

HOLY NAMES UNIVERSITY

Fall Semester 2014

PHILA 140W: The Human Person -- 3.0 Units

(SUBJECT TO REVISION)

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Class times: Fri., 6:30.-9:30 p.m.
Final Exam: **Sat., Dec. 13, 4 to 7 p.m.**
Class Room: Brennan 61
Class Dates: Aug. 29 – Nov. 21, 2014

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will embark on the amazing adventure of exploring our existence. What is to be a human being – and a “human person?” What is our relationship as humans to ultimate reality? Do we as humans have a purpose to life? What is the meaning of human suffering and death, and how can we find happiness, meaning and peace? Why do we ask these questions and what is the proper use of reason and logic in responding to them?

We will also work on improving four skills essential to philosophy: how to ask questions, how to read carefully, how to reason with logic and evidence and how to take a position and defend it in writing. We will read both classic philosophic texts and modern descriptions of “lived philosophy.” The classic texts pose the questions and ideas at the foundations of Western philosophy and will require a line-by-line “close” reading. For the modern writings, we will read two books, *Tuesdays with Morrie* and *Man's Search for Meaning*. These are highly readable and should be read whole. Our discussion will engage us in a dialogue between the classic ideas and the modern experiences, including our own experience of life.

As a class, we will form a learning community. My role is to establish the structure and ground rules for our discussion. Your role is to do your best, be honest, especially about doubts and confusion, and engage the studying and discussion with your whole self. The learning will come from our group interaction. In this sense, the real “teacher” is the group process itself.

As a “W” course, writing will be an important focus. You will write informal “quick writes,” a formal self-reflection paper, two formally argued debate papers, and a philosophic autobiography. You will keep every word you write in a Writing Folder and select your best pieces to present at our last class with your autobiography.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, you, the student, will have:

1. Understood and practiced the skills, attitudes and habits leading to lifelong learning.
2. Deepened your understanding of traditional concepts and questions about human life in the various world philosophical traditions.
3. Improved your ability to form and defend a philosophical position through disciplined reasoning and proper logical argumentation in constructive debate.
4. Improved your ability to write informally to discover new thoughts and to write formal papers to argue authentically and clearly according to proper academic style.
5. Refined your personal philosophy of life.

Required Texts:

Albom, Mitch. *Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, a Young Man and Life's Greatest Lessons*. (New York: Random House, 2007.)
Frankl, Viktor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.)

Reference Texts on Reserve in Library:

Stevenson, Leslie. ed. *The Study of Human Nature: A Reader*, 2nd Edition. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
Stevenson, Leslie and Haberman, David L. *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, 6th edition. Oxford University Press, 2009.
Hacker, Diane, *A Pocket Style Manual (Sixth Edition, spiral bound)*

COURSE ORIENTATION:

This course is a major professional endeavor, like taking a job with important responsibilities at an international business or preparing to play on a world-class sports team. There is no such thing as “going through the motions.” Philosophy is notoriously difficult to read and understand. Your brain will hurt. You will wonder why you enrolled. Don't worry. That's normal. These are mental growing pains. They will pass and you'll be the better for it. Students of past generations have spent their lifetimes on understanding these thinkers. Their ideas have the power to change your life for the better forever.

Therefore, we will need to prepare mentally to meet the challenges of this material. The task at hand will require grueling training, intense concentration, a willingness to struggle through disappointment, confusion and setbacks, a refusal to quit or be satisfied with anything less than your best effort. Our task requires excellence from all of us!

LEARNING COMMUNITY GUIDELINES:

For this class to work, we all must participate fully. I will make every effort to maintain a respectful, honest atmosphere where everyone has equal opportunity and feels safe enough to share their thoughts openly. Your job is to do the work, say what you really think and be open to new ideas, even if they make you uncomfortable. The whole group will suffer if any one of us shows up in body but not in spirit.

