

I. Course Description

This course seeks to provide students with a plethora of answer to the question “What does it mean to be human?” In order to grasp this question, we will look particularly at questions about the soul, essences, God, knowledge, and will with the aid of philosophical logic. A key element in this class will be critical thinking and the basics of philosophical argumentation (no prior training required).

II. Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students should

- Be able to achieve a basic grasp of philosophical texts
- Understand how each philosopher studied addresses the question “What does it mean to be human?”
- Utilize basic logic to formulate arguments
- Be able to articulate their own view on what it means to be human
- Integrate class material into their own understanding of what it means to be human

III. Texts¹

Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy* (ISBN 0872206572: \$13.95 New)

Schaum’s Easy Outlines: Logic (ISBN: 007145535-3 New)

Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (ISBN 0-87220-192-9: \$5.95 New)

Plato, *Five Dialogues* trans. by G.M.A. Grube (ISBN: 0872206335, \$6.95 New)

Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*. Edited/trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (ISBN: 0-691-02028-0, \$11.95 New)

Additionally, there will be a number of articles placed on electronic reserve which students must also read for the class.

IV. Grading and Assignments

A.Outlines	20%
B.Paper	20%
C. Participation*	20%
D.Midterm Exam	15%
E.Final Exam	25%

A.Outlines

The homework component will be composed of selected writing assignments which will vary in length. I will provide you with a sample outline on the first day of class. Outlines will require the student to demonstrate an understanding of the argument made in a philosophical text by restating it within a limited number of words (which will vary per assignment). The goal in this writing assignment is to duplicate the *argument* of the text.

B.Paper

The term paper builds upon the student’s ability to outline an argument and insert missing premises or articulate flaws in the argument. In the case of the term paper, the student should demonstrate an understanding of the texts considered and then engage with the text to answer the question “Who am I?” or “What sort of thing am I?”

C.Participation, Attendance, and Conduct

A key component in this course is participation. The participation portion of this grade divides into two major sub-components:

¹ Whenever possible, I utilize Hackett editions since they are both (a) cheap and (b) scholarly.

1. In Class Participation: Minimally, this includes careful listening and coming to class having read the material (for which I reserve the right to quiz you should other forms of participation fail). What I will be noting is meaningful engagement with class lectures and involvement in class discussions (I record this every day). [10%].

2. Out-of-Class Participation: Sending three **reading questions** [5%] and one **prompt question** [5%] via e-mail in advance of the class (dates assigned by the instructor)

Reading Question

Quality	Question
Poor D to F	Why was the reading so long? [F] What year was Socrates born? [F]
Good B to C	What does it mean says “Socrates ... busies himself studying things in the sky and below the earth” (19b)? [C]
Excellent A to B+	Socrates’ defense against the charge of atheism (26c-28e) seems inadequate. While it is true that belief in some things implies belief in others (e.g. belief in bananas implies belief in banana trees), Socrates seems to be tricking his interlocutor into assuming there can be only one cause for an effect. Does this mean Socrates is an atheist or engages in the sort of manipulative arguments he claims to eschew (19b)? [A]

Prompt Question

A Prompt question is a question that will be used to focus the class discussion. You may be asked to read your question out loud to the class. Since this question is worth as much as the three reading questions altogether, I expect the quality to be commensurately higher. A good prompt question for the *Apology* would be to ask whether Socrates is taking the trial seriously and to propose as examples that he is not (a) his own choice of sentencing, (b) his direct manner towards his accusers, and (c) his willingness to offend the good citizens of Athens who constitute his jury.

Your participation grade also incorporates two anti-participatory patterns which can negatively impact your overall grade:

1. In addition to noting participatory activity, I also notice (**but do not mention**) texting, ringing cell phones, surfing the internet, studying for another class, sleeping, etc. All of these demonstrate a lack of thoughtful participation and count as an unexcused absence.
2. Further, it is impossible to participate without attending. As such, class attendance is expected and absences must be excused through contact with the instructor by e-mail, voicemail, or in person during office hours. Students missing more than one full class sessions will receive an F in the course. Late attendance is preferable to missing an entire session, but no student may come to class late repeatedly since this harms the learning environment.

The instructor also reserves the right to award a failing grade in the course to any student whose conduct (after an initial warning) continues to detract substantially from the learning experience of other students, and to ask the student to stop attending and drop the course.

D. & E. Examinations

The midterm and final contain short answer and essay questions. The latter will require the student to demonstrate a grasp of the material that goes beyond what is directly learned in class. Each exam focuses on the section lectured but may require knowledge of all material previously lectured.

