

The Human Person

PHI 2323
Philosophy Department
University of Dallas

Spring 2024

PHI 2323. The Human Person. What does it mean to be human? Is there soul and, if so, what is it? In light of contemporary reductive materialism and its claims for the sufficiency of scientific naturalism, this course explores the relationship between nature and soul. In the classical philosophical understanding, the human person finds himself or herself in tension between the immanent spheres of nature (or body or history) and the call to a commitment to a transcendent dimension of reality—a transcendent dimension associated with *psyche*, *anima*, mind, or spirit. The investigation includes an account of the parts and powers of the soul, such as sense, desire, intellect and will. Readings feature texts by Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Descartes and Nietzsche. Prerequisite: Philosophy 1301. Fall and Spring.

Part I

General Information

Instructor: Lance Simmons
Meetings: Cardinal Farrell Hall 207
Contact: simmons@udallas.edu
Office Hours in Braniff 338:

- M 11:00am–11:50am
- Tu 11:am–11:50am
- W 10:30am–11:20pm
- F 10:00am–10:50am

1 Required Texts

Plato's *Phaedo* and Aristotle's *De Anima* Any edition will work, so long as it has scholarly numbers in the margins. Here are two inexpensive ones: (1) Plato, *Phaedo* (Hackett Publishing Company, 1977) ISBN: 978-0915144181 (2) Aristotle, *De Anima* (Hackett Publishing Company, 2017) ISBN: 978-1624666193.

Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* See <https://www3.nd.edu/~afreddos/summa-translation/TOC-part1.htm>, or any other edition. I recommend an abridged version: Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy* (Hackett Publishing Company, 2003) ISBN: 978-0-87220-657-2.

Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Reid Photocopies of these readings will be available in a few weeks from Printing and Postal.

2 Course Policies

This course is governed by all the University's academic policies and procedures, with one addition:

Do not use AI to generate written work. You must be prepared to discuss with me all written work submitted in fulfillment of course requirements. If, through such a discussion, you cannot take adequate responsibility for the content, form, or style of the work you submitted, the assignment will be subject to discipline for academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Part II

Assessment

1 Learning Objectives

Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives has been widely accepted since the 1950s. Most teaching involves some combination of the six different categories or levels of objectives Bloom describes, though some involve only one or two levels. — Joseph Lowman

Assessment in this course is based on how fully you master five learning objectives: (1) recall and recognition, (2) comprehension, (3) application, (4) analysis, and (5) synthesis.

Recall and recognition allow you to reproduce and re-identify the philosophical concepts and arguments we consider. Mastery is assessed based on the objective sections of the midterm and the written part of the final exam.

Comprehension restates arguments, distinguishes conclusions from premises, and accurately judges which conclusions follow from which premises. Mastery is assessed based on the objective sections of the midterm and the written part of the final exam, on the essay sections of the midterm and the written part of the final exam, and on the oral part of the final exam.

Application extends arguments to address new problems and questions that were outside the scope of the original argument. Mastery is assessed based on the objective sections of the midterm and the written part of the final exam, on the essay sections of the midterm and the written part of the final exam, on the two papers, and on the oral part of the final exam.

Analysis sorts the premises of arguments into appropriate categories. Premises are typically compatible with some premises and incompatible with others. Some premises are compatible with nearly all other premises. Analyzing arguments brings to light the large clusters of premises that “clump” or “hang” together. Mastery is assessed based on the essay sections of the midterm and the written part of the final exam, on the term paper, and on the oral part of the final exam.

Synthesis reconstructs into an intelligible whole the subject matter of the course. It recognizes different philosophical approaches to the question at hand, and then, in light of this recognition, surveys the philosophical terrain. Every philosophical approach regards all others as wrong in fundamental ways. Synthesis uncovers how each approach explains the initial plausibility of its rivals’ putative errors. Mastery is assessed based on the essay sections of the midterm and the written part of the final exam, and on the oral part of the final exam.

