



**JOHN FELICE
ROME CENTER**

**PHIL 130: Philosophy and Persons
John Felice Rome Center**

Spring 2026

Mondays & Wednesdays | 2:15-3:30 p.m.

Sala 1

Dr. Francesco Mariani (he/him/his)

Email: fmariani@luc.edu

Office Hours: Mon. 12:00-1:00 p.m.

(by appointment)

Course Description

The course aims to provide an overview of the history of Western philosophy from ancient Greece to the modern world. In this historical and ideal trajectory from the ancient world to the present day, in particular, the course aims to outline some of the most important and influential philosophical paradigms. In particular, the course will focus on the human capacity to acquire knowledge of the external world (natural and historical) and to use that knowledge to transform the world. The connection between knowledge and transformative power will inform the trajectory of the entire course. By studying some of the most important thinkers in Western philosophy we will be able to appreciate the diversity of approach and interpretation of the role and mission of philosophy, as well as the elements of continuity and discontinuity among them. The course will examine, among others, different notions of knowledge, nature, freedom, and justice. The course is divided into three blocks. The first block is dedicated to the foundational role of Socrates and Plato in ancient Greek philosophy. The second block is divided into two thematic sections: the first thematic section focuses on the notions of knowledge, reality, utopia in early modernity. The second thematic section is dedicated to the Enlightenment and the idea of autonomy and human progress. The third block of the semester will be centered around the crisis of late modernity and the questioning, through Marx and Nietzsche, of some of the pillars of Western civilization.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to demonstrate 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. Students will learn to:

- (a) recognize the way in which the basic principles governing how one ought to live are conditioned by one's involvement in and responsibilities toward the socially organized community in which one lives
- (b) understand different positions on this issue, to appreciate the concerns that account for these differences, to look for the reasons given in support of the different views, and to assess the forcefulness of the challenge that each poses for the others and for our own culture.

This course enables the student to

- (a) appreciate the profound issues involved in social relations, such as dignity and diversity
- (b) engage in dialogue with great philosophers, paying close attention to their meaning, their reasons, their concerns, their vision
- (c) examine the way different philosophically defended views challenge each other and see how they also challenge unexamined presuppositions in our own culture
- (d) include their own reflections into the dialogue
- (e) recognize reasons supporting a view, identify unexamined presuppositions, appreciate astute insights, expose vulnerabilities in established positions.
- (f) recognize the need for ethical judgment
- (g) distinguish alternative courses of action.
- (h) articulate the relevant ethical values, principles, rights, and virtues from the point of view of each stakeholder



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Required Text / Materials

Plato, *The Apology of Socrates* (available online)

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

Immanuel Kant, *What is Enlightenment?* (available online)

Assigned and supplementary readings posted on Sakai;

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.

Twice-a-week classes:

- 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).

Assessment Components

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|--------------------------------|-----|
| • Midterm Exam (in-class test) | 35% |
| • Final Exam (take-home paper) | 35% |
| • Presentation | 15% |
| • Participation | 15% |

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



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Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct (use of AI included) are unacceptable at the Rome Center and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Students may not plagiarize; the use of AI is considered plagiarism too and treated as such. Any Turnitin submission flagged over 30% may be investigated as potential plagiarism. Please keep draft versions of your saved work to show your progress in case you are called for a discussion about academic integrity. The use of any grammar-checking app, in order to avoid false positives in the AI scan, must be agreed upon in advance with the instructor. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here: <https://catalog.luc.edu/academic-standards-regulations/undergraduate/>. You are responsible to comply with the LUC University Catalog.

Late or Missed Assignments & Exam Policy

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

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) requiring academic accommodations should contact the Academic Affairs office at the John Felice Rome Center during the first week of classes.

Title IX

The Rome Center follows Loyola's [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Retaliation](#) and will comply with those as indicated and instructed.

DEI

In line with JFRC's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, students are expected to embrace and contribute to a learning environment that is open, welcoming, and aims for mutual understanding. As members of the JFRC community, we strive to create a safe and inclusive environment that encourages the expression of diverse opinions. Both students and faculty have a responsibility to convey respect when interacting with others and to honor the dignity of all community members.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	Text/Assignment	
Mon. 1/19	Introduction. Ancient philosophy		
Wed. 1/21	Socrates I	<i>The Apology of Socrates</i> (full text)	
Mon. 1/26	Socrates II	Foucault, <i>Discourse and Truth</i> (excerpts)	3
Wed. 1/28	Plato I	<i>Platonic Dialogues</i> (excerpts)	



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Mon. 2/2	Plato II	<i>The Republic</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 2/4	More's Utopia. Student presentation I	<i>Utopia</i> (full text)
Fri. 2/6	Machiavelli I	<i>The Prince</i> (5-6-9-15)
Mon. 2/9	Machiavelli II	<i>The Prince</i> (Chap. 18)
Wed. 2/11	Machiavelli III	<i>The Prince, Discourses</i> (Chap. 25, excerpts)
Mon. 2/16	Descartes, doubt and the method	<i>Discourse on the Method</i> (excerpts)
Mon. 2/23	The Enlightenment and the Age of Reason	J. Israel, <i>A Revolution of the mind</i> (excerpts), <i>Discourse</i> (Section II, excerpts)
Wed. 2/25	Rousseau I	<i>Discourse</i> (Section II, first half)
Mon. 3/2	Rousseau II	<i>Discourse</i> (Section II, second half), <i>The Social Contract</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 3/4	Midterm exam	
Mon. 3/16	Kant I	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (Preface)
Wed. 3/18	Kant II	<i>Critique of Practical Reason</i> (excerpts)
Fri. 3/20	Kant III	<i>What is Enlightenment?</i> (full text)
Mon. 3/23	Kant IV	<i>Idea for a Universal History</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 3/25	Marx I	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (first section)
Mon. 3/30	Marx II	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (second section)
Wed. 4/1	Marx III	<i>Selected Writings</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 4/8	Nietzsche I	<i>The Gay Science, Zarathustra</i> (excerpts)
Mon. 4/13	Nietzsche II	<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 4/15	Nietzsche III	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i> (excerpts)



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Mon. 4/20	Student presentation I
Wed. 4/22	Student presentations II
Wed. 4/29	Final exam