V. Assignment Schedule

Date	Reading	Assignment
Jan 19	Plato, <i>Apology</i> (21-44); Syllabus	
Jan 23	CLASS CANCELLED	
Jan 26	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> (1-20)	
Jan 30	<i>Logic</i> , Ch. 1	
Feb 2	Plato, <i>Meno</i> (58-92)	Outline <i>Meno</i> : 350 words*
Feb 6	<i>Logic</i> , Ch 3:21-34	
Feb 9	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (96[59d]-122[83b]);	Outline <i>Phaedo</i> , 96-122: 400 words
Feb 13	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (122[83b]-126[88b] & 129[91d]-145[108c])	
Feb 16	<i>Logic</i> , Ch. 4	
February 20th is a Holiday; February 21st = Monday Schedule		
Feb 21	Midterm	
Feb 23	Aquinas, <i>Philosophy</i> 1-6; 12-18	
Feb 27	Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> BK I.1, II.1-4	
Mar 1	Aquinas, <i>Philosophy</i> , 61-86 (Soul)	
Mar 5	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> BK I.1-7	Outline Aristotle I.1-7: 350 words
Mar 8	Aquinas, <i>Philosophy</i> 113-134 (Will)	
SPRING BREAK March 12-18		
Mar 19	Descartes, pg 1-4 and Med. 1-2	Outline Descartes Med. 2: 300 words
Mar 22	Descartes, Meditation 3	
Mar 26	Descartes, Med. 4-6	
Mar 29	Confucius / Mencius (E-Reserve)	
Apr 2	Laotzu (E-Reserve)	
EASTER BREAK April 5-9		
Apr 12	Buddhism Selections (E-Reserve)	
Apr 16	B.F. Skinner Selections	Paper Thesis Due
Apr 19	Sartre "Existentialism is a Humanism": http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/works/exist/sartre.htm	
Apr 23	Søren Kierkegaard, <i>SUD</i> 13-42	
Apr 26	Søren Kierkegaard, <i>SUD</i> 43-74	
Apr 30	Søren Kierkegaard, <i>SUD</i> 75-104	Term Paper Due
May 3	Søren Kierkegaard, <i>SUD</i> 104-131	

Final Exam: Probably May 10, 2012 at 1:30pm

* - This represents the **expected** number of words. If your paper is more than 10% shorter, you probably have not covered enough. Outlines that are more than 10% longer will be penalized.

VI. Policies and Guidelines

A. Late Homework and Exam Policy

Late Homework. On those days when the homework is taken for a grade, it will not be accepted late. The instructor will regard excuses about computer and printer problems as equivalent to “The dog ate my homework.” In the event that a student has an excused absence for such a period, the student may provide the homework upon their return. If a student fails to do so with reasonable promptness (along the same guidelines as students who were present), then no credit will be given.

Late Exams. Every student must take the exams for this course with the rest of the class at the indicated times. Excepting a dire emergency (such as medical conditions that require admission to a hospital) that can be documented to the instructor’s satisfaction, in which case the student must arrange to take the exam as soon as reasonably possible. *The instructor does not offer early or make-up exams to students for whom the exam schedule conflicts with their travel schedule. It is each student’s responsibility to inform anyone who might make travel arrangements on her or his behalf of the academic calendar.*

B. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

For a full statement of Fordham policies applying to academic integrity, see the Honor Code section of <http://www.fordham.edu/UndergraduateBulletin/>, which is hereby incorporated into this syllabus by reference. Briefly stated, plagiarism is the use or citation of materials in a manner that misrepresents the authorship as one's own. The most flagrant examples of this are examples of direct copying either in whole or in part without the use of quotation marks or an indication of its source. Equally wrong is the effective copying of a work's contents by paraphrase without identifying the source of the statements or arguments. Finally and most subtly, an improper citation also is a form of plagiarism. At the discretion of the instructor, plagiarism cases may incur an F in the course, 0 on the assignment, or a reduction in grade on an assignment -- depending both on the severity of the act and the attitude of the student towards the committed act.

C. Disability Services

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (Rose Hill - O’Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655 or at Lincoln Center – Room 207, x6282).

Note: The ADA cuts both ways in that it is also unlawful for me to provide you with such a benefit without you going through the Office of Disability Services.

D. Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to alter or make reasonable exceptions to any detail of this syllabus if, in his view, doing so will enhance the learning experience while preserving fairness for all students. (If a student knows that something in this syllabus might present a problem for her individual performance, it is the student’s responsibility to approach the instructor to ask for clarification and revision.)