

PHIL 130-026
Philosophy & Persons
FALL 2020

Instructor: Daniel Skibra

Time and Location: T, Th 1:15-2:30pm*, **online**

Contact: email: dskibra@luc.edu

Office Hours: Tues, 11:00 - 1:00pm (or by appointment) via Zoom

* A good portion of this class will be delivered online, asynchronously. We will, however, have synchronous meetings via Zoom every so often. These are scheduled in advance and would only occur during within the class period designated above. See course schedule below for exact dates and times.

Course Description

This is the first course in the Philosophical Knowledge section of the Core Curriculum. It introduces students to the fundamental philosophical issues that bear on our understanding of persons. The unifying question is: What is a person? The course has three equally weighted components, each with its own unifying questions, namely:

- **Persons and Values.** What is value? When does something have value for a person, for instance in ethics, aesthetics, education, the environment, bioethics, and religion? What is the ground of, or basis for, value in human life? Are values culturally relative?
- **Persons and Knowledge.** What is it for persons to have knowledge, including knowledge in such areas as logic, science, morality, and religion?
- **Persons and Reality.** What exactly are persons, and how are they related to the entities acknowledged in religion (e.g., God and souls), metaphysics (e.g., substances and abstract entities), and science (e.g., matter and causal relations)?

This Course and the University Core Curriculum

Knowledge Area(s) satisfied:	Philosophical Knowledge, Ethics
Skill(s) Developed	Critical Thinking Skills and Dispositions, Ethical Awareness and Decision-Making
Value Requirement(s) satisfied:	none

Course Requirements

Assignments

10 Short Quizzes: 20 points
Writing Assignments:

- 1st Writing Assignment (essay) 30 points
- 2nd Writing Assignment (short essay) 15 points
- 3rd Writing Assignment (short essay) 15 points
- 4th Writing Assignment (short response) 4 points

Exam 1: 30 points

Exam 2: 30 points

Exam 3: 30 points

Discussions:

- Discussion 1 (on Persons and Values) 5 points
- Discussion 2 (on Persons and Knowledge) 5 points
- Discussion 3 (on Persons and Reality) 5 points

Remaining Assignments:

- Introduction exercise 1 points
- Reading Exercise 1 2 points
- Reading Exercise 2 2 points
- Reading Exercise 3 2 points
- Reading Exercise 4 2 points
- Reading Exercise 5 2 points

= 200 points total

Notes on assignments

Resources for writing a philosophy paper:

- <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Grading

There will be a total of 200 points to earn in this class by the end of the term. A record of the points you have earned will be displayed in Sakai. The percentage of points you earn will be converted into letter grades as follows:

<i>A</i>	: [94%, 100%]	<i>B-</i>	: [80%, 83%)	<i>D+</i>	: [66%, 70%)
<i>A-</i>	: [90%, 94%)	<i>C+</i>	: [76%, 80%)	<i>D</i>	: [63%, 66%)
<i>B+</i>	: [86%, 90%)	<i>C</i>	: [73%, 76%)	<i>D-</i>	: [60%, 63%)
<i>B</i>	: [83%, 86%)	<i>C-</i>	: [70%, 73%)	<i>F</i>	: <60%

Course Policies

What to Expect

Here is what a typical week would look like when you are taking this class. You will access the course material on Sakai. The course material will be organized by week, so simply navigate to the appropriate week, where all you have to do for the week is laid out in the weekly module. Each module will contain a breakdown of the week's work, reproducing the information on the syllabus, but with more detail and instructions. A typically week will include readings (pdfs of readings not from the Shafer-Landau book will be available on Sakai), videos of lectures, and the assignments for the week. Unless I advise otherwise, aim to do the week's reading *before* watching the lectures. Some weeks will have a heavier reading load than others, but I aimed to keep the reading load manageable. Still, the readings are challenging, so be prepared to take your time with them.

You should expect to watch about an hour's worth of lectures a week. Take notes while watching these much as you would during a regular class period. The lectures will compress the material a bit, so expect for it to take you longer than an hour to watch, when you account for your note taking, stopping the video, and re-watching parts of the lecture as needed. The lectures will be embedded directly into Sakai, so you can stream them to your computer or mobile device.

