LOCATION: Kaplan Hall, Room 002; MWF, 10:10 – 11:05 am
OFFICE HOURS: MWF 9:00 – 10:00 am; 2:30 – 3:30 pm and by appointment – Room 105, Whittaker Hall
EMAIL AND TELEPHONE EXTENSION: hofbauer@msmc.edu; Telephone extension: 569-3339

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to a meaningful understanding of philosophy that can be retained over a lifetime. It is for this reason that the actual quantity of the reading assignments and discussion topics is not overwhelming. The reading assignments and discussion topics have been intentionally limited so that the student can focus (repeatedly) on the issue at hand – this enables the student to attain a richer, qualitative understanding of the issue and it allows her to retain the knowledge over a much longer period of time. And the issues are important, for they deal with some of the most worthwhile questions about human existence, e.g., the question of what it means to be human and what it means to be free. There are other issues as well, such as the responsibility associated with human freedom, the relationship between mind and body, what it means to know something, and what it means to be certain about what is known. Our focus on these questions – and the answers that can be given – will enable the student to use these answers to set value-laden priorities, to have better relationships with others within the framework of these values, and ultimately, to place their career and personal goals in the same meaningful context. This course will also enable students to become more reflective and to attain a greater awareness of the history of philosophical speculation.

Student Learning Objectives: If you do the work required for this course (reading, reflecting, understanding, participating in class discussions, and writing), you will be able to:

- identify some major philosophical interpretations of philosophy
- summarize the views of philosophers as expressed in philosophical writings
- use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which philosophers attempt to craft philosophical theories; and
- state and support your own views on issues related to philosophy in journals, class discussions, and in logical, coherent, concise, clear papers.

Required Texts:
- Leisure, the Basis of Culture, by Josef Pieper
- The Philosopher’s Way: Thinking Critically About Profound Ideas, by John Chaffee
- The Philosopher’s Notebook, by John Chaffee
- Selections from St. Thomas Aquinas (and various other handouts from the instructor)

Class Requirements: One critical/reflective paper (10% of final grade), journal entries (10% of final grade), periodic quizzes (announced and unannounced – 40% of final grade), punctual attendance/class participation (15%), a midterm exam (10%) and a final exam (15%). In addition, each absence from class (or early departure) will decrease the student's final numerical course average by 2 points. "Make-up" examinations/quizzes will not be given under any circumstances. Please review the college’s rules concerning plagiarism, because plagiarized papers will cause you to fail the course.

Attendance Policy: Please show up to class on time and ready to go. It is your responsibility to be punctual and prepared. I will not stop and review the information for latecomers and absentees. Thus, the responsibility to find out what you miss falls on you. Absences and latenesses will be strictly noted. Students are allotted THREE absences and THREE latenesses before any penalty to the final course grade; THREE latenesses equal ONE absence. SIX absences, or two full weeks of absences, ensure a final course grade no higher than a “C.” NINE absences, or three full weeks of absences, automatically guarantee a failure for the course.

Documentation for medical, filial, or personal situations will excuse your absence thereby making it an excused absence. However, documentation will not make up for the lack of participation and class work.
• Leaving class early for any reason will be noted and may, at the discretion of the instructor, count as an absence. If you know that you will be missing class, leaving class early, or arriving to class late, please let me know ahead of time.

**Grading Scale**

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**University Grading Standards**

I fully confirm to the University’s official statement regarding the assignment of grades and workload expectations.

A … achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

B … achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

C … achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

D … achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

F … represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

I (Incomplete) … Assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. This stipulation requires a written agreement between instructor and student.

**Schedule of Topics and Readings**

I. **Introductory Classes:** Leisure, The Basis of Culture (Weeks 1, 2, and 3: 8/25/08, 9/1/08, and 9/8/08)

- Discussion: Whether an analysis of the "end" (purpose) of human nature will provide us with an insight into the nature of philosophy itself
- Discussion of various definitions of "success" and "happiness"
- Some preliminary definitions of "hope" and "despair"
- Some interpretations of "final fulfillment" and "final non-fulfillment" (St. Thomas Aquinas/St. Augustine)
- Discussion of "leisure"
  - Distinction between ratio and intellectus
  - The meaning of the term "liberal arts"—the idea of philosophy as "useless"
  - the uniqueness and scope of philosophical questions
  - "Acedia" as an attitude rooted in despair, one which makes leisure impossible
  - psychological abnormalities associated with "acedia"
  - Leisure as gratitude for existence and one’s existential situation
  - the proof for God’s existence based upon the distinction between essence and existence
  - Leisure as a "celebration" of one's hope for a realizable, objectively definable state of perfect happiness (ultimate success/final fulfillment)

