (Blackboard)

Friday, August 26th

The practical value of philosophy

- (1) Ayn Rand, “Philosophy: Who Needs It” (continued)

The impractical value of philosophy

- (2) Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy,” from *The Problems of Philosophy* (Blackboard)

Monday, August 29th

The impractical value of philosophy

- (2) Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy” (continued)

Cultural controversies with a philosophical dimension

Wednesday, August 31st

Abortion rights: Anti

- (3) Pope John Paul II, “The Unspeakable Crime of Abortion,” from the papal encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (Blackboard)

Friday, September 1st

Abortion rights: Pro

- (4) Leonard Peikoff, “Abortion Rights are Pro-Life.” Read online: <http://goo.gl/XxngrS>

Monday, September 5th—LABOR DAY HOLIDAY—NO CLASS

Wednesday, September 7th

Inequality: Not a problem

- (5) Don Watkins, “Economic Inequality Complaints Are Just A Cover For Anti-Rich Prejudice.” Read online: <http://goo.gl/Yeo0LN>

Friday, September 9th

Inequality: A problem

- (6) Elbert Ventura, “Self-Made in America.” Read online: <http://goo.gl/tKtSrW>

PAPER #1 DUE: 11:59pm (just before midnight)

Philosophical questions about morality

Monday, September 12th

The soul and ideal goodness

- (7) Plato, “The Good and Practicing for Death,” from *The Phaedo* (Blackboard)

Wednesday, September 14th

- (8) Plato, “The Soul’s Pursuit of Perfection,” from *The Republic* and *The Symposium* (Blackboard)

Friday, September 16th

Human nature and the human good

- (9) Aristotle, “The Ultimate Human Good,” from *Nicomachean Ethics* (Blackboard)

Monday, September 19th

The nature of the human self

- (10) Aristotle, “Self-Love and Intellectual Contemplation,” from *Nicomachean Ethics* (Blackboard)

Wednesday, September 21st

Moral rightness vs. self-interest

- (11) Immanuel Kant, “The Morality of Rational Universalizability,” from *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Blackboard)

Friday, September 23rd

Moral rightness vs. self-interest

- (11) Immanuel Kant, “The Morality of Rational Universalizability” (continued)

The nature of the human self and its evil

- (12) Immanuel Kant, “Rational Freedom Thwarts the Evil of Human Nature,” from *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* and *The Critique of Practical Reason* (Blackboard)

Monday, September 26th

The morality of self-interest

- (13) Ayn Rand, “The Morality of Rational Self-Interest,” from *The Virtue of Selfishness* and *The Ayn Rand Letter* (Blackboard)

Wednesday, September 28th

The morality of self-interest

- (13) Ayn Rand, “The Morality of Rational Self-Interest” (continued)

Friday, September 30th

The ethics of care

- (14) Virginia Held, “The Ethics of Care: Beyond Self and Others,” from *Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory* (Blackboard)

Monday, October 3rd

The ethics of care

- (14) Virginia Held (continued)

Philosophical questions about free will

Wednesday, October 5th

Rational selfishness as universal

- (15) Nikolai Chernyshevsky, “We are All Motivated by Self-Interest,” from *The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy* (Blackboard)

Friday, October 7th

Irrationality self-destruction as real

- (16) Fyodor Dostoevsky, “We are Free to Be Irrational,” from *Notes From Underground* (Blackboard)

Monday, October 10th—FALL BREAK HOLIDAY—NO CLASS

Wednesday, October 12th

MIDTERM EXAM: 11:59pm (just before midnight)

Friday, October 14th

Materialistic determinism

- (17) Baron d’Holbach, “We are Not Free Agents,” from *System of Nature* (Blackboard)

Monday, October 17th

Materialistic determinism

- (17) Baron d’Holbach (continued)

Wednesday, October 19th

The compatibility of free will and determinism

- (18) David Hume, “We Are Free to Act,” from *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (Blackboard)

Friday, October 21st

The compatibility of free will and determinism

- (18) David Hume (continued)

Monday, October 24th

The incompatibility of free will and determinism

- (19) Thomas Reid, “We Determine Our Own Will,” from *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (Blackboard)

Wednesday, October 26th

The incompatibility of free will and determinism

- (19) Thomas Reid (continued)

Friday, October 28th

Pragmatic indeterminism

- (20) William James, from “The Dilemma of Determinism”

Monday October 31st

Pragmatic indeterminism

- (21) William James, from *Talks to Teachers*

The choice to think or not to think

- (22) Harry Binswanger on Ayn Rand, from “Volition as Cognitive Self-Regulation” (Blackboard)

Wednesday, November 2nd

The choice to think or not to think

- (22) Harry Binswanger on Ayn Rand (continued)

Philosophical questions about God

Can we have free will if there is a God?

Friday, November 4th

God-given free will

- (23) St. Augustine, “Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will are Compatible,” from *City of God* (Blackboard)

Monday, November 7th

God as the only source of salvation

- (24) St. Augustine, “Against the Pelagians,” from *On Grace and Free Will* (Blackboard)

Wednesday, November 9th

God vs. free will

- (25) Martin Luther, “Our Salvation is Predestined,” from *Bondage of the Will* (Blackboard)

Can there be moral obligations if there is no God?

Friday, November 11th

Divine command theory

- (26) William Lane Craig, “Can We Be Good Without God?” Read online: <http://is.gd/jZDZ9n>

Monday, November 14th

The practice of divine command theory

- (27) “Divine Commands,” from *Genesis* and *Exodus* (Blackboard)
- (28) Thomas Aquinas, “On the Dispensability of the Decalogue,” from *Summa Theologica* (Blackboard)
- (29) The Bible: *The Gospel of Matthew, John’s First Epistle, Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Blackboard)

Wednesday, November 16th

The practice of divine command theory

- (30) The Bible (continued)

Friday, November 18th

A critique of divine command theory

- (31) TO BE ANNOUNCED

Monday, November 21st

A critique of divine command theory

- (31) TO BE ANNOUNCED

Tuesday, November 22nd

PAPER #1 DUE: 11:59pm (just before midnight)

Wednesday, November 23rd to Friday, November 25th—THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS—NO CLASSES

Is there a God?

Monday, November 28th

Religious testimony

- (32) William Paley, from *Evidences of Christianity* (Blackboard)
- (33) John Locke, from *The Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Blackboard)

Wednesday, November 30th

Religious testimony as self-undermining

- (34) David Hume, from *The Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (Blackboard)

Friday, December 1st

An argument for God’s existence from causes

- (35) St. Thomas Aquinas, “Cosmological Arguments,” from *Summa Theologica* (Blackboard)
- (36) Samuel Clarke, from *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (Blackboard)

Monday, December 5th

A critique of the argument for God from causes

- (37) Hume, from *Dialogues Concerning Natural religion* (Blackboard)

Wednesday, December 7th

An argument for God’s existence from design

- (38) William Paley, from *Natural Theology* (Blackboard)

Friday, December 9th

A critique of the argument for God from design

- (39) David Hume, from *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Blackboard)