

San José State University
Department of Philosophy
Phil 12: *Philosophy of the Person*, Fall 2018

Course and Contact Information:

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Office Hours:	Tues/Thur 1:30 - 2pm, or by appt.
Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:00 - 1:15pm
Classroom:	Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH) 149B
GE Category:	Area E (Human Understanding & Development), Core GE

Course Description:

This course provides students the opportunity to explore many of the perennial questions addressed by Western Philosophy regarding the notion of “person” since the time of antiquity. Through class discussion and course assignments, students will investigate whether there are experiences or perspectives unique to being a person and to thinking of oneself as an “I”. Students will be required to critically address, verbally and in written form, the more poignant issues that have preoccupied the imagination and reason of philosophers over the characterization of *self* throughout the ages. Therefore, philosophical issues concerning the origins, development and maturation of the *self* from a variety of perspectives will form the central theme of this class. In addressing this theme in philosophy, students will come to appreciate the different ways in which people learn to think of themselves, as well as the role which biology, society, and cultural norms play in this learning process, and how people use what they learn in shaping and developing their own character and personality. The overall purpose, then, is to enable students to attain knowledge of the interdependence of the physiological, social/cultural, and psychological factors which contribute to the process of human development. As such, students will come to know themselves as integrated social, physical and psychological entities that are able to formulate strategies for lifelong personal development. Furthermore, through the study of the philosophy of the person, students will learn to critically assess and discuss ideas concerning *human nature*. Some of the philosophical questions addressed in this course are: What is a person? What does it mean to be a human being? What is human nature? Do we have souls? How can we make sense of the notions of self, subject, ego and mind? And what does it mean to be an “I” as the dynamic intersection of social identifiers when it comes to ability, age, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as differing spiritual, socio-economic, and ethnic/linguistic/racial backgrounds? In other words, what is it to be someone with unique goals, values, aptitudes, interests and experiences? This course will look at these questions, and others, from various philosophical perspectives in an effort to prompt students to critically assess and develop their own personal notions about *human nature* and what makes them a *unique* individual. Ultimately, the final goal, is to weave together “strands of rational and emotive thought” so that students may integrate knowledge they believe to be personally important with knowledge that they have learned is valued by others.

Student Learning Objectives for this Course:

This course qualifies as an Area E (Human Understanding & Development) course in your General Education requirements. It is designed to enable you to achieve the following GE learning outcomes:

1. Recognize the physiological, social/cultural, and psychological influences on personal well-being.
2. Recognize the interrelation of the physiological, social/cultural, and psychological factors on personal development across the lifespan.
3. Use appropriate social skills to enhance learning and develop positive interpersonal relationships with diverse groups and individuals.
4. Recognize one's self as an individual undergoing a particular stage of human development, and how one's well-being is affected by academic social systems, as well as how one can facilitate their own development within the university environment.

Required Reading:

The *Phil 12: Philosophy of the Person* course reader is available at Maple Press

Maple Press
330 S. 10th Street
San Jose, CA 95112

Course Requirements and Assignments:

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Student Responsibilities:

Students are expected to arrive on time, stay for the entirety of class, and complete the assigned readings prior to attending class. Class participation is mandatory. It is crucial that students come to class prepared to discuss issues, as class participation is a significant component of grading and crucial to the process of philosophical inquiry and reasoning. In addition to developing ideas through in-class discussions, students will learn the process of writing a reflective, critically reasoned philosophy paper. This course enables students, in keeping with the general character of philosophy, to reflect on and critically analyze issues concerning theories of *personhood* within the context of human efforts to understand their physicality, environment and social world.

Course Structure:

This course will be partly lecture, and partly in-class discussion/activity. It is important that students demonstrate what they are learning from lectures and the readings through thoughtful in-class participation and logical, well-written papers. Accordingly, all students are expected to contribute to in-class discussions and debates. Each student's participation will be evaluated based on the quantity *and* quality of his or her contribution to class debates/activities, and how it reflects both an understanding and a critical assessment of the course material. Students will be asked to do various kinds of work for this course (both in and out of class) with the aim of drawing on the different learning styles and strengths among students to make learning and assessment as fair as possible. Students will be given both marks and comments as feedback on their written work; and, once returned, each assignment will be discussed in class. This is designed to give students both a specific assessment of the work they have completed and enable them to do a self-diagnostic reassessment of their approach to future work in order to further develop critical thinking and writing skills. Altogether, writing assignments will total roughly 4000 words, surpassing GE area E minimum requirements for writing.

