



**JOHN FELICE
ROME CENTER**

PHIL 130: Philosophy and Persons

John Felice Rome Center

Fall 2025

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

Dr. Moreno Rocchi

Email: mrocchi1@luc.edu

Office Hours: Tue./Thu., 2:00-3:00pm (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 four blocks.

The first block 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 preference for active life during the Renaissance.

The Scientific Revolution, one of the most important turning points of Western civilization, will mark the divide between the first and the second block of the course. In such second block, after having analyzed the idea that a culture unchained from prejudice and authority can and will transform society for the better, we will focus on Rousseau's ground-breaking analysis of the origin of social inequality.

The third block will be dedicated to Marx and his critics. Having discussed Marx' view on human nature, the meaning of history, and the possibility of positive progress for humankind, we will contrast it with Freud's rather pessimistic anthropology as well as with Arendt's theory of action and its emphasis on concepts such as freedom, diversity and uniqueness.

In the fourth and last block of the course we will trace the development of the notion of "human being" throughout the second half of the twentieth Century in light of the transformations wrought by feminist and post-colonial thinkers.

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.



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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 Rome Center mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, and in compliance with full-time student visa status, all courses adhere to the following attendance policy.

Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student and synonymous with academic success. Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for each course. Lateness or leaving class early will impact the course grade at the professor's discretion. All absences, including medical absences, will be treated the same, unless they are documented long-term conditions or emergencies. Such situations will be evaluated case-by-case by the Academic Affairs office.

- **After 2 absences, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.**
- Missing **6 classes** or more will result in an **automatic failure (F)**.

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) | 32% |
| • Final Exam (take-home paper) | 33% |
| • In-class participation | 20% |
| • Forum participation* | 15% |

* One or two discussion questions/prompts will be posted on Sakai, section "Discussions", every week.

Each student is required to publish at least two posts every two weeks (ideally, at least one answer to my prompt and one reply to someone else's answer).

7% will be for completion. The other 8% will be for the quality of your submissions. I will not grade each post individually, but I encourage you to put thought and effort into each of them so that you can demonstrate the skills and knowledge you are gaining throughout the course.

Basic requirements of each post:

- Posts should be between 150 and 250 words;
- Use language that is professional and respectful of both the authors discussed and your classmates;
- Posts that respond to classmates' posts should begin with a brief statement about what you appreciate or agree with about the classmate's post.



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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)

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours **will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs**. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.

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



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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.

Notice of Reporting Obligations for Responsible Campus Partners

As an instructor, I am a Responsible Campus Partner (“RCP”) under Loyola’s Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation (available at www.luc.edu/equity). While my goal is for you to be able to engage fully and authentically with our course material through class discussions and written

work, I also want to be transparent that as a RCP, I must notify the Office for Equity & Compliance (“OEC”)/Title IX Coordinator when I have any information about conduct that reasonably may constitute Title IX Sex-Based Discrimination. Title IX Sex-Based Discrimination includes any of the following conduct, when the conduct was within the University’s education program or activity:

- Discrimination or discriminatory harassment on the basis of sex (including sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, gender identity, sexual orientation, and Pregnancy or Related Conditions),
- Sexual harassment (including quid pro quo and hostile environment sexual harassment),
- Sexual assault,
- Dating and/or domestic violence, and/or
- Stalking

As the University’s Title IX office, the OEC coordinates the University’s response to reports and complaints of sexual misconduct (as well as discrimination of any kind) to ensure students’ rights are protected.

The University maintains such reporting requirements to ensure that any student who experiences sexual/gender-based violence receives accurate information about available resources and support. Such reports will not generate a report to law enforcement (no student will ever be forced to file a report with the police). Additionally, the University’s resources and supports are available to all students even if a student chooses that they do not want any other action taken. If you have any questions about this policy, you are encouraged to contact the OEC at equity@luc.edu or 773-508-7766.

If you ever wish to speak with a confidential resource regarding gender-based violence, I encourage you to call The Line at 773-494-3810. The Line is staffed by confidential advocates from 8:30am-5pm M-F and 24 hours on the weekend when school is in session. Advocates can provide support, talk through your options (medical, legal, LUC reporting, safety planning, etc.), and connect you with resources as needed – without generating a report or record with the OEC. More information about The Line can be found at www.luc.edu/wellness.

Course Schedule (N.B.: ALL READINGS MUST BE DONE BEFORE CLASS!)

Date	Topic	Assignment
Tue. 09/02	Introduction to the course	



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Thu. 09/04	Cosmocentrism and the primacy of contemplative life part I	Plato, excerpts from <i>Republic</i> and <i>Theaetetus</i>
Tue. 09/09	Cosmocentrism and the primacy of contemplative life part II; Theocentrism part I	Aristotle, excerpts from <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> and <i>Metaphysics</i> ; Augustine, excerpts from <i>To Simplicianus</i>
Thu. 09/11	Theocentrism part II	Augustine, excerpts from <i>The City of God</i> and <i>Confessions</i>
Tue. 09/16	Anthropocentrism and active life	Salutati, Manetti, Ficino, Pico (selections)
Thu. 09/18	Towards the Modern Age: Machiavelli	<i>The Prince</i> , Ch. XV-XVIII
Tue. 09/23	The Scientific Revolution	PowerPoint presentation + Galilei (selections)
Thu. 09/25	The Enlightenment	Voltaire, <i>Philosophical Dictionary</i> (selections); Kant, «What is Enlightenment?»
Tue. 09/30	Rousseau	<i>Discourse on the Arts and Sciences</i>
Thu. 10/02	Review	
Tue. 10/07	Midterm Exam	
Thu. 10/09	Rousseau	<i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Mankind</i> (I part)
[FALL BREAK]		
Tue. 10/21	Rousseau	<i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Mankind</i> (II part)
Thu. 10/23	Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic	Hegel, excerpt from the <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> + listen to this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGe-qXeehE
Fri. 10/24	Introduction to Marx	Anthology of quotations + PowerPoint presentation
Tue. 10/28	Marx: Alienation and Ideology	Manuscript on "Alienated Labor"; excerpts from <i>German Ideology</i>
Thu. 10/30	Freud's <i>Civilization and its Discontents</i>	§§ 1-2
Tue. 11/04	Freud's <i>Civilization and its Discontents</i>	§§ 3-5
Thu. 11/06	Arendt's <i>Human Condition</i>	Preface and Ch. 1
Tue. 11/11	Arendt's <i>Human Condition</i>	Ch. 2 and 5 (selections)



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Thu. 11/13	Existentialist feminism	De Beauvoir, excerpts from <i>The Second Sex</i>
Tue. 11/18	The postcolonial viewpoint	Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> , Introduction and excerpts from Ch. 5 and 7
Thu. 11/20	Black feminism and the birth of intersectionality	Davis, «Women and Capitalism: Dialectics of Oppression and Liberation» <u>OR</u> bell hooks, excerpts from <i>Ain't I a woman?</i>
Tue. 11/25	Movie day	
Tue. 12/02	Beyond dualities, beyond the human	Haraway, excerpts from <i>Cyborg Manifesto</i>
Thu. 12/04	Study day: <i>work on your final paper!</i>	
Tue. 12/09 (tbc)	Final exam (= take-home paper deadline)	