The lectures will be delivered asynchronously, so you can watch them at your own leisure. We will also have live class meetings occurring over Zoom, which you will also access via Sakai. These synchronous meetings won't occur *every* week, but close to it. They are scheduled in advance (the schedule appears on this syllabus, and the weekly modules will contain reminders), so can make sure to plan for them. They only occur during the times that were originally scheduled for the course, so you should not have any conflicts with other classes.

Finally, on a given week, there are a number of assignments you will have to complete. You will find more information about them, including the dates and times they will be due, on Sakai. Among the more traditional academic assignments, you will have two essay assignments over the course of the term, a mid term exam, and a final exam. The rest of the assignments will include reading exercises; structured, asynchronous discussions (using VoiceThread), and short quizzes. The assignments are structured so that they are relatively short, small assignments, but there are more of them. The motivation behind this is two-fold, and worth sharing with you. First, it aims to maximize your engagement with the material, with the instructor (me), and with each other as much as possible, even in an online environment. Second, it makes the assignments lower-stakes, but more frequent, so I can more easily see how everyone in the course is faring with the material.

To do well in this course, you have to be committed to putting the work in every week. It's a manageable amount, but if you let it slide for a week or two, you run the real risk of falling behind. If you encounter any trouble in the course (with the material, with assignments, or with the technology), send me an email. I am happy to help, discuss, and meet with you (virtually) as necessary.

Attendance

In face-to-face classes, I take attendance. Since we are not meeting in a classroom, I obviously won't be passing around a sign-in sheet. Nonetheless, your attendance is required in this course. There are two ways that I will manage attendance for the course. First of all, I will take attendance during our live meetings. You are required to be in attendance for those. Second, I will monitor that you are indeed watching the lectures. (The application that hosts the videos on Sakai, Panopto, allows me to track viewership, and I will be monitoring this.)

If you miss more than two live Zoom meetings over the course of the term, your final grade will drop by 5 points, and another 5 points for each additional missed Zoom meeting. If you expect to miss a Zoom meeting, but have a valid excuse for this which you can provide documentation of (doctor's note, etc.), I will excuse the absence.

For the lectures, if your viewership drops below 75% (so, you watch less than 75% of the lectures), your final grade will drop by 5 points. For every additional 5% below that benchmark, your final grade will drop another 5 points. Since you can watch the lectures at your own leisure, the only way you can be excused from this is if you become really sick at some point, and can provide a doctor's note.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a learning disability that requires special arrangements for note-taking in class, essay-writing, or sitting exams, please inform Student Services (Sullivan Center) at the beginning of the semester. After doing that, please inform me by the end of the first week. Student Services will not notify me: you must approach me, and I guarantee confidentiality.

Policy on Academic Integrity

All the work you submit for this course should be your own. In writing an assignment, don't take a sentence from a book or website and put it into your essay without acknowledging the source. Doing so amounts to claiming the sentence or passage to be your own work. Plagiarism is cheating. It also prevents you from learning.

Please note: *That includes unintentional or accidental plagiarizing.*

Loyola's Principles and Policies for Academic Excellence states: "Loyola University Chicago has strict policies on incidents of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and, in cases of the use of copyrighted material, a legal offense. Incidents of plagiarism are reported to the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled and a note is placed in the student's file. The student receives an 'F' on the assignment and may receive an 'F' in the course. Serious or repeated incidents of plagiarism could result in permanent expulsion from the university."

If you and other student(s) prepare essays together, limit it to discussion and taking brief notes. Do not work together in writing the essay. Do not prepare for your essay by reading

another student's essay, or let another student read yours when she is preparing her own. If the same sentence turns up in two students' essays, the instructor will assume that plagiarism has occurred, and both students may get an 'F' for the essay-assignment.

Extension Policy

The due dates for the assignments are as they appear on the syllabus. Late assignments will not be tolerated, and will accumulate deductions of one third of a letter grade for every day the assignment is late. If you think you will need an extension for an assignment, you need to request one at least two days before the due date. Do not ask after the date has passed, or the night before the deadline.

Email/ Communication

The best way to reach me is via email. However, give me around 24 hours to respond during the week. If you email me after 5pm on Friday, don't expect a response until Monday morning. Most of the time, I will be able to respond to you sooner than this, but please plan your emails accordingly. When there is a paper due, get all of your questions to me 48 hours before the due date.

