

**Philosophy 160: Philosophy of Human Nature**  
**Section 4, MWF, 9:00-9:50, STR 242**  
**Section 6, MWF, 11:00-11:50, STR 242**  
**Section 13, MWF, 12:00-12:50, WHH 324**

*The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus to best suit the educational needs and aims of the course.*

Instructor: Dr. Shannon Nason

Office: UNH 3614

Email: snason@lmu.edu

Phone: 424-568-8372

Office Hours: MWF: 1:00-3:30, M: 11:00-11:50, or by appointment.

### **Course Description**

The English word “philosophy” comes from the Greek word “*philosophia*,” which literally means “love of wisdom.” Philosophy is the activity of achieving wisdom about the nature of reality, human nature, why we are here, and what we can know. This course is an introduction to the essentially human activity of philosophical questioning, and it will primarily be concerned with understanding questions that philosophers throughout history have asked (and why these questions are worth asking) and what theories they have developed as answers to their questions. To do this, we will spend a good amount of time learning about and discussing pivotal movements in the history of philosophy, and closely reading four philosophers who are exemplary representatives of these movements.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The aim of this course is for students to become

- a. Critical Readers
- b. Clear Philosophical Writers
- c. Thoughtful and Informed Participants in Discussion
- d. Acquainted with Philosophical Problems and their Connection to Issues of Utmost Human Concern
- e. Personally Inspired and Enriched by Philosophical Inquiry

**Required Texts** (available at LMU Bookstore) Students MUST use these editions

Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Joel Relihan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001)  
ISBN: 0872205835

David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998) ISBN: 0872204022

Donald Palmer, *Looking at Philosophy*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2010) ISBN: 9780073407487

Plato, *Five Dialogues*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, trans. G.M.A Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002) ISBN: 9780872206335

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, trans. Carol Macomber (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) ISBN: 97803000115468

### **Course Requirements**

Attendance: 0%

Four Short Papers (1-2 pages each) 20%

Final Paper (6-7 pages) 20%

Midterm Exam 20%

Final Exam 25%

Preparation/Participation 15%

**(a) Note on Attendance:** Attendance is expected, encouraged, welcomed, and is mandatory to succeed in this class, but I will not offer points for it.

**(b) Note on Short Papers:** The short papers will be on topics central to the four core philosophical movements we will discuss. It is up to you to decide when to write and turn in your paper, but each paper should be turned in during (and no later than) each three to four week interval. Each paper should be an answer or reflection on one of the “Topics for Consideration” at the end of each chapter in Donald Palmer’s book, and must be relevant to the material we have covered in class (Don’t answer a question that is on something we aren’t reading about). These papers must be well written, tightly argued, and, when offering personal beliefs, supported by objective reasoning. Subjective claims without objective, rational support will not be tolerated.

**(c) Note on Final Paper:** The final paper will be on some argument or claim from Plato, Boethius, Hume, or Sartre. It must clearly explain the meaning and significance of the argument or claim, and discuss the argument or claim in light of its historical and philosophical context (you must use Palmer’s book for this). Furthermore, the paper will raise two strong objections against the argument. Finally, the paper should consider whether the argument/claim can withstand these objections. More information to come.

**(d) Note on Exams:** The exams will consist of short answer and short essay questions.

**(e) In-Class Participation:** Coming to class prepared to discuss the readings for the day, including a willingness to offer insightful comments, to raise questions, and to orally provide summaries of arguments, is crucial for earning participation points. In addition, the prepared student will come to class with the assigned reading. You are responsible for obtaining, keeping, and bringing to class the texts we are reading on any given day. Also, **don’t text or surf the internet in class.** Turn off/silence your cell phones when you enter class. **Such behavior will affect your participation grade.** Lastly, 50 minutes isn’t a long time. I can think of just one or two good reasons why a student must leave in the middle of class. Unless you are very sick, do not interrupt lecture and discussion by getting up and leaving. If you do, then take your stuff with you, because it would be a shame if you doubly interrupted class by coming back in.

### **Academic Integrity**

Penalties for academic dishonesty and plagiarism are severe. Plagiarized papers will receive a zero and, depending on the severity, may lead to a failing grade for the course as well as disciplinary action from the Dean. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the University policy on academic dishonesty set forth in Loyola Marymount University’s “Honor Code and Process” on pages 24-27 of *Community Standards* (2008-2009) and at <http://www.lmu.edu/Page13245.aspx>. If you desire more information about plagiarism and how to avoid it, I recommend looking at Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab on the matter here: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

### **Course Calendar**

#### I. Ancient Greek Philosophy: Reason, Nature, Immortality

*Week One* (Jan. 9/11/13) Preliminary Remarks, Logical Reasoning

Read Palmer, pp. 1-10

**Jan 13: No Class – Prof. Nason out of town**

*Week Two* (Jan 16/18/20)

Read Palmer, pp. 11-51

**Jan 16: No Class—Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

*Week Three* (Jan. 23/25/27)

Read Palmer, 52-75

Read Plato, *Euthyphro* (all)

*Week Four* (Jan. 30/Feb. 1/3)

Read Plato, *Phaedo*, 57a-84b

*Week Five* (Feb. 6/8/10)

Read Plato, *Phaedo*, 84c-118a

Read Palmer, pp. 76-83

**Feb. 10: Last day to turn in first short paper**

## II. Medieval Philosophy: Faith, Reason, and God

*Week Six* (Feb. 13/15/17)

Read Palmer, pp. 96-118; pp. 123-126.

Read Boethius, Book III

*Week Seven* (Feb. 20/22/24)

Read Boethius, Book III, cont. and IV (pp. 91-105, pp. 110-125)

**Feb. 24: Midterm Exam**

*Week Eight* (Feb. 27/29/March 2)

**No Class—Spring Break**

*Week Nine* (Mar. 5/7/9)

Read Boethius, Book V (pp. 130-134; pp. 144-150)

Read Palmer, pp. 135-143

**March 9: Last day to turn in second short paper**

## III. Modern Philosophy: What Can We Know?

*Week Ten* (Mar. 12/14/16)

Read Palmer, pp. 160-180; pp. 196-200, 209-218

*Week Eleven* (Mar. 19/21/23)

Read Hume, Parts I-II, V

*Week Twelve* (Mar. 26/28/30)

Read Hume, Parts VI-VII, IX-XI

Read Palmer, pp. 218-227

*Week Thirteen* (Apr. 2/4/6)

Catch-up

**April 2: Last day to turn in third short paper**

**April 4-6: No Classes—Easter Break**

## IV. 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Philosophy: Self-Consciousness and Freedom

*Week Fourteen* (Apr. 9/11/13)

Read Palmer, pp. 235-244, pp. 254-278

*Week Fifteen* (Apr. 16/18/20)

Read Palmer, pp. 359-383

Read Sartre, pp. 17-54

**April 20: Final Paper Due**

*Week Sixteen* (Apr. 23/25/27)

Catch-up

Review for Exam

**April 25: Last day to turn in fourth short paper**

*Week Seventeen* (April 30-May 4)

Finals Week

Section 4: W, 8:00 am

Section 6: F, 8:00 am (Do NOT make travel arrangements that conflict with this exam time)

Section 13: W, 11:00