

Course Syllabus
PHIL 232: *The Nature and Identity of Persons*
UW Milwaukee, Spring 2009
3:30 - 4:45 PM, CRT 209

Course Description: The concept of personhood is central to many philosophical and practical issues. We give persons special moral and legal status over non-persons. We think of persons as special kinds of objects fundamentally different from other types of objects. Yet it isn't at all clear that we really know what persons are. In this class, we will consider some answers to philosophical questions such as: What is it to be a person? Why am I this person and not another? Can non-human animals, or even intelligent machines, be persons? And what's so special about being a person anyway? No special background in philosophy will be assumed for this topical introductory course.

Required Texts:

- (1) [PI] *Personal Identity*, John Perry (UC Press, 1975).
- (2) [A] *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self*, Susan J. Brison (Princeton, 2001).

All of these books are available at Panther Bookstore (located just East of campus at 3132 N Downer Ave). Other readings will be made available on the course's D2L site.

Instructor: Aaron Schiller, schillea@uwm.edu; OH: MW 5-6 and by appointment, CRT 613.

Grading: The final course grade will be out of 1000 points and breaks down as follows:

Attendance	200 points
Weekly Reading Questions	100 points
1 st Short Paper	200 points
2 nd Short Paper	200 points
Final Paper	300 points

Attendance: At the start of each class I will hand around a roll-sheet for you to sign. There are 28 class meetings. You can miss 3 classes and still receive all 200 points, but after that you will be docked 1/28th of 200 points (approx. 7 points) for each class missed.

Weekly Reading Questions: Once a week, at the start of class, I will ask you to hand in a list of three questions that came up in your reading. You can turn in a week's questions either Monday or Wednesday, but you cannot turn in a week's questions once that week is past. Each list of questions will be worth approx. 7 points.

Short Papers: The Short Papers should be around 3 (double-spaced) pages long. The goal of these papers will be to clearly lay out an argument as found in one of the course readings and to offer an analysis and reply. I will supply a list of topics for these assignments.

Final Paper: The final paper should be around 5 (double-spaced) pages long. The final paper will be similar to the Short Papers except that you will be asked to consider a more in-depth argument as well as to consider possible objections to your views.

In-Class Participation: There are no formal in-class participation points. But students who are on the line between grades at the end of the semester and have a history of regularly contributing to classroom discussions will have their grades bumped to the higher grade.

Course Schedule:

Meeting	Reading and Topic
1/26	Intro to Course / Course Mechanics
1/28	Part I: Metaphysics of Personhood
	PI pgs. 3-12 – Intro to the Philosophical Analysis of Personhood
2/2	PI Ch. 2, pgs. 33-42 – Locke’s Memory Theory
2/4	PI Ch. 2, pgs. 42-52 – Locke cont.
2/9	PI Ch. 3, pgs. 53-61 – Quinton’s Memory and the Soul
2/11