I will answer *simple, specific* questions over email pertaining to the course material or the logistics of the course. I can also address simple interpretive questions you have with the material, or arguments you are trying out for your papers. To address anything more involved, you'll need to meet with me virtually in office hours. (I highly encourage you to make use of this time at some point anyway.)

Required Texts

- All required readings will be posted to the online course site. You do not need to buy a book for this class.

Reading Schedule*

*The readings and assignments are due in the week they are listed. (Note that the date listed in the **Date** column is the Monday of that week, even though technically, the course isn't scheduled to meet on Mondays.) You should aim to complete the readings in the first half of the week. In general, the assignments will tend to be due in the second half.

Day	Date	Assignment	Length
Part 1: Persons & Values			
WEEK 1	Aug 24	Introduction to the class (no reading; but start the reading for next week) Assignments: Quiz 1 Introductions Exercise	
WEEK 2	Aug 31	Readings: Mill – Chapters 2 and 4 of <i>Utilitarianism</i> Assignments: Reading Exercise 1 Quiz 2 Live class meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 1 at 1:30 PM	26 PAGES
WEEK 3	Sept 7	Readings: Shafer-Landau – Chapters 11 and 12 of <i>Fundamentals of Ethics</i> Assignments: Quiz 3	33 PAGES
WEEK 4	Sept 14	Readings: Kant – section 1 of <i>Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals</i> Kant – <i>Theory and Practice</i> Assignments: Reading Exercise 2 Live class meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 15 at 1:30 PM	24 PAGES
WEEK 5	Sept 21	Readings: Aristotle – <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Book 1, Ch 7-13 Aristotle – <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Book 10, Ch 6-9 Assignments: Quiz 4 Discussion 1 Live class meeting: Thursday, Sept. 24 at 1:30 PM	41 PAGES
Part 2: Persons & Knowledge			
WEEK 6	Sept 28	Readings: Plato – <i>Meno</i> Assignments: Quiz 5 Exam 1	28 PAGES
WEEK 7	Oct 5	Readings: Descartes – <i>Meditation 1</i> Descartes – <i>Meditation 2</i> Assignments: Reading Exercise 3 First Writing Assignment due Live class meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 6 at 1:30 PM	12 PAGES
WEEK 8	Oct 12	Readings: Locke – <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Book 2, Ch 1-4 Locke – <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Book 4, Ch 1-3 Assignments: Quiz 6 Live class meeting: Thursday, Oct. 15 at 1:30 PM	19 PAGES
WEEK 9	Oct 19	Readings: Zagzebski – <i>Virtues of the Mind</i> Assignments: Reading Exercise 4 Second Writing Assignment due	11 PAGES

Day	Date	Assignment	Length
WEEK 10	Oct 26	Readings: Cassam – <i>Vicious Thinking</i> Assignments: Quiz 7 Discussion 2 Live class meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 27 at 1:30 PM	25 PAGES
Part 3: Persons & Reality			
WEEK 11	Nov 2	Readings: Plato – <i>Phaedo</i> 65a - 88a Assignments: Exam 2 Live class meeting: Tuesday, Nov. 3 at 1:30 PM	21 PAGES
WEEK 12	Nov 9	Readings: Descartes – Meditation 6 Assignments: Quiz 8	13 PAGES
WEEK 13	Nov 16	Readings: Locke – Of Identity and Diversity, from <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> Sider – <i>Personal Identity</i> Assignments: Reading Exercise 5 Quiz 9 Live class meeting: Thursday, Nov. 19 at 1:30 PM	44 PAGES
WEEK 14	Nov 23	Readings: Fisher, Kane, Pereboom & Vargas – <i>A Brief Introduction to Some Terms and Concepts</i> Holbach – <i>the Illusion of Free Will</i> Assignments: Quiz 10 Third Writing Assignment due Live class meeting: Tuesday, Nov. 24 at 1:30 PM	11 PAGES
WEEK 15	Nov 30	Readings: Hume – Sections 7 and 8 of <i>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> Augustine – <i>On the Free Choice of the Will</i> , Book 3 excerpts Assignments: Discussion 3 Fourth Writing Assignment due Live class meeting: Thursday, Dec. 4 at 1:30 PM	44 PAGES
FINAL EXAM	TBD	Exam 3 will take place on our assigned exam day (date to be determined)	