Participation:

Participation in the form of in-class discussion/debate is crucial to philosophical inquiry, and therefore crucial to a student's success in this course. Students who do not take class discussion seriously will find it difficult to do well in the class. Students can earn 1 to 5 participation points each day of class. Once that class period is past, however, so is the opportunity to earn those participation points. Students will self-evaluate their participation each day, but the instructor will assess whether a student has accurately assessed their participation each week. Students will earn 3 points per class for showing up and having done the reading. If students are late or leave early, they may only earn 1 or 2 points depending on the amount of time lost. Students engaged in active listening will earn 1 additional point. Those who actively share in the class discussion may earn another point, totaling a maximum of 5 points per class by offering one or more significant contributions to class discussion—e.g., offering a question of significance, a substantial answer, an insight about the reading, a summarization or review of key concepts, and/or by volunteering to read out loud for the class's benefit, etc. The instructor may call on those not volunteering to participate, in order to make sure they are earning at least some participation points. It is best to offer your point of view voluntarily in class. So please speak up! Public speaking is a crucial skill in the job market; and the university experience is one of the best opportunities to become better public speakers. Overall, participation is worth 15% of your total course grade.

Writing Assignments:

Students will be required to write 3, four-to-five page papers of at least 1200 words each throughout the semester, with 1 in-class writing assignment of approximately two-pages in length for the final culminating experience. Later in the semester, handouts will be provided which detail the specific requirements and essay question prompts for each of the paper assignments. Basically, each paper assignment will be a thoughtful, critical exploration of the student's views concerning the questions raised by the various readings in class. Each of the 3 paper assignments will count for 25% of the student's total course grade, while the final in-class writing assignment will count for 10%.

NOTE that University policy F69-24 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf> states that "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading."

Grading Policy:

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Participation Sheet	15%	Dec. 4th
Paper Assignment #1 (1200 words)	25%	Oct. 4th
Paper Assignment #2 (1200 words)	25%	Nov. 8th
Paper Assignment #3 (1200 words)	25%	Dec. 14th
In-class Writing (culminating exp.)	10%	Dec. 14th
Culminating Experience (no final exam)		Friday, December 14th @ 9:45 am - 12:00 noon

Note that "All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades." See University Policy F13-1 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf> for more details.

Classroom Protocol/Community Etiquette:

- Be respectful and kind to others.
- Have the courage to speak up.

- No interrupting others while speaking.
- Do the readings before class.
- Be present not only physically, but mentally.
- No web surfing, checking emails, or texting during class.
- No tolerance for intolerance.

University Policies:

Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs **maintains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.** You may find all syllabus related University Policies and resources information listed on GUP's [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Phil 12: Course Reading Schedule

(Subject to change with fair notice)

Date	Topic	Reading
21 AUG 23	Welcome: Review of Syllabus & Class Expectations <i>Perictione: What is philosophy? & Mind-Body Intro</i>	Buy Reader Handout #1, R: p.2
28 30	Expectations for Writing a Good Philosophy Paper <i>Thesis Defense (Argumentative) Papers & Precision of Language</i> Assign Paper #1 & Review Grading Rubric	Handout #2
4 SEP 6	Plato: Phaedo, Phaedrus & the Republic <i>Plato continued</i>	Read: 3-12
11 13	Aristotle: DeAnima (On the Soul) <i>Aristotle continued</i>	Read: 13-17
18 20	Descartes: Discourse on the Method & Meditations <i>Descartes continued</i>	Read: 18-27
25 27	Ryle: The Myth of the 'Ghost in the Machine' <i>Ryle continued</i>	Read: 28-33
2 OCT 4	Symposium: Mind-Body Duality Paper Assignment #1 Due on Oct 4th & Assign Paper #2	
9 11	Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding <i>Locke continued</i>	Read: 34-43
16 18	Hume: A Treatise of Human Nature <i>Hume continued</i>	Read: 44-51
23 25	Freud: The Partly Hidden Self <i>Freud continued</i> Count Participation Points on Oct. 25th	Read: 52-58

30 1 NOV	Kurzweil: How to Make a Mind <i>Kurzweil continued</i>	Read: 59-63
6 8	Nagel: What is it Like to Be a Bat? <i>Nagel continued</i> Paper Assignment #2 Due on Nov 8th & Assign Paper #3	Read: 64-72
13 15	Ortega y Gasset: Man the Technician <i>Ortega y Gasset continued</i>	Read: 73-87
20 22	Sartre: Existentialism (Condemned to Be Free) <i>Thanksgiving Holiday</i>	Read: 88-96
27 29	Menkiti: Person and Community (Criticism of Existentialism) <i>Menkiti continued</i>	Read: 97-104
4 DEC 6	Camus: The Myth of Sisyphus Paper Assignment #3 Due on Dec 14th	Read: 105-107
14	<i>Culminating Experience during Final Exam Time @ 9:45am-12noon</i>	