This is a large class and our progress will quickly become chaotic unless the following points are respected. These are essential to your learning, and your grade:

- Plan on 6 hours of homework a week, including the “off” weeks: As discussed in HNU Policies at the end of this syllabus, you can expect 2 hours of work outside of class for each hour of class, for a total of 6 hours of outside work each week. Since our class only meets seven times, this means you will have 12 hours of outside reading and writing to do between classes. I suggest you make arrangements in your life, write in your calendar the blocks of this study time and keep rigorously to your scheduled studying.
- Print, read and bring copies of the readings: Please print, read and bring all the readings posted on Blackboard. We have too many students for me to provide copies in class.
- Know this syllabus – and expect change: Our work is dictated by the pace of the class discussion, not pre-set plans. Be aware: we may vary the schedule.

- Check announcements regularly. Make sure you are able to receive the updates that I sent through Blackboard, usually before class meetings. Set up your phone to alert you.
- No late arrivals: Your learning, and grade, will suffer unless you arrive on time and participate fully to the end of the entire class. No class will be dismissed early.
- Attendance required: HNU policy says students can fail if they miss more than 20 % of the class time. Our class only meets 7 times for 3 hours each, or 21 hours. So if you miss more than 4 hours of class time, you will probably fail.
- No excused absences: If you have an emergency and must miss a class, you can make it up by doing three things: 1) Notify me by email or cell phone in advance of the class. 2) Submit documentation of the emergency. 3) Write a 3-page informal review of the material covered in the reading and the class discussion by conferring with your class members within two weeks of the missed class. I will not remind you about this. If you do not make up the class on your own initiative within two weeks, it will count as one of your absences toward failure.
- Ongoing emergencies: Students with ongoing emergencies that require repeated absences should discuss their situation with HNU counseling services and the Student Success Center to evaluate and make a realistic plan for continuing their studies.
- No TurnItIn and no printed copy in class = no paper: Every word you write, except for informal quick writes in class, must go through TurnItIn. Hence, it is your responsibility to turn all written assignments to TurnItIn before the electronic cut-off deadline. (DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED.) It is also essential that you print out your paper in proper academic style, staple it and submit it at the beginning of the class when it is due. In other words, to meet the paper's deadline and receive credit, you must 1) submit it to TurnItIn on time **and** 2) bring a printed copy to hand in at class.
- No late submissions: No late papers are accepted. In an emergency, you may submit a paper late for half-credit. Papers will be returned to you unread if they do not meet academic standards or have not been properly submitted to TurnItIn and handed in as a printed copy by their deadlines. I do not accept any papers by email.
- Maintain your Writing Folder: I will review your Writing Folder with all your writing periodically and expect you to bring it to our conferences.
- No extra credit: There will be no extra credit and no make-ups for missed papers.
- Resolve your technology problems with the helpdesk as soon as possible: If you have technical problems of any kind, please resolve them as soon as possible by notifying the helpdesk at helpdesk@hnu.edu, or by visiting their offices on the third floor of Heafey across from the computer lab. Your computer problems are your responsibility to resolve at the beginning of the semester.
- Two standards for papers: Your informal papers are yours. Just make an honest effort and write legibly so I can read them. I will not grade them or judge them on grammar, spelling, form or content. Your formal papers are different. No formal paper – your debate papers and final papers -- will be accepted that does not meet academic standards as outlined in the Guidelines to an Acceptable Paper posted on Blackboard.
- No side conversations or disruptions: You may think no one notices, but if you talk to your neighbor, the entire class hears low-level static and it disrespects the person speaking. Just as we give you our undivided attention when you speak in class, you are expected to do the same when others speak. Otherwise, I will ask you to stop or leave.

