Philosophy of Human Nature (PHIL 1000/EP Seminar)  
Fordham University, Spring 2012

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Description: What is the nature of a human being? What are the consequences of any answer we might give to this question? In this course we will explore some of the most influential engagements with this question found in the Western philosophical tradition. Our focus will not be limited solely to human nature, as we will encounter and explore related topics such as knowledge, truth, the existence of God, freedom, identity, and our relations with others. The aim of the course is to introduce you to critical thinking and analysis, and develop your ability to express yourself philosophically in presentations, discussion and writing.

Texts: Available at the Fordham University Bookstore.


Make sure you purchase these editions from these publishers.
Additional readings are available on Blackboard.

Assessment: Participation 10%  
6 response papers 2% each  
1 Presentation 10%  
4 drafts 2% each  
2 Short papers 10% each  
2 Long papers 20% each

Schedule:

Wk 1: Tues Jan 17  
Introduction  
Wed Plato, *Meno* (70a-80e)  
Fri *Meno* (70a-80e)

2: Tues Jan 24  
*Meno* (81a-100b)  
Wed Plato, *Phaedo* (57a-84b)  
Fri *Phaedo* (57a-84b)

3: Tues Jan 31  
*Phaedo* (84b-118)  
Wed *Phaedo* (84b-118)  
Fri 1st Short paper draft due

4: Tues Feb 7  
Plato, from *Republic* (504d-519c), 1st Short paper due  
Wed *Republic* (504d-519c)  
Fri Aristotle, from *Physics* (IV.10-11)
5: Tues Feb 14  Aristotle, from *Physics* (IV.10-11)
   Wed **Presentations**
   Fri **Presentations**

6: Tues Feb 21  No class, following Monday schedule
   Wed **1st Long paper draft due**
   Fri Thomas Aquinas, “The Five Ways”, from *Summa Theologica*

7: Tues Feb 28  “The Five Ways”, 1st **Long paper due**
   Wed René Descartes, *Meditations* Dedicatory letter, Synopsis, 1 & 2
   Fri *Meditations* Dedicatory letter, Synopsis, 1 & 2

8: Tues Mar 6  *Meditations* Dedicatory letter, Synopsis, 1 & 2
   Wed *Meditations* 3 & Selections from the Objections and Replies on Med 3 (pp.78-89)
   Fri *Meditations* 3 & Selections from the Objections and Replies

**March 12-18 – Spring break**

9: Tues Mar 20  *Meditations* 6 & Selections from the Objections and Replies on Med 6
   Wed *Meditations* 6 & Selections from the Objections and Replies
   Fri *Meditations* 6 & Selections from the Objections and Replies

10: Tues Mar 27 **Presentations**
    Wed **Presentations**
    Fri Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to *The Second Sex*

11: Tues Apr 3  Introduction to *The Second Sex*
   Wed **2nd short paper draft due**
   Fri No class, Easter break

12: Tues Apr 10 Judith Butler, “Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir’s *Second Sex*”
    Wed **2nd short paper due**
    Fri Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism”

13: Tues Apr 17 “Existentialism is a Humanism”
    Wed Frantz Fanon, “The Lived Experience of the Black”, from *Black Skins, White Masks*
    Fri “The Lived Experience of the Black”

14: Tues Apr 24 Linda Alcoff, “Toward a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment”
    Wed “Toward a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment”
Fri  
Presentations

15:  
Tues May 1  
Presentations
Wed  
2nd Long paper draft due

2nd Long paper due during exam period.