



# Philosophy & Persons

## PHIL 130 – Spring 2025

**Instructor: Dr. Stefano Giacchetti**

**M/W 3.45-5.00 – Office hours M/W 1.00-2.00 (by appointment)**

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### SUMMARY

**Short Description:** The course examines the way philosophy looks for fundamental characteristics that identify life as a properly human life, asks about its ultimate meaning or purpose, and raises questions about what counts as a good life.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the various approaches of the philosophical questions related to what it means to be human, with attention to the historical and conceptual development of these questions, and be able to articulate some of the major problems and responses central to this area of philosophy.

Students should be able to demonstrate

- (a) understanding of the relationships among cultural, economic, political, and social forces, and their impact on human behavior.
- (b) understanding of the processes and components of societies, states and cultures.
- (c) understanding of the differences of class, gender and race in societies, states and cultures.
- (d) awareness that human values and behavior, ideas of justice, and methods of interpretation are influenced by culture and time
- (e) ability to differentiate among historical and contemporary perspectives about the world with a view to fashioning a humane and just world.

Students will learn to

- (a) recognize the way in which the basic principles governing how one ought to live are conditioned by one's involvement in and responsibilities toward the socially organized community in which one lives
- (b) understand different positions on this issue, to appreciate the concerns that account for these differences, to look for the reasons given in support of the different views, and to assess the forcefulness of the challenge that each poses for the others and for our own culture.

This course enables the student to

- (a) appreciate the profound issues involved in social relations, such as dignity and diversity
- (b) engage in dialogue with great philosophers, paying close attention to their meaning, their reasons, their concerns, their vision
- (c) examine the way different philosophically defended views challenge each other and see how they also challenge unexamined presuppositions in our own culture
- (d) include their own reflections into the dialogue
- (e) recognize reasons supporting a view, identify unexamined presuppositions, appreciate astute insights, expose vulnerabilities in established positions.
- (f) recognize the need for ethical judgment
- (g) distinguish alternative courses of action.
- (h) articulate the relevant ethical values, principles, rights, and virtues from the point of view of each stakeholder

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Full Course Description:**

This introductory core course is designed to acquaint the student with some of the classical themes and topics in Western philosophy. The course is divided into three segments, each one dealing with a central philosophical topic or issue. The three segments consist in: (1) persons and knowledge; (2) persons and reality; and (3) persons and values. In the first segment we will ask what it means for us to have knowledge, the nature and scope of our knowledge, and in what areas we may want to assert this. This segment will analyze the seminal writings of Plato and Descartes. In the second segment, through the reading of the works of Machiavelli, Rousseau and Marx, we will ask about the nature of social reality, including the nature of persons, rationality, free will, and alienation, among other issues. In the third segment we will inquire about the nature of value, including whether the good is merely what is useful or whether there is intrinsic good; the nature of the highest human good (e.g., virtue, happiness, pleasure, material success); the role of deliberation in moral reasoning. This last segment will be elaborated through the critical writings of Nietzsche and the overview of moral theory provided by Rachels.

The aim of the course is to lead students to autonomously judge fundamental issues related to human condition, with special reference to the nature of ideas, existence, justice, fairness, rules and duties, cultural and social influences. This will provide students with the basic critical skills for recognizing different philosophical approaches and for judging their feasibility and correctness. The analysis of the philosophies which most consistently influenced the development of Western culture will be the tool for understanding existential and social dilemmas and constructing philosophically informed decisions.

**Required Texts:**

- Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses*. (Also available online)
- Descartes, *Meditations*. (Also available online)
- Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*. (Also available online)
- Marx, *Selected Writings*. (Available for borrowing from professor)
- Nietzsche, *On the genealogy of morals*. (Also available online)
- Rachels *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. (Available for borrowing from professor)

**Assessment Components:**

Student's final grade will be based on:

- One in-class test (Midterm): 40% of the final grade.
- One take-home paper or in class test (Final): 40% of the final grade.
- In-class presentations and participation: 20% of the final grade. Students will be requested to make presentations (15-20 min.) for one of the scheduled readings assigned.

**Grading Policy:**

The following grading scale will be applied for determining the final grade:

Presentation: A=20; A-=18; B+=17; B=16; B-=15; C+=14; C=13; C-=12; D+=12; D=11; F=10

Midterm and Final (each): A=40; A-=37; B+=36; B=34; B-=33; C+=32; C=30; C-=29; D+=27; D=26; F=24

Final Grade: A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 60-66; F = 59 and below

**Attendance Policy:**

Students should plan to regularly attend the class, since we will often broaden the topics contained in the texts to contemporary issues, and since this class is mainly intended to the rousing of students' personal thoughts and ideas.

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy:

This course meets twice a week, thus a total of two unexcused absences will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the "approved limit". DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL.

**Class Conduct:**

One important aspect of a Jesuit education is learning to respect the rights and opinions of others. Please respect others by (1) allowing all classmates the right to voice their opinions without fear

of ridicule, and (2) not using profanity or making objectionable (including gendered, racial or ethnic) comments, especially comments directed at a classmate.

