Instructor: Mr. John Gregor MacDougall  
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Office hours: Wed 3pm-5pm, Fri 3pm-5pm, or by appointment.

Course description and objectives
This course is an introduction to the study of philosophy. Its title can be misleading. "Human nature" sounds like a fairly limited topic, but considering the fact that we are humans, for us the question of what we are can be viewed as central because it tells us about our place in the world. We will therefore be studying a variety of topics that get at the question of what it means to be human both directly and indirectly, by trying to place humankind in the grand scheme of things. Topics will include the nature of persons both in relation to physical reality and ultimate reality (including God, if he exists); the nature of human values and ethics; and the nature of human knowledge.

The primary goal of the course is to help students learn to understand and ask questions of ultimate meaning and to provide a set of basic concepts and tools that will help them begin to address these questions. Students will read selections from classic texts in the history of philosophy and will be expected to display critical engagement with the texts as well as a big picture understanding of the general issues addressed in the texts. Students will also develop skills in critical reflection and written communication through a variety of writing assignments on the various course readings and lectures.

Course requirements
Students will be required to write two papers, both at least 5 pages in length. For each paper, a rough draft must be submitted in order to receive comments before the final draft. This is a requirement. Late rough drafts will lose points for the final draft. The purpose of both papers is to develop one of the arguments we will go over in class and either defend it against objections or attack it and anticipate rebuttals. Students will be given arguments to choose from but will be expected to develop their defense and objections/rebuttals to the argument based on class discussion, assigned readings, and additional research.

There will also be some quizzes given, each having two questions: one on the reading for that day and one on the class discussion from the previous class period. They will not occur every class period but could be given at any time.

Attendance and participation is a significant part of this course. Participation grades will take into account a balance of both the quality and quantity of student’s input into class discussion.

You are expected to write journal entries with analysis and reflections for many of the readings, to be turned in before the beginning of each class. You must write one journal entry for each class period, and you may select which reading you focus on if there are multiple readings, but you are always expected to read each assigned reading. Each entry should be at least one page double-spaced (1 inch margins, 12 point font) and should include your summary of the main points of the reading or your own reflections on the content. Whether you are merely summarizing or reflecting personally, though, it is essential that you tailor what you say to the text itself. In other words, what you say should be directly relevant (rather than tangential) to the reading. Journals will be given full credit unless the student appears to be cutting corners, not taking it very seriously, or not even attempting to understand what the text is saying.

Finally, there will be a comprehensive final exam at the end of the class.

Handing in work and late policy
All assignments should be sent via email to jmacdougall@fordham.edu, before the beginning of the class period (9:00am) in which they are due for journals, or before midnight on the due date for papers. Late
work will be deducted 1/3 of a letter grade for every day it is late excluding Sundays (so an A assignment that was due on Saturday night becomes an A- if handed in on Monday, a B+ on Tuesday, a B on Wednesday, and so on).

Attendance policy
Absences may be excused only if you bring me a note from a doctor or the dean, or at the very least if you have what I consider a good reason and inform me of it more than 24 hours in advance. If you miss even one class without excuse your participation grade will be significantly affected, because one class is the equivalent of an entire week during the semester. You also may not make up any quizzes for unexcused absences. Homework assignments may be turned in late for reduced credit.

Finally, PLEASE NOTE: According to the school handbook if you have more than two weeks’ worth of absences in a semester for a given class, then you automatically fail. Because this class is condensed, missing two full days is tantamount to missing two weeks during a regular semester course (and therefore sufficient for you to fail the course), so be sure you are there every day!

Grading
10% Attendance/participation
20% Journals
15% Quizzes
15% First paper
20% Second paper
20% Final

Grades will be awarded both on individual assignments and overall based on a graduated GPA scale, as follows:
4.00 ≥ A ≥ 3.80
3.80 > A- ≥ 3.50
3.50 > B+ ≥ 3.15
3.15 > B ≥ 2.85
2.85 > B- ≥ 2.50
2.50 > C+ ≥ 2.15
2.15 > C ≥ 1.85
1.85 > C- ≥ 1.50
1.50 > D ≥ 1.00
1.00 > F ≥ 0

Required texts
Since the readings for each class period are short selections from much larger works, all texts will be distributed in electronic form via blackboard. Go to my.fordham.edu and log-in, then click the blackboard link at the top of the page. Next find the name of this course in the right sidebar, click it, and then click “Content” on the left sidebar once you reach the course pages. You should see the folder for course readings and will find pdfs of the readings listed by date for each individual class.

Note: You will be expected to print these texts out and bring them to each class.

Use of Technology
Important: You may not use computers or phones or tablets or any other internet enabled device during this class. If I catch you with any such device, I will ask you to bring it up to the front of the room and leave it with me for the rest of the class period, and you will lose participation points for the day. If you need an accommodation because of a disability of some kind, please see me after the first class. If some day you have a personal emergency and for some reason you need to have your phone with you, please be sure to come and tell me before class begins.

Note on Americans with Disabilities Act
Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of
Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disability that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule a meeting to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (Rose Hill - O'Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655 or at Lincoln Center – Room 207, x6282).

