

Philosophy of the Human Person (Phi 2323)
Kathryn Rombs, Ph.D.
Summer Rome Program, 2016

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course asks: What does it mean to be a human person? In light of contemporary reductive materialism and its claims for the sufficiency of scientific naturalism, this course explores various claims throughout the Western tradition regarding the transcendence of the human person, including claims that the human person has a mind, will, spirit, and/or soul. We shall approach our topic by studying a few seminal thinkers who have influenced our opinions on the meaning of human existence, including Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and Descartes. We will look at Personalism and its contribution, if any, to our understanding of who we are and that in which our dignity lies.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Plato, *Phaedo*
Aristotle, *De Anima*
Augustine, *Confessions*
Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* selections (handout)
Descartes, *Meditations*
Spaemann, Robert. *Love and The Dignity of Human Life* (handout)
Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*
Wojtyla, Karol. *Love and Responsibility* (handout)

GRADING

Paper 20%
Paper 30%
Final 30%
Class Participation 20%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance is required.
2. Study questions: Each class, you will be given study questions to answer for the next class period. When called on, you must have an answer to the questions. Your class participation grade is based on your ability to answer the study questions.
3. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.
4. No electronic devices permitted in the classroom.
5. Proper dress required.

- June 4 Introduction: What is philosophy? What does it mean to be a human person? Are we mere animals, or is there something transcendent about us? If we have dignity, in what is it grounded? The contemporary challenge to philosophically justify the dignity of the human person. Weinberg Handout. Dawkins handout.
- June 5 Plato, *Phaedo*.
- June 7 Plato, *Phaedo*.
- June 8 Plato, *Phaedo*. Reflections on the human person: Plato.
- June 9 Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 2.
- June 10 Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 3.
- June 13 Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 3. Reflections on the human person: Plato and Aristotle.
- June 14 1st Paper due. Introduction to Augustine's *Confessions*.
- June 20 Augustine, *Confessions*, Book X.
- June 21 Augustine, *Confessions*, Book X. Intro to Aquinas.
- June 22 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I. 12. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III. 25, 37-40, 48, 53.
- June 24 Spaemann, *Brain Death*. Reflections on the human person: Augustine and Aquinas. Essences and their import on moral questions.
- June 27 2nd Paper due. Introduction to Descartes.
- June 29 Descartes, *Meditations*, 1-3.
- June 30 Descartes, *Meditations*, 4-6.
- July 1 Spaemann, "Paradoxes of Love," and Lewis
- July 8 Spaemann, "Human Dignity and Human Nature."
- July 9 Nagel

July 11 Nagel

July 12 Nagel and Wojtyla

July 13 FINAL EXAM