- No eating in class. Please eat snacks or dinner before you come to class or during our break. It's hard to think and talk during a serious discussion our stomachs are busy.
- Seek help for special problems: If you have problems during the semester with your study habits, writing, English grammar, personal emergencies, disabilities, or academic format requirements (like APA style), please consult with the appropriate campus services and let me know.
- No special deals: If you think you've made any arrangements with me or received special permission from me to deviate from any of these policies, please get it in writing from me. If it's not in writing, it doesn't count, no matter what I say before or after class.
- Plagiarism rules are strictly enforced: Plagiarism includes
 - quoting someone else's work without proper citation,
 - paraphrasing ideas from other sources without citation,
 - "cutting and pasting" from the Internet even with citation,
 - copying ideas from other sources even with proper citation,
 - using a "model" of a similar paper on the Internet,
 - asking someone else for "help" to do your thinking for you, or to "check my English" by rewriting your paper and
 - anything else that is not your original work, including
 - "cutting and pasting" from your previous papers and think I won't notice.
- Plagiarism will be reported to the administration as academic dishonesty, subject to academic sanction and the grade of F in this course. It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and isn't by reading carefully the relevant sections in *A Pocket Style Guide* by Diane Hacker on reserve in the library.

Practice Safe Academics: 1) Do your own work 2) Quote accurately 3) Paraphrase properly in your own words 4) and always always always provide citations to the sources using an acceptable academic style like APA, MLA or Chicago for Endnotes or Footnotes.

- HNU Policies rule: Please consult and know the HNU policies at the end of this syllabus.

METHODS OF EVALUATION AND CLASS REQUIREMENTS:

This is a "W" class, so writing will be a big part of your learning experience. The goal is for you to become comfortable with writing through the process of writing, summarizing and revising. Some of your writing will be in short bursts of spontaneous "quick writing" at the beginning of class or during free writing periods in class. In other cases, you will write formal papers in preparation for the class debates and as a final paper at the end of the semester. All formal writing is public. Expect to share your formal papers with the class.

1. **Quick writing starters:** At the start of some classes, you will have 5 to 10 minutes to respond in a short essay form to a question or prompt based on the reading or previous class. These are informal and quickly written. 5 "quick writes" x 3 points each = 15 points.
2. **Self-reflection Paper:** At the beginning of the course, you will write a formal 3-pg self-reflection paper.
3. **Debates and debate papers:** The heart of the class will be two debates that you will participate in, either as a debater on a team or a listener. Everyone will study the issue under debate and prepare a formal 3-page paper presenting your position and arguing it with reasons,

evidence and examples. Then we will divide up into teams to prepare for the debate at the next class. Your grade will depend on your paper and the debate. 2 x 10 points = 20 points.

4. Philosophical Autobiography Papers: As a summation of your own experience and reading, you will write a formal 5-page Philosophical Autobiography that will relate the course themes to your experiences in life. This paper should 1) examine your own experience in life, including your experience of other people or events, 2) to illustrate the ideas and readings discussed in the class and, 3) present changes you may have undergone during this examination and avenues for further exploration. This self-reflection paper is not a thesis paper, does not need an argument, but it needs to be a thoughtful, serious attempt to grapple with the meaning of the course material. It must have specific examples and specific references to the texts we have read, with proper academic citation. A successful self-reflection will balance the voice of the quickwrite with the rigor of a formal argument paper. 20 points.

5. **Self-Assessment of class participation:** Twice during the semester, you will write and submit to me an assessment of your learning, participation and attendance. You will propose a grade for yourself based on a scale of 0 to 10. I will make the final decision. 30 points.

6. Final class: Your presentation of your autobiography Paper and your Folder will serve as the final exam. It is a free discussion for “internalization and appropriation,” a reflection on what you have taken to heart from the course, what you are still pondering and what you have rejected. This last class is scheduled for **Saturday, Dec. 13, from 4 to 7 pm.** (NOT my idea!) You should plan now to make sure you will attend, and note that the unusual date! If you miss the class, your grade will drop by 10 percent. 10 points.

7. Writing Folder: You must keep all your writing in a Writing Folder and select your best pieces at the end of the semester. These should be simple plastic folders with pockets with your syllabus. I will have samples to show you.

8. Student Conferences: As part of your attendance and participation, I will have individual conferences for 15 to 20 minutes with all students on each of the papers they have written. All conferences and student meetings are in the Brennan Lounge. I do not use the classroom or any office for meetings.

