

"Enquiry ... is exploration, not a guided tour." (Ted Honderich)

Course Identification:

Honors Philosophy of Human Nature
PHIL 111
MWF 10:10-11:05, Founders 124
Prerequisite: none

Instructor Information:

Dr. Kevin Timpe
ktimpe@sandiego.edu
www.sandiego.edu/~ktimpe

Office: Founders 165A
Office Hours: 8:00-9:00 MWF and 11:15-1:15 F
Office Phone: 260.7768

Course Description:

This course is built around two main issues. The first is concerned with what it means to be a human person: What is the relationship between a human person and his/her body? Am I identical with my body? Or am I distinct from my body in some important way? In addressing these questions, we will look at a number of theories in the philosophy of mind, and well as objections to these theories. We will also look at criteria for personal identity through time. In virtue of what does a person continue to exist through time? In addressing this issue, we will look at how various views of what it means to be a person can account for the possibility of resurrection or other forms of post-mortem survival.

The second issue concerns a unique feature of what it means to be a person (including human persons). What does it mean to say that a person is free, and thus morally responsible for his/her actions? Are all an agent's actions merely the result of the laws of nature? What does it mean to say that an agent's actions are caused? Is freedom compatible with determinism?

Course goals and objectives:

Upon completion of the course, the students should be able to:

- (1) describe significant aspects of one or more of the major epistemological traditions,
- (2) describe and analyze important views of human nature, including accounts of the mind/body relation, personal identity and post-mortem survival, and
- (3) describe and analyze different positions regarding free will.

Text/Readings:

Simon Blackburn, *Think* (Oxford University Press, 1999) [THK]
Ted Honderich, *How Free are You?*, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press, 2002) [HFY]

Additional readings in the form of handouts or research articles will also be used. Most of these will be posted on electronic reserve through the library [ER]. Students are to print these articles, read them and bring them to class on the days that are being discussed (password: **persons**).

This course will also make extensive use of WebCT.

Assignments:

One-fifth of your course grade is based on class participation. Students are to keep up with the reading and have read enough (and closely enough) to participate regularly in class discussion. While attendance is not required, it is difficult to participate if one is not in class. Failure to read or participate regularly will be noted and will be detrimental to your grade. Class participation includes, but is not limited to, asking and answering questions in class, reading quizzes, and meetings with the instructor.

If deemed necessary by the instructor, quizzes will be given over the reading material to make sure that students are staying current with the texts. The frequency of quizzes will be inversely proportional to the level of overall class participation. Quizzes need not be announced ahead of time and *cannot* be made up if missed.

One reading question per class period will be posted on WebCT. Students are responsible for answering any 20 of these questions during the course of the semester. Answers to individual questions will *only* be accepted on the day the reading assignment in question is discussed in class (particular due dates for individual questions will be on WebCT). Answering the reading questions will help prepare one to participation in class discussion. This requirement is necessary, but not sufficient, for achieving a good class participation grade.

Students will be required to write *two* short papers during the course of the semester. Further details will be forthcoming.

There will be *two* exams. They will (in all likelihood) consist primarily of short-answer and essay questions. The final exam will *not* be comprehensive in nature. A study guide will be circulated prior to each exam [via WebCT].

Students are responsible for regularly checking WebCT for when the various assignments are due.

Course Grade:

Class Participation	20%
Papers	35%
<u>2 Tests</u>	<u>45%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale:

A	> 93%
A-	90-92%
B+	88-89%
B	83-87%
B-	80-82%
C+	78-79%
C	73-77%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	< 60%

Academic honesty:

This is, after all, a course concerned with truth. Academic dishonesty in any form (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) will not be tolerated. The University of San Diego's policy on academic honest reads, in part, as follows:

Academic dishonesty, and allegations of academic dishonesty, are matters of University-wide concern in the same way that academic integrity is a matter of University-wide concern. Students bear the responsibility not only for their own academic integrity but also for bringing instances of suspected academic dishonesty to the attention of the proper authorities.... Penalties imposed by the instructor or supervisor with respect to a course or academic exercise may include: reduction in grade of the affected person in the course or exercise; the requirement that the affected person withdraw from the course or exercise; the requirement that all or part of the course or exercise be retaken; the requirement that the person engage in additional work in connection with the course or exercise.

Cheating on a test or other major assignment, including plagiarizing a paper, is grounds for failure of the course.

Miscellaneous Information:

Students are expected to treat all others in the class with the respect that is due.

Students will turn off all cell-phones during class meetings. Any phone that rings or vibrates, the instructor gets to answer.

You should become familiar with my web-page, as it has links to E-Reserve and WebCT.

Also note that email is probably the best way to get a hold of me.