### **Sakai:**

All course materials will be located on Sakai which can be accessed at <https://sakai.luc.edu> Sakai is a web based learning management system. You will be able to access it from any computer connected to the internet. Instructional guides and video tutorials for using Sakai are available at: <http://www.luc.edu/itrs/sakai/sakai-student-tutorials.shtml>

Course content, including syllabi, reading material etc. will be available online. Students should check Sakai often for announcements, assignments, and other course content.

### **Student Support Resources:**

- ITS Service Desk: [helpdesk@luc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@luc.edu) 773-508-4487
- Library Subject Specialists: <http://libraries.luc.edu/specialists>
- Student Accessibility Center: [sac@luc.edu](mailto:sac@luc.edu)
- Writing Center: <http://www.luc.edu/writing/>
- Ethics Hotline: <http://luc.edu/sglc/aboutus/> 855.603.6988

### **Email Messages:**

All email messages sent to students about this course will be sent to their Loyola email address. Students are expected to check their Loyola email address on a regular basis. You can access your web based LUC email account at <https://outlook.luc.edu>

### **Special Circumstances--Receiving Assistance:**

Students are urged to contact their instructors should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have any special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work, please let your instructors know so they can establish a plan for assignment completion. If you require assignment accommodations, please contact your instructors early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with Student Accessibility Center (SAC) (<http://www.luc.edu/sac/>).

### **Copyright:**

Copyright law was designed to give rights to the creators of written work, artistic work, computer programs and other creative materials. The Copyright Act requires that people who use or reference the work of others must follow a set of guidelines designed to protect authors' rights. Unfortunately, copyright law is complex and too often incomprehensible; that does not, however, excuse users from following the rules. The safest practice is to remember (1) to refrain from distributing works used in class (whether distributed by the professor or used for research); they are likely copyright protected and (2) that any research or creative work should be cited. For LUC's copyright resources check online: <http://www.luc.edu/copyright>

### **Intellectual Property:**

All lectures, notes and other instructional materials in this course are the intellectual property of the professor. As a result, they may not be distributed or shared in any manner, either on paper or virtually without my written permission. Lectures may not be recorded without my written consent; when consent is given, those recordings may be used for review only and may not be

distributed. Recognizing that your work, too, is your intellectual property, I will not share or distribute your work in any form without your written permission.

### **Privacy Statement**

Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Students will be informed of such recordings by a statement in the syllabus for the course in which they will be recorded. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. Recordings including student activity that have been initiated by the instructor may be retained by the instructor only for individual use.

### **Accessibility Accommodations**

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

### **Harassment (Bias Reporting):**

It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias.

In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link:

<http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/>

### **Technology:**

This course is designed partially as an online course, and thus, students are expected to know how to use Sakai and its features, be able to navigate the internet to explore resources, and to use the electronic resources available through LUC's library homepage.

### **Workload Expectations:**

As an average, students should expect to dedicate about 8 hours per week to fulfill course activities, including readings/review of materials, assignments, pre-recorded lessons, etc.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Loyola University Chicago, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle.

Failing to meet the following academic integrity standards is a serious violation of personal honesty and the academic ideals that bind the University into a learning community. These standards apply to both individual and group assignments. Individuals working in a group may be held responsible if one of the group members has violated one or more of these standards.

1. Students may not plagiarize; the use of AI is considered plagiarism too and treated as such.
2. Students may not submit the same work for credit for more than one assignment (known as self-plagiarism).
3. Students may not fabricate data.
4. Students may not collude.
5. Students may not cheat.
6. Student may not facilitate academic misconduct.

Follow this link for more details about these standards, sanctions, and academic misconduct procedures: ([https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml))

### **Late or Missed Assignments**

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

### **Course Schedule:**

01/20 Introduction

01/22 Pre-Socratics and Myth (Heraclitus)

01/27 Plato *Republic*, Book VII

01/29 Machiavelli ch. I p.4, II p.5, III p.6, IX p. 35, X p.39

02/03 “ “ ch. XVII p.60, XVIII p. 63, XIX p. 66, XXI p. 81

02/07 “ “ ch. XLIII p. 226, XLIV p.227, XLV p.229 & XLVI p.231; Third Book, ch. II p.403, XIX p.470, XXIX p.495 & XL p.526

02/10 Descartes *Meditation I-II*

02/12 “ “ “ “, III-IV

02/17 “ “ “ “, V-VI

02/19 Rousseau *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men*, Part One

02/24 “ “ “ “, Part Two

02/26 Study Day

03/03 Midterm Exam

03/05 Introduction to Marx

03/17 Marx *Selected Writings*; pp. 58 to 79; 99 to 101

03/19 “ “ “ “; pp. 158 to 186

03/21 “ “ “ “; pp. 220 to 255

03/24 “ “ “ “; pp. 255 to 282; 294 to 300

03/26 Introduction to Nietzsche

03/31 Nietzsche *On the Genealogy of Morals*; First Essay, Sections 4 to 16

04/02 “ “ “ “, Second Essay, Sections 1 to 12

04/07 “ “ “ “, Third Essay, Sections 17 to 18 & 24 to 28

04/09 Rachels Ch. 1, 2

04/14 “ “ Ch. 7, 8

04/16 “ “ Ch. 9, 10

04/23 “ “ Ch. 13, 14

04/28-05/01 Final Exam