

**PHIL 130: Philosophy and Persons**

**John Felice Rome Center**

Fall 2024

Tuesdays & Thursdays | 3:45-5:00pm

Dr. Moreno Rocchi

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Office Hours: Thu., 1:00-3:00pm (by appointment)

**Course Description**

This introductory core course is designed not only to acquaint the student with some of the classical themes and topics in Western philosophy, but also to show how closely Western philosophy has been entwined with all other cultural expressions throughout history.

Thus this course has a historical trajectory, which is divided into two blocks. The concept of Enlightenment and the birth of the idea of a secular and ever-increasing Progress during the French Enlightenment mark the divide between the two. The first block has two sections. The first one is dedicated to the pre-modern age. Our primary goal here is to obtain a basic grasp of three paradigms on human nature that succeeded one another in the Western intellectual tradition: the primacy of contemplative life in ancient Greece, theocentrism during the Middle Ages, anthropocentrism and its primacy of active life during the Renaissance. We will then address one of the most important turning points of Western civilization, namely the so-called Scientific Revolution.

In the second block of the course we will first analyze the idea that a culture unchained from prejudice and authority can and will transform society for the better. We will then pay special attention to Rousseau's ground-breaking analysis of the origin of social inequality, which will allow us to appreciate the different but equally fundamental theories of Kant and Marx on human nature, the meaning of history, and the possibility of positive progress for humankind. Having contrasted Marx' theory with Freud's rather pessimistic view on humankind, we will conclude by addressing some of the key components of Arendt's theory of action, such as freedom, plurality and disclosure.

**Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the course students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the various approaches of the philosophical questions related to what it means to be human, with attention to the historical and conceptual development of these questions, and be able to articulate some of the major problems and responses central to this area of philosophy.

This course should also enable students to:

- (a) distinguish alternative paradigms on human nature;
- (b) look for and appreciate the reasons given in support of the different views, to assess the forcefulness of the challenge that each poses for the others, and to determine how they also challenge unexamined presuppositions in our own culture;
- (c) engage in dialogue with great philosophers, paying close attention to their meaning, their reasons, their concerns, their vision;
- (d) insert their own reflections into the dialogue;
- (e) differentiate among historical and contemporary perspectives about humanity with a view to fashioning a humane and just world;
- (f) recognize the premises for a given conclusion or viewpoint, identify unexamined presuppositions, appreciate astute insights, expose vulnerabilities in established positions.

### **Required Texts/Materials**

Assigned readings posted on Sakai;

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Mankind* (available online);

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (available online);

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (available online).

### **Attendance Policy**

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

This course meets twice a week, thus a total of **two unexcused absences** will be permitted. **Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit”.**

If, however, you are ill, do not attend class (your absence will be excused).

### **Campus Health**

The JFRC will conduct all activity according to policies and best practices as prescribed by the Italian Ministries of Health and Education and in consultation with the Loyola University Chicago main campus. These policies will be subject to change as the situation warrants.

### **Assessment Components**

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|--------------------------------|------|
| • Midterm Exam (in-class test) | 35 % |
| • Final Exam (take-home paper) | 38 % |
| • Participation                | 20 % |
| • Reflection paper*            | 7 %  |

\*Students will be required to write a reflection paper (about 3 pages, MLA format) on a topic to be agreed upon with the instructor. They will also occasionally be required to write short reflections on topics discussed in class.

### **Grading**

94-100: A

90-93: A-

87-89: B+

84-86: B

80-83: B-

77-79: C+

74-76: C

70-73: C-

67-69: D+

60-66: D

59 or lower: F

### **Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Loyola University Chicago, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle.

Failing to meet the following academic integrity standards is a serious violation of personal honesty and the academic ideals that bind the University into a learning community. These standards apply to both individual and group assignments. Individuals working in a group may be held responsible if one of the group members has violated one or more of these standards.

1. Students may not plagiarize; **the use of AI is considered plagiarism too and treated as such.**
2. Students may not submit the same work for credit for more than one assignment (known as self-plagiarism).
3. Students may not fabricate data.
4. Students may not collude.
5. Students may not cheat.
6. Student may not facilitate academic misconduct.

Follow this link for more details about these standards, sanctions, and academic misconduct procedures: ([https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml))

### **Late or Missed Assignments**

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

### **Accessibility Accommodations (with addendum on classroom recording policy)**

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Loyola University provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with Student Accessibility Center (SAC), located in Sullivan Center, Suite 117. Professors receive the accommodation notification from SAC via Accommodate. Students are encouraged to meet with their professor individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential.

Please note that in this class, software may be used to record class lectures exclusively in order to provide equal access to students with disabilities. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. Recordings are deleted at the end of the semester.

For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or [SAC@luc.edu](mailto:SAC@luc.edu).

### **Course Schedule**

Date	Topic(s)	Assignment
Tue. 09/03	Introduction to the course	
Thu. 09/05	Introduction to ancient Greek philosophy	Plato, <i>Republic</i> (excerpt)
Tue. 09/10	The primacy of contemplative life	Plato, <i>Theaetetus</i> (excerpt); Aristotle,

*Metaphysics and Nicomachean Ethics (excerpts)*

Thu. 09/12	Cosmocentrism	Aristotle, <i>Physics</i> (excerpts)
Tue. 09/17	Theocentrism part I	Augustine, <i>To Simplicianus</i> and <i>The City of God</i> (excerpts)
Thu. 09/19	Theocentrism part II; Introduction to the Renaissance age	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> (excerpts)
Tue. 09/24	Anthropocentrism and active life	Salutati, Manetti, Pico, Ficino (selections)
Thu. 09/26	Introduction to the Modern Age: The Scientific Revolution	Galilei and Leopardi (selections)
Tue. 10/01	Against prejudice and authority	Voltaire, <i>Philosophical Dictionary</i> (selections)
Thu. 10/03	Review	
<b>Tue. 10/08</b>	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
Thu. 10/10	Introduction to Rousseau	<i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Mankind</i> (Preface and Introduction)
[FALL BREAK]		
Tue. 10/22	Rousseau	<i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Mankind</i> (I part)
Thu. 10/24	Rousseau	<i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Mankind</i> (II part)
<b>Fri. 10/25</b>	Kant	<i>Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose</i>
Tue. 10/29	Kant	<i>Conjectural Beginning of Human History</i>
Thu. 10/31	Marx: Alienation	Manuscript on "Alienated Labor"
Tue. 11/05	Marx: Critique of ideology	<i>On the Jewish Question</i> (selections) <i>German Ideology</i> (selections)
Thu. 11/07	Marx: Philosophy of history	<i>German Ideology</i> (excerpts); <i>Communist Manifesto</i> (part I)
Tue. 11/12	Freud's <i>Civilization and its Discontents</i>	§§ 1-2



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Thu. 11/14	Freud's <i>Civilization and its Discontents</i>	§§ 3-5
Tue. 11/19	Freud's <i>Civilization and its Discontents</i>	§§ 6-7
Thu. 11/21	Movie day	
Tue. 11/26	Arendt's <i>Human Condition</i>	Chapter 1
Tue. 12/03	Arendt's <i>Human Condition</i>	Chapters 2 and 5 (selections)
Thu. 12/05	Study day	
<b>Tue. 12/10 (TBC)</b>	<b>Final exam</b> (= take-home paper deadline)	