

PHILOSOPHY 100.02 CONCEPTS OF THE PERSON
MWF 8:20 – 9:15 Grad Chem 123
Spring Semester 2001

Instructor: Chris Johns E-Mail: cjohns@ic.sunysb.edu Philosophy Dept. office: 632-7570	Office: 149A Harriman Hall Office Hours: After class until 10:30, and by appointment.
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Course Description: This course is a general introduction to philosophy, focusing somewhat on the concept of “person.” We will explore questions regarding the “essence” of a person (psychologically and theologically); what knowledge is; whether (and if) the soul can be distinguished from the body; whether humans have free choice (and if so, why don’t they use it?); and how societal contexts dramatically alter human behavior. Throughout the course, we will be attentive to the ways in which historical contexts affect both human nature and the theories about it. This course is also an introduction to philosophical ways of thinking, which emphasizes the close analysis of concepts and the development of critical thinking.

To do well in this class you will have to slog through *much* difficult reading, suffer through *mind-numbing* lectures and discussions, survive *torturous* writing assignments and exams, and then rack your brains over *even more* painful thinking. But it will be fun.

Required Texts: Two books are required, all of which may be purchased at Stony Books, across from the train station. The books may or may not be available at the University bookstore.

- Plato. *The Last Days of Socrates*.
- Augustine. *On Free Choice of the Will*.
- Descartes. *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations*
- Rousseau. *Discourse on Inequality*.
- Dostoevsky. “The Grand Inquisitor.”
- Freud. *Civilization and its Discontents*.
- Extra material you will copy from the philosophy office, 213 Harriman.
- Optional, but recommended: Pence, Gregory. *A Dictionary of Common Philosophical Terms*.

Course Requirements:

Paper One: (3 pages) 15%
Paper Two: (3-4 pages) 20%
Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 25%
Response Papers 15%
Participation 5%

Papers: I will provide you with paper topics two weeks before the due date. Papers handed in after the due date will be rejected or penalized. Papers must be typed in a normal font, double spaced, and have one-inch margins. Papers must support a clearly defined thesis. I will provide you with details on what I expect, and on how to organize a good paper.

Response Papers: By Friday of each week you must hand in a one-page (typed, double spaced) response paper to the assigned readings. (If you prefer, you may hand in on Monday a response

to a reading assigned the previous Friday.) The paper should consist of at least two substantial paragraphs. The first paragraph should be an attempt to explain a certain passage or point made by a specific author. The second paragraph should consist of your reaction to what the author said—agreement, disagreement, confusion, and *why*. Papers will be graded on a five-point scale. At least 60 points gets you an A for 15% of your course grade.

Attendance and Participation: Since classes are short, and since latecomers are distracting, please be on time. Most days I will take attendance. If you do not arrive by the time attendance is taken, you will be marked absent. Attendance will be figured into your participation grade. **If you accumulate more than eight unexcused absences during the semester, you will automatically fail the course.** I will excuse an absence only if you give me written documentation for a legitimate excuse. Keep in mind that coming to class will most likely improve your exam and paper grades. Participating in class discussions, asking questions, and so forth, will help all of your grades, especially the Participation grade.

Also, as part of your participation grade, at some point in the semester you must ask one question during class time on the assigned readings. The question must be prepared ahead of time, and must show some thoughtful engagement with the text. I will hand out a sign-up sheet. Of course, you are always welcome to ask questions at any time.

Exams: Exams will be comprehensive. Exam make-ups will be given *only* for serious reasons accompanied by written documentation.

Plagiarism: To put it bluntly, plagiarism is lying and stealing, and will not be tolerated. Unfortunately, too many students try it. Do not underestimate my ability to spot it. I have sent many a dismayed student to the Office of Academic Judiciary. These days it is easy to get papers off the Internet, but it is also easy for teachers to find them on the Internet. Yet the Internet is not the only source of plagiarism.

However, plagiarism is a complex issue. If you are unsure about how to cite sources properly, please talk to me. If you are having trouble with an assignment, it is always best to talk to me *before* handing in your paper. I would rather see you struggle with a topic and learn something, rather than fail you for dishonesty.

University Services:

- Writing Center: If you have writing issues that need extra attention, please take advantage of the Writing Center's tutorial services. These instructors help all students, from first-year to doctoral. Keep in mind that they will *not* proofread or copy-edit your work. Call 632-7405 for an appointment, or stop by Humanities 198. Check out <http://ws.cc.sunysb.edu/writrhet/description/writctr.html> for more information.
- Disability: If you have a mental or physical disability and require special assistance, please contact Disabled Student Services (DSS), Humanities 133, 2-6748. All information is strictly confidential.
- Ombud: If you are having a conflict with the teacher or other students, and you need to speak confidentially to a neutral party, please consult the Ombudsperson in Humanities 114, 2-9200.

Course Schedule. This schedule is subject to change, but not without due notice. Please have the assignments read *before* the day they are listed. Note that some days do not have a reading listed, but that doesn't mean nothing is happening.

Week/Author	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
0. Introduction		1/24 Intro to course	1/26 Intro to Plato
1. Plato, <i>The Last Days of Socrates</i>	1/29 <i>Euthyphro</i>	1/31	2/02 <i>Apology</i>
2.	2/05	2/07 Socrates, <i>Crito</i> MLK "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." (copy available in office)	2/09
3.	2/12 Plato's <i>Phaedo</i>	2/14	2/16
4. Augustine, <i>On Free Choice of the Will</i>	2/19 Bks. 1-2.	2/21	2/23 Paper One Due
5.	2/26 Bk. 3-end.	2/28 Start reading Descartes	3/02
6. Descartes, <i>Discourse on Method and Meditations</i>	3/05 <i>Discourse on Method</i>	3/07 <i>Meditations</i>	3/09
7.	3/12 <i>Meditations</i>	3/14 Review	3/16 Mid-Term
8. SPRING BREAK	3/19 SPRING	3/21 BRE	3/23 AK
9. Rousseau, <i>Discourse on Inequality</i>	3/26 Preface	3/28 Question and Part One	3/30 Part Two
10. Dostoevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor"	4/02	4/04	4/06
11.	4/09 Passover (NO CLASS)	4/11	14/13
12. Freud, <i>Civilization and its Discontents</i>	4/16	4/18	4/20
13.	4/23	4/25	4/27 Paper Two Due
14. Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism"	4/30 (copy available in office)	5/02	5/04
15.	5/07 Wrap up and review	5/09 Last day	

FINAL EXAM: MONDAY MAY 14, 8:00 AM – 10:30 AM