GRADING SYSTEM SUMMARY:

- ▶ 5 “quick writes” x 3pts = 15 percent
 - ▶ Formal 3-pg self-reflection paper 1 x 5 pts = 5 percent.
 - ▶ 2 Debate papers and debate performance: 2 x 10 pts = 20 percent
 - ▶ Final Philosophical Autobiography Paper: 20 percent
 - ▶ 2 self-Assessments of class attendance and participation: 2 x 15 pts = 30 percent
 - ▶ Folder and Final Paper presentation at the Final Class: 10 percent
- TOTAL: 100 percent.

**Course documents, assignments and this syllabus
are posted on Blackboard: <http://blackboard.hnu.edu>.
Look there for updates and revisions.**

CLASS SCHEDULE

Theme: Human Person as Questioning Seeker

Class 1. Friday, August 29: What is Philosophy?

I. 6:30 – 7 pm: Intro to Course, Syllabus.

READING DUE: Course Syllabus

ALSO DUE: Student Information sheets

II. 7 – 7:45 pm: What is Philosophy? Are humans questioning seekers by nature?

III. 8- 9:30 pm.: How to read classic texts.

READING DUE: How to Read Classic Texts (Blackboard = BB)

READING DUE and IN-CLASS READING: Plato's *Apology* pg. 7 to 9 ("I have gained..." to "...extreme poverty.") (BB)

FYI READING DUE ON YOUR OWN: 1) Hacker on Avoiding Plagiarism. 2) Standards for Academic Papers, 3) Points for Successful Argument Papers. (BB)

Theme: Human Person and Ultimate Reality

Class 2. Friday, September 12: Reality

PAPER #1 DUE: A formal 3-pg self-reflection paper on questions in your life.

TurnItIn deadline: Thursday midnight.

Printed originality report deadline: Beginning of class.

I. 6:30 – 6:45 pm: Discussion, questions, self-reflection papers.

II. 6:45 – 9:30 pm: What is really real? Material objects or ideal forms?

READING DUE and IN-CLASS READING: Plato's Cave Analogy, pg. 35-41 (stop at ***) (BB)

Theme: Use of Human Reason

Class 3. Friday, September 26: How to argue using reason and evidence.

DUE: Watch *The Great Debaters*.

I. 6:30 - 8 pm: Debate Intro: How to argue with reasons, evidence, and examples.

READING DUE: Summaries of Fallacies (BB)

READING DUE: Debate Guidelines (BB)

II. 8:15 -9:30 pm: **Pick topic for Debate 1 and Prepare for Debate 1.**

Theme: Human Person and Suffering

Class 4. Friday, October 10: Suffering; Debate 1

PAPER #2 DUE: Debate 1 paper

TurnItIn deadline: Thursday midnight.

Printed originality report deadline: Beginning of class.

WRITING FOLDER DUE: All work included for review.

I. 6:30 – 7:30 pm: Discussion, questions

READING DUE: Albom, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, 1-99.

III. 8 – 9:30 pm: **DEBATE 1**

Bring Debate Guidelines (BB)

Theme: Human Person and Death

Class 5. Friday, October 24: Is it rational to fear death?

SELF-ASSESSMENT #1 DUE: Self-assessment for Wks 1-4.

TurnItIn deadline: Thursday midnight.

Printed originality report deadline: Beginning of class.

I. 6:30 – 8 pm: II. 7:45 pm – 9:30 pm: Socrates' death.

READING DUE and IN-CLASS READING: Plato's *Crito*, *Phaedo*, pgs. 95
("When he had finished speaking..." to end. (BB)

READING DUE: Albom, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, 100-199.

II. 8-9:30 pm. **Pick topic and teams for Debate 2.** Prepare for debate

Theme: Human Person and Happiness

Class 6. Friday, November 7: Happiness in Aristotle

PAPER #3 DUE: Debate paper 2

TurnItIn deadline: Thursday midnight.