**Quiz #1 (Leisure)**

- Leisure as a contemplative "celebration" of the human person's "embodied spirituality"
  - of one's ability to understand "universal ideas"
  - of one's capacity for "self-reflection"
  - of one's capacity for "self-mastery"
  - of one's capacity for "self-determination"
- The "philosophical act"
  - the capacity to “observe, behold, and contemplate” without the desire to “change”
II. What is Philosophy: Thinking Philosophically About Life (Chaffee, Chapter One – Week 4: 9/15/08)

- the human soul as “all in all”
- Leisure’s connection to worship
  - Leisure as the unity of tranquility, contemplation, and intensity of life
  - Leisure as the ability to attain a calm conviction that everything happens “for the good”
    - as the ability to be “serene” and to “let things happen”

III. Socrates, Plato, and the Examined Life (Chaffee, Chapters Two and Three – Weeks 5, 6, and 7: 9/22; 9/29; and 10/6/08)

- The Art of Wonder; “Having versus Doing;” Journal Entry 1.1 “What do you value most?”
- Becoming a Critical Thinker; What is Philosophy?; The Aim of Philosophy; Thinking Critically (pp. 8-21)
- Traditional Branches of Philosophy; Metaphysics: Reality and the nature of the self; Journal Entry 1.5 “What is your idea of reality?”
- Journal Entry 1.6 “Am I free?”
- Epistemology: What is truth?
- Ethics; Journal Entry 1.10 “Moral Decisions”
- Politics and Social Philosophy; Aesthetics; Logic and Critical Thinking
- The Search for a Meaningful Life

Quiz #2 (Chapter 1, Chaffee)

Quiz #3 (Chapter 2, Plato)

- The "allegory of the cave"
- The "philosopher king"
- Situating Plato philosophically
  - St. Augustine – Plato and Christianity (p. 101)
  - Journal Entry 3.5 “Platonic concepts of self – comparison with St. Augustine”
  - contrast with Aquinas's metaphysics: Plato's separation of "being" and "becoming"
  - contrast with Aquinas's epistemology: Plato's separation of "intellectual knowledge" and "sensation"
  - contrast with Aquinas's "hylomorphism:" Plato's separation of the "soul" from the body

MIDTERM EXAM
IV. Descartes, Hume, and Churchland – Perspectives on the Self (Weeks 8, 9, 10, 11: 10/13; 10/20; 10/27; and 11/03)

- Reading: pp. 102-109 and selections from Descartes’ Meditations
- Journal Entry 3.6 “Seeking After Truth”
- Meditation #1: Universal Doubt
  - in sharp contrast to Aristotle's point of departure (affirmation), Descartes chooses the path of "antecedent skepticism" (hyperbolic doubt)
  - the possibility of the presence of an "evil genius" brings even mathematics and geometry into the sphere of doubt
  - one instance of being deceived by the senses (e.g., the ball of wax) is enough to doubt all sensible experience
- Meditation #2: The Res Cogitans
  - the proof for the existence of the self as a "thinking thing" -- Descartes' "absolute and sure foundation"
  - Cartesian "dualism" (comparison with Plato)
  - assumptions used in his line of argumentation which were not subjected to hyperbolic doubt: the principle of "self-identity"; the principle of "non-contradiction"; the principle of "cause and effect"; the presumption that reality was logical/reasonable; the presumption of his own ego and "individuality" as distinct from a collective consciousness; the "criterion of truth"
- Meditation #3: God's Existence
  - the steps to Descartes' first proof for God's existence; what his proof gives him
  - critical assessment of this proof

Quiz #4 (Descartes, Meditations 1-3)

- Meditation #4: Final Causality/Divine Providence
  - Descartes' definition of "error"
  - why Descartes might want to eliminate philosophical speculation about "final causality"
  - why Descartes might have confused "divine providence" with "final causality"
- Meditation #5: The Ontological Argument
  - Descartes' "ontological argument" for God's existence
  - the question of why he needs this additional argument
- Meditation #6: The Proof for "Extensionality"
  - Descartes' two "clear and distinct" ideas
  - Descartes' proof for the existence of "bodies"
  - critical assessment of this proof
  - the relationship between thought and extension
  - the "point of interaction" between thought and extension

Quiz #5 (Descartes, Meditations 4-6)