2 Assessment

At semester’s end I will assess your mastery of the course’s learning objectives as superior (A), good (B), adequate (C), passing (D), or failing (F), using the following scale:

minus	base	plus
A- = 90-92	A = 93-100	
B- = 80-82	B = 83-86	B+ = 87-89
C- = 70-72	C = 73-76	C+ = 77-79
D- = 60-62	D = 63-66	D+ = 67-69
	F = 0-59	

I will weight elements of the course roughly as follows:

First Paper (1000-word)	15%
Midterm Exam	30%
Term Paper (2500-word)	25%
Written Part of Final Exam	15%
Oral Part of Final Exam	15%

The first paper and the term paper are argumentative essays. You are to state a clear thesis, argue for it, and defend your arguments against the strongest objections you can invent. The term paper also helps me assess your mastery of comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis.

The midterm exam and the written part of the final exam both have an objective section and an essay section. The objective section helps me assess your mastery of recall and recognition, comprehension, and application. The essay section helps me assess your mastery of comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis.

The oral part of the final exam is a 20-minute conversation with me about issues raised by the course. It helps me assess your mastery of recall and recognition, comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis. Here are some advantages of using oral assessments:

[Oral assessment] allows probing of the students' knowledge. It improves learning. It suits some students. The meaning of questions can be clarified. It helps ensure academic integrity. —Gordon Joughin

Philosophical disagreements When I assess your mastery of learning objectives, I will never take into account your philosophical opinions. Reasonable people disagree about every topic we will consider.

Part III

Schedule

*A three-credit course which meets three hours per week will require **six hours of outside work each week** by the student in an undergraduate course, seven and a half hours in a graduate course.* —*Faculty Handbook*, University of Dallas

1 Introduction

W 1/17 Course Introduction

F 1/19 Discussion

Sunday 1/21, 8:00pm **Submit Paper #1 as a PDF file via Brightspace,
bring hard copy to class Monday**

M 1/22 Discussion

2 Am I a rational animal?

2.1 Plato (62 pp.)

W 1/24 57a–72e (18 pp.)

F 1/26 73a–88e (18 pp.)

M 1/29 89a–101e (15 pp.)

W 1/31 102a–118 (15 pp.)

F 2/2 Discussion

2.2 Aristotle (43 pp.)

M 2/5 I.1–4 (14 pp.)

W 2/7 II.1–3 (6 pp.)

F 2/9 II.11–12 (4 pp.)

M 2/12 III.1–5 (11 pp.)

W 2/14 III.6–7 (4 pp.)

F 2/16 III.10–11 (4 pp.)

M 2/19 Discussion

2.3 Thomas Aquinas (43 pp.)

W 2/21 *ST* I, Q. 75, A. 1-6; Q. 76, A. 1-4, 8

F 2/23 Q. 78, A. 2-4, Q. 81, A. 2-3; Q. 79, A. 2-4, 6, 8, 12-3

M 2/26 Q. 84, A. 1-8; Q. 85, A. 1-7

W 2/28 Q. 86, A. 1-4; Q. 87, A. 1-4

F 3/1 Q. 88, A. 1-3; Q. 82, A. 1-4; Q. 83, A. 1-3

M 3/4 Q. 90, A. 1-4; Q. 118, A. 2-3

W 3/6 Discussion

F 3/8 **Midterm examination**

3 Am I a Self?

3.1 Descartes (31 pp.)

- M 3/18 Part 1 (5 pp.)
- W 3/20 Part 2 (6 pp.)
- F 3/22 Part 3 (4 pp.)
- M 3/25 Part 4 (5 pp.)
- W 3/27 Part 5 (6 pp.)
- W 4/3 Part 6 (8 pp.)
- F 4/5 Discussion

3.2 Personal Identity (23 pp.)

- M 4/8 John Locke on personal identity (10 pp.)
- W 4/10 Locke, continued
- F 4/12 Discussion
- M 4/15 David Hume on personal identity (9 pp.)
- W 4/17 Hume, continued
- F 4/19 Discussion
- M 4/22 Thomas Reid on personal identity (4 pp.)
- W 4/24 Reid, continued
- F 4/26 Discussion
- Sun 4/28 by 8:00pm **Submit Term Paper as a PDF file via Brightspace, bring hard copy to class Monday**
- M 4/29 Discussion (**bring hard copy of Term Paper to class**)
- W 5/1 Course conclusion