

PHI 100¹
Concepts of the Person

Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:30–12:50 p.m.
<https://meet.google.com/qdh-dtxv-eyc>

Professor Robert Harvey²
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Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:30-2:30 p.m. or by appt
<https://meet.google.com/pjf-jysv-naz>

teaching assistants

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Here is how *the generic, catalogue descriptor* for PHI 100 reads: “an introduction to philosophy through readings and discussion on topics such as human identity, human understanding, and human values.”

But let’s look first at the course title: “Concepts of the Person.”
Whence do we *get* the term “person”?
What does *that* mean?
Does being a person entail responsibilities?
What is it that we call an individual? (... a subject, the self, the ego, etc.)
We could also ask, of course, What is a concept?

The premise of this course will thus be that this line of questioning is a fruitful way not only of introducing ourselves to the world of “philosophy” but also of exploring what it means to us to belong to the animal species that we ourselves have named homo sapiens.

Required Readings

William O. Stephens, *The Person: Readings in Human Nature*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson–Prentice Hall, 2006.

¹ DEC category B or SBC categories CER & HUM (see page 2).

² N.B. – If you don’t hear from your instructor within 72 hours, please email CAS_Dean@stonybrook.edu

Course Requirements

This course will be delivered remotely and synchronously. In other words, we will meet online on the scheduled days at the appointed times (Eastern North America time zone). Should exceptional circumstances arise where a student needs to miss a class session, they need to contact the professor or one of the TAs so that the recording can be made available to them.

For all classes (and office hours), all students will need to have or have access to the Internet via a reliable Wifi connection on a device (laptop or desktop preferably; tablet or smartphone in a pinch) equipped with camera and microphone.

- weekly *reading responses* to be submitted on BlackBoard by midnight each Sunday (20%)
What, to your view, is the one most *salient* or *productive* point made one of the philosophers in the current reading assignment? After expressing that, formulate a question regarding the point. It is important to contextualize or “set up” the question, as if you were actually posing it to a group of thinkers. Length: 150-200 words.
- *adopt a term* (10%), where students commit to a synonym for person or a closely related term, develop definitions, and prepare to discuss as part of the following...
- *discussion groups*, which take place on BlackBoard (20%)
- *midterm exam*, consisting of some short-answer questions and a short essay (20%)
- *final exam*, consisting of some short-answer questions and a *longer* essay (25%)
- *attendance*, which the TAs will take at random moments during the online class sessions from the attendees list on Google Meet (5%)

Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC) Learning Outcomes met by successful completion of PHI 100

(HUM) Address Problems Using Critical Analysis and the Methods of the Humanities

You will come to understand...

the major principles and concepts that form the basis of knowledge in the humanities and

the theoretical concepts that undergird one or more of the humanities.

You will develop an awareness of...

the key historical themes of one or more of the humanities,

the multi- or interdisciplinary nature of issues within the humanities, and

the contexts (historical, social, geographical, moral) in which these issues emerged.

...and develop...

the verbal and written skills to articulate valid arguments on these issues.

(CER) Practice and Respect Critical and Ethical Reasoning

This entails...

demonstrating an ability to distinguish among the ethical principles guiding human behavior and

understanding and differentiating ethical, legal, social justice, and political issues.

Semester Program

- N.B. — I shall endeavor to keep to the following schedule of readings and discussions. However, I reserve the possibility of modifications in order to favor critical thinking over the compulsion to complete.
- titles and references in blue, below, are from the Stephens reader.
 - * after an author’s name indicates longer selections. Don’t delay reading!
 - + indicates that a reading response is due the following Sunday at midnight.
 - square brackets “[...]” in the right column indicate readings repeated.

class meetings/lectures	read before the following session
25 August — Introductions & Orientation	read the syllabus <i>thoroughly</i>
27 August — “Deconstructing Donne’s ‘No man is an island.’”	Plato (1)
1 September — Conceptual History — Plato	Aristotle (2) & Cicero (3)
3 September — Aristotle & Cicero	Midgley (34) +
8 September — Midgley	Taylor* (31) & Rorty* (36)
10 September — Taylor & Rorty	Engberg-Pedersen (38) & Stephens (41) +
15 September — Engberg-Pedersen & Stephens	[Cicero (3)], Epictetus (4) & Descartes (10)
17 September — Personology (i.e. accounts of the person) — Cicero, Epictetus & Descartes	Hobbes (11) & La Mettrie (13) +
22 September — Hobbes & La Mettrie	Kant (16b and 16c)
24 September — Kant	Kierkegaard (17) & Comte (18) +
29 September — Kierkegaard & Comte	Nietzsche (19)
1 October — Nietzsche	Weil (20) (153–56), Sartre (21) & Dennett (27) +
6 October — Weil, Sartre & Dennett	Locke (12) & Leibniz (14)
8 October — Identity of Persons — Locke & Leibniz	Hume (15) & Strawson (22)
13 October — Hume & Strawson	study for Midterm
15 October — Midterm	Kant (16a)
20 October — Kant	Frankfurt (25) & Parfit (33)
22 October — Frankfurt & Parfit	Clement (5) & Boethius (6) +
27 October — Divine Persons — Clement & Boethius	Anselm (7) & Thomas Aquinas (8)
29 October — Anselm & Thomas Aquinas	Duns Scotus (9) & Broad (23) +
3 November — Duns Scotus & Broad	Smullyan (28) & Legenhausen (35)
5 November — Smullyan & Legenhausen	Warren (26) +
10 November — Nonhuman Persons & Human Non-Persons — Warren	French (30) & Dolby (37)
12 November — French & Dolby	Hanfling (39) & Martin (40) +
17 November — Hanfling & Martin	The Boyd Group (42)
19 November — The Boyd Group	Taylor (24)
no classes 23-28 November	just read and try to relax!
1 December — Persons & Non-Western Cultures — Taylor [& Smullyan]	Menkiti (29)
3 December — Menkiti & Conclusions	chill, but study...

Final Exam: Wednesday, 16 December, 11:15-1:45 p.m.

Official University Statements³

Responsibilities in the Virtual Classroom

Students are expected to attend each session of the class (see first point under Course Requirements above) unless other arrangements are made; arrive for class on time and leave the classroom only at the end of class; engage in class discussions and activities when appropriate; exhibit classroom behavior that is not disruptive of the learning environment. Any use of a cell phone or other unauthorized electronic device during an examination may lead to an accusation of academic dishonesty.

Absentee Policy

Students are expected to take their examinations and do the graded coursework as scheduled. If a student is unable to report for any examination or to complete graded coursework on time, the student must contact the professor or a TA immediately.

Academic Integrity

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html

Student Accessibility Support Center (SASC) Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, 128 ECC Building, (631) 632-6748, or at sasc@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

³ for further information, see https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/provost/faculty/handbook/academic_policies/minimal_instructional_and_student_responsibilities.php