- (Weeks 4-5) Transition from Descartes to Hume; Reading: selections from Hume's Enquiry
- discussion of Hume's "consequent skepticism" versus Descartes' "antecedent skepticism"
- discussion of whether Hume’s philosophy is a reaction to Descartes’ “obsession with certitude”
- discussion of Hume as an “idealist”
- Reading (pp. 116-120); Journal Entry 3.10 “Empiricism and the Self”
- Hume’s definition of “impressions” and “ideas”
- the rule regarding the relationship between impressions and ideas
- the two “objects of human reason”
- the “secret powers” and issues surrounding the relationship between “cause and effect”
- the “laws of association” and the role of the imagination
- discussion of whether Hume's claim that impressions are "non-referential" is an extra-empirical criterion
- discussion of whether Hume's claim that ideas are "representative" is an extra-empirical criterion
- discussion of whether Hume's claim that the imagination is the cement of the universe is a declaration about the way things are "in themselves"
- discussion of whether Hume's claim that the human mind is limited to its own perceptions and that the "cause cannot be found in the effect" are also declarations about the way things are "in themselves"
o discussion of whether Hume's first two claims (above) are, in addition to being derived from extra-empirical criteria, also declarations about a reality outside the "inner world" of his own unique perceptions

Quiz #6 (David Hume)

o Paul Churchland, Materialism – “The Self is the Brain”
o Arguments for and against “Eliminative Materialism” (pp. 140-141)
o Journal Entry 3.16 “Analyzing Eliminative Materialism”

V. What is Morality? (Chaffee, Chapters Five and Six – Weeks 12, 13, and 14: 11/10, 11/17/ and 11/24)

o Journal Entries 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 “Who is a Moral Person?”; “What are My Moral Values?”; “Making Moral Decisions”
o Ethical Subjectivism – Rousseau; Journal Entry 5.4 “How Ethically Subjective Are My Ethics?”
o Cultural Relativism; Journal Entry 5.5 “Cultural Relativism and My Perspective”
o Ethical Absolutism – William Stace, The Concept of Morals
o Ethical Egoism
o Morality and Religion; Journal Entry 5.11 “Religion and My Ethics”
o Aquinas: Natural Law Ethics; Journal Entry 5.12 “Natural Law and My Beliefs”
o Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
o Aristotle – Virtue Ethics and Becoming a Virtuous Person; selections from Nicomachean Ethics
o Aristotle’s reaction to Plato's metaphysics, his philosophy of human nature, and his epistemology
  o metaphysics: Aristotle understood Plato's radical, dualistic "separations" as a failure to be precise about the Forms' relation to the particular
    • his decision to incorporate Plato's objective Forms into "individual substances"
    • "substance" as one "thing" with two metaphysical "principles," a principle of "permanence" (form) and a principle of change (matter)
  o philosophy of human nature: at least in sensation, the body is a "co-cause," therefore the soul alone is not the person -- the person is a composite of form and matter
  o epistemology: the "active intellect" abstracts the form from matter, therefore there are no "innate ideas"
    • the intellect alone is the cause of intellectual knowledge, although the body is considered as a "necessary condition"
  o Journal Entry 6.7 “Do I have a virtuous character?”
o Existentialist Ethics – Living an Authentic Life; Soren Kierkegaard
  o Journal Entry 6.9 “Analyzing Soren Kierkegaard”

PAPER DUE (Week 15: 12/01/08)

Suggested Paper Topics: Choose one method of philosophizing (Plato and/or Descartes) and compare/contrast it with an alternative method (Pieper/Aquinas and/or Aristotle, or Hume)

Some points of comparison/contrast you might want to consider:

■ Epistemology: a priori knowledge vs. a posteriori knowledge: whether deduction/reasoning from ideas (Plato/Descartes) is superior/inferior to induction/reasoning from actual existence (Aristotle/Aquinas/Pieper)
■ The Role of the senses in the acquisition of knowledge: Plato's/Descartes' separation of sense knowledge from intellectual knowledge vs. Aristotle's/Aquinas's unification of sense knowledge with intellectual knowledge
■ Philosophy of Human Nature: Platonic/Cartesian "dualism" vs. Aristotle's/Aquinas's "hylomorphism" (the unity of soul and body)
■ Metaphysics: Plato's separated Forms vs. Aristotle's/Aquinas's immanent forms (substances) -- contrast Plato's separation of "being" from "becoming" with Aristotle's/Aquinas's unification of "being" with "becoming"
■ Compare/contrast the plausibility of Plato's proofs for the immortality of the human soul with the plausibility of Aquinas's proofs for the "spirituality" of the human soul

VI. Summaries and Conclusions (Week 15: 12/01/08); FINAL EXAM