



广东金融学院
Guangdong University of Finance

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Guangdong University of Finance

2018 Summer Program

PHI 201 Philosophy of the Person

Course Syllabus

Course Code: PHI 201

Instructor: Dr. Faraz Sheikh

Home Institution: College of William & Mary

Office Hours: TBA

Email: fmsheikh@wm.edu

Credit: 4

Class hours

This course will have 72 total class hours, including 40 lecture hours, 12 instructor office hours, 12-hours of TA-led discussion sessions (four sessions of 3 hour each), 8 hours of review sessions (four review sessions, 2 hours each).

Course Description

What does it mean to be a human being? How do people become the persons they are? What or who am “I” and what kind of a person should I be? How does one become, or fail to become, the person that one ought to be? How does one’s conception of one’s self affect one’s interactions with and attitudes towards oneself, towards other people and the world at large? This course examines the ways in which thinkers from a wide variety of philosophical and religious traditions have grappled with such questions about the nature, formation and transformation of selfhood. We examine important statements on self and self-formation from the ancient and modern Western thought, and from India and East Asia, and endeavor to sensitively compare these diverse visions of the human self and self-formation without capitulating to nihilism, relativism, or self-satisfied cultural chauvinism. We examine influential statements from a variety of traditions, including ancient and modern Western Philosophy, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Recurring issues include the character



and relation of reason and emotion; the nature and purpose of human dispositions and capacities; the relationship between our more “animal” and more “human” sides; problems, practices and perspectives in life that may deform, or enhance, the self; the need, if any, for “transcendent” influences to actualize a fuller selfhood; the form of and rationale for various practices of self-formation and transformation; and the relation between individual and communal flourishing.

Grading

Final grades will be determined by four factors:

Six Reflection Papers:	30% (5 % each)
Attendance and Participation:	20%
Two Essays	20% (10% each)
Final Exam	30%

You can earn a total of 100 points in this class. Each point is 1 %age point (I apologize for insulting your intelligence).

- Two, FOUR-page long (12 Font, double-spaced) Essays – 20 points (10 points each)
- SIX, one-page long reflection papers (12 Font, double-spaced) – 30 points (5 points each)
- Attendance, Preparation and Participation – 20 points
- Final Exam – 30 points

Weekly Class Schedule

Week 1

Introductions; Syllabus; David Wallace talk “This is water” available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mYNelfJrO0>

Harry Frankfurt “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”, p. 5-20

Aristotle, Excerpts from Nichomachean Ethics

Charles Taylor, Excerpts from Sources of the Self

Marcel Mauss, A notion of the Person



Week 2 Emotions, Body and the Self

Martha Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” in *Therapies of Desires* pg. 359-401

Shigehisa Kuriyama, “Muscularity and Identity” in *The Expressiveness of the Body*, pg. 111-151

Shigehisa Kuriyama, “Wind and Self”, pg. 233-270

Edward Slingerland, “Cultivating the Sprouts: Wu-wei in the Mencius,” pg. 131-173

Edward Slingerland, “Straightening the Warped Wood: Wu-wei in the Xunzi” pg. 217-264

First Essay due

Week 3 Early and Pre-modern Selfhood

Sin and redemption: Augustine, *Confessions*, 39-74 (books 1-2); Christian Asceticism: Flood pg. 144-174

Responses to Sin: Augustine, *Confessions*, pg. 113-157 (books 5-6); Christian Love and Wisdom: Flood pg. 175-207

The Ascetic Self in Hindu and Buddhist Thought

Gavin Flood, “The asceticism of action”, pg. 64-118

Gavin Flood “The Middle Way” and “Ritual Formation” pg. 119-143; pg. 211-231

Week 4 Ways of Making Personhood

Matthew B. Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the value of Work*, pg. 1-71; 180-197

Anna Peterson “Person and Nature in Native American Worldviews” pg. 100-126

Jonathan Schofer, *The Making of a Sage: A Study in Rabbinic Ethics*, pg. 71-115

Vincent Miller, *Consumption and Personhood*, pg. 107-145

Saba Mahmood, *The Muslim Feminist Subject. Excerpts from Politics of Piety*



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Week 5 Mystical and Theological Perspectives

Sara Sviri, "The Self and its transformation in Sufism: With special reference to Early Literature" pg. 195-215;

William Chittick, "Between the Yes and the No", pg. 95-109;

Dan P. McAdams, *The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans live by*, pg. 83-124

Mark Siderits *Buddhist No-Self*

Søren Kierkegaard, *Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition of Edification & Awakening by Anti-Climacus*, 33-39; 43-72;

Second Essay due.