



Philosophy 12-02
Philosophy of the Person
Fall 2021

Dr. Dan C. Williamson

This course meets in DMH 208 TuTh 10:30am-11:45am

Required texts:

Kupperman, Joel J.; *Theories of Human Nature*, Hackett 2010

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Sacks, Oliver; *The Man who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales*, New York: A Touchstone Book, 1985

There will be additional readings which, for the most part, will be available online.

Socrates was reputed to be the ugliest man in Athens, but he was also said to have a ‘beautiful soul,’ like the flower above. Plato said this too. But what is a beautiful soul? For Plato, at that time, it was a Just soul, an ethical soul. But do humans have a soul? If so, what and how? Is that the same as personal identity? This course will examine questions about the self, personal identity and the older sense of soul as Plato and others meant it. The course is as concerned with how humans are ethically, as much as who or what humans are as souls, selves or personal identity. These questions will be explored through a consideration of self from the Ancient Greeks and the Chinese Sages through Modern Philosophy (e.g.: Locke and Hume to name two), up to the present which considers some of the issues that the late Dr. Sacks entertained as a neuroscientist and psychiatric clinician. Integrated with this will be questions of gender, race and class identities with thinkers such as Audre Lorde, Michel Foucault, Patricia J. Williams, and many more besides. The emphases will be simultaneously concerned with theories of the self (the ‘what’) and the ethical constitution of a self, of identity (the ‘how’ of the self).