

Duquesne University
McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Fall 2018

Honors Seminar: Faith and Reason
HONR 201-01
FH 706
W 12:00-2:40 pm

Instructor: Zach Slanger
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Office Hours: M 12:00pm-2:00pm

Course Description

In this course, we will be discussing the question of what it means to be a human person. What are the fundamental aspects and structures of human experience? Where does the human person come from and where is the human person going? How does the human person orient itself within the world? Is there a meaning to human life and, if so, what is this meaning and how is it found? What distinguishes the human person from other forms of life (plants, animals, etc.) and from complex machines (robots, etc.)? What do human persons owe to each other, ethically, and how ought human persons live together, politically? Where do identity and personality come from? What roles do faith, memory, duty, guilt, freedom, suffering, and education play in human experience? How ought one respond to oppression of the human spirit?

These and other questions will be discussed and explored through readings from the history of philosophy, viewings of the philosophically sophisticated HBO series *Westworld*, and written and other assignments.

Course Objectives

The primary aim of this Honors Faith and Reason Seminar is to introduce students to some of the fundamental problems in the philosophy of the human person. These problems are neither abstract nor trivial, but rather are integral to our everyday lives. Thus, one crucial course objective is to foster the questioning of our everyday lives in order to problematize our assumptions about the world around us and how we interact with it. To this end, different methods of critical thinking will be intrinsic to this course. Another central course objective is the close analysis and careful evaluation of arguments, as this ability is foundational and will be required in most, if not all, classes that you take over the course of your undergraduate career, not to mention your post-university careers. A final course objective is the comparison of philosophical positions across different texts, authors, and cultural contexts.

Learning Outcomes

The primary skills that students should leave this class having refined are the three (C)Rs: (Critical) Reading, (Critical) Reasoning, and (Critical) Writing. Every assignment and activity will be oriented towards developing these fundamental skills and helping students learn to utilize them in whatever they pursue in life. Other skills that will be developed in this class include analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of philosophical positions as well as articulation and argumentation of one's own philosophical position(s).

Course Texts

- Augustine, *On Genesis*, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2004). ISBN 978-1565482012
- Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1993). ISBN 978-0872201668
- Gordan Marino (Ed.), *Basic Writings of Existentialism* (New York: Modern Library, 2004). ISBN 978-0375759895