Printed originality report deadline: Beginning of class.

WRITING FOLDER DUE: All work include for review.

I. 6:30 – 7:45 pm: **DEBATE 2**

II. 8 – 9:30 pm: Is happiness possible in human life?

READING DUE and IN-CLASS READING: Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*,
(excerpts) (BB)

READING DUE: Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, pgs. 1-97.

Theme: Human Person, Happiness and Meaning

Class 7. Friday, November, 21: Happiness and Meaning in Life

PAPER #4 DUE: Philosophical Autobiography

TurnItIn deadline: Thursday midnight.

Printed originality report deadline: Beginning of class.

I. 6:30 – 7:45 pm: Is happiness possible in this life? How can we find it?

READING DUE: Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, pgs. 97-122.

Final Exam Class: Sat., Dec. 13, 4 to 7 p.m. NOTE TIME)

Presentation of Final Papers and Folders

SELF-ASSESSMENT #2 DUE: Self-assessment 2 for attendance and participation for Weeks 5- 7 and overall.

TurnItIn deadline: Thursday midnight.

Printed originality report deadline: Beginning of class.

WRITING FOLDER DUE: For sharing, discussion and distribution in class.

I. 6:30 – 8 pm.: Presentation of Philosophical Autobiographies

II. 8:15- 9:30 pm. Review of course: Internalization and appropriation.

ENJOY YOUR HOLIDAY VACATION!

Syllabus Addendum

Definition of Grades:

“A” – Demonstrated exceptional effort in understanding and advancing the class discussion, shown imagination and insight in generating philosophical ideas and in the final seminar paper.

“B” – Good performance in class discussion, participation and in writing the seminar paper.

“C” – Present in body but less so in mind or spirit. Adequate work. Fulfilled basic requirements.

“D” – Inadequate effort in all areas of understanding the ideas, participating in class discussions, writing the final seminar paper and meeting class requirements.

“F” – Unacceptable work; failure in basic class requirements.

HNU Attendance Requirement: The HNU Catalogue states that students who have excessive absences may receive a grade of F. Excessive absences occur when more than one-fifth of the scheduled class hours are missed. The instructor reserves the right to assign a grade of F to any student who misses more than 20% of class time.

HNU Credit hour policy: A credit hour (unit) is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Failure to complete reading/written assignments as assigned out of class work can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Academic Honesty: The University considers honesty vital to its academic life. Therefore, it requires that students learn and abide by the standards of honesty expected in an academic community. See the University catalog for further clarification on this point. In general, academic honesty requires that students: (1) submit work that is clearly and unmistakably their own; (2) properly represent information and give adequate acknowledgment to all sources that were used in the preparation of an assignment; (3) neither seek, accept, nor provide any assistance on tests, quizzes, and/or assignments unless explicitly permitted to do so by the instructor.

Pathways to Academic Success (DSS): Reasonable and appropriate accommodations for individuals with qualifying disabilities are extended through Pathways to Academic Success (Disability Support Services). Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Coordinator of Pathways to Academic Success (DSS) at 510-436-1394 or dss@hnu.edu to set-up a confidential appointment to discuss accommodation guidelines and available services.

Use of HNU Email for Communication: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (known as FERPA) require careful protection of a student's academic record. This record includes materials and communications regarding grades, degree planning, performance, assessment, and most other matters documented or discussed between a student and faculty member. One method we use to ensure that the student--and only the student--is reading email correspondence from HNU faculty, staff, or administrators is to require the student to use her/his password-protected HNU email account when communicating regarding school-related matters. For similar reasons, we also require that faculty use their password- protect HNU email accounts when communicating with students or with other HNU personnel regarding student academic matters.

Note the following Academic Calendar dates:

Last date to add: Wed., Sept. 10, 2014

Last date to drop: Wed., Sept. 10, 2014 (100% Refund); Wed., Sept. 17, 2014 (50% Refund)

Last date to withdraw: Wed., Nov. 12, 2014

Last day to file for incomplete: Mon. Dec. 8, 2014