**Note on Plagiarism**
Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. The first offense will result in an immediate F on the assignment in question and a meeting with the dean for possible further disciplinary consequences. The second offense will result in failure of the course, immediate academic suspension, and possibly expulsion from the school. Students are expected to familiarize themselves thoroughly with the school's academic integrity policy, which can be found here: [http://www.fordham.edu/info/25380/undergraduate_academic_integrity_policy](http://www.fordham.edu/info/25380/undergraduate_academic_integrity_policy)

The following is a brief (incomplete) summary of common forms of plagiarism:
1) Copying any sentence or any substantial part of a sentence from any source without quotation marks and citation.
2) Copying substantial portions of a source even if you do give credit. (Sometimes in academic writing it is appropriate to give extended quotations for the purpose of commenting on those quotations, but that will probably not be relevant in this class.)
3) Paraphrasing sentences, i.e., taking material from sources in such a way that the sentence structure is preserved but only some words are changed. If you are summarizing any source, you must completely rewrite it with your own words as well as sentence and paragraph structure.
4) Failure to cite any source that gave you an idea.

**Schedule of classes and readings**
**Class 1 – 5/29**
*Introduction*
1st hour: Introduction part 1: syllabus and survey


Introduction part 2: what is philosophy and why study it?

*Philosophical (meta)ethics*
3rd hour: **Reading:** McBrayer, “Why Our Children Don't Think There are Moral Facts”

Are there moral facts? Can we know them?

**Class 2 – 5/30**
1st hour: **Reading:** Plato, *Euthyphro*, 2a-11c

What is the good part 1: what pleases God?

2nd hour: **Reading:** Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* Book I, parts 1,7

What is the good part 2: a feature of things?

3rd hour: What is the good part 3: a human creation?

**Class 3 – 5/31**
*Free will and determinism*
1st hour: **Reading:** William Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, ch.13.1-13.2

Free will or determinism: the problem

2nd hour: Free will and determinism: the problem continued

3rd hour: Solutions to the problem
Class 4 – 6/6

**Philosophical method: logic**

1st hour: *Reading*: Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, Basic Logical Concepts
Introduction part 3: what is logic?

2nd hour: *Reading*: 1) Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, Fallacies; 2) Common Fallacies (IEP)
Logic continued

3rd hour: Logic continued

Class 5 – 6/7

**Philosophy of mind and metaphysics**

1st hour: *Reading*: Plato, *Phaedo* 63e-67b, 69e-70b, 77c-81a
Substance dualism part 1: the soul and forms

2nd hour: The soul and forms continued

3rd hour: Alternative theories of universals.

Class 6 – 6/8

1st hour: *Reading*: Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book VII, selections from parts 13,17; Book VIII, part 6
Intro to hylomorphism: wholes and parts, universals and particulars

Hylomorphism and the soul

3rd hour: Hylomorphism continued

6/10 (Saturday) – Paper 1 rough draft due by midnight

Class 7 – 6/13

1st hour: *Reading*: William Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, ch.3 Overview-3.2
Substance dualism part 2: Descartes’s arguments

2nd hour: *Reading*: Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, pp.46-58
Substance dualism part 3: objections to substance dualism

3rd hour: Substance dualism continued

Class 8 – 6/14

1st hour: *Reading*: Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, pp.8-17
Intro to contemporary philosophy of mind

2nd hour: *Reading*: Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, selections from pp.267-283
Consciousness part I

3rd hour: Consciousness continued

Class 9 – 6/15

1st hour: Consciousness continued

2nd hour: *Reading*: Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, pp.91-102
Mind-brain identity theory
3rd hour: Functionalism

6/17 (Saturday) – Paper 1 final draft due by midnight

Class 10 – 6/20
Philosophy of knowledge (epistemology)
1st hour: Reading: Richard Feldman, Epistemology, ch.1
Sources and types of knowledge

2nd hour: Reading: Rene Descartes, Meditations I-II
The problem of skepticism and the justification of knowledge

3rd hour: Skepticism and the justification of knowledge continued

Class 11 – 6/21
1st hour: Reading: Rene Descartes, Meditations IV
The cause of error and disagreement

2nd hour: Reading: Rene Descartes, selection from Meditations VI
Overcoming skepticism

3rd hour: Skepticism and relativism

Class 12 – 6/22
Philosophy of religion
1st hour: Reading: William Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief,” section 1
Faith and reason

2nd hour: Faith and reason continued

3rd hour: Reading: Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica Ia q.3 a.7; q.4 a.2
Neoplatonic background: God and transcendentals

6/24 (Saturday) – Paper 2 rough draft due by midnight

Class 13 – 6/27
1st hour: Reading: Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica Ia q.2 aa.2-3
Arguments for God’s existence part I: cosmological and teleological arguments

2nd hour: Cosmological and teleological arguments continued

3rd hour: Reading: Réne Descartes, Meditations V
Arguments for God’s existence part II: ontological arguments

Class 14 – 6/28
1st hour: Reading: William L. Rowe, “The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism”
Difficulties for God’s existence

2nd hour: Difficulties for God’s existence continued

3rd hour: Exam review

Class 15 – 6/29
Final exam
7/1 (Saturday) – Paper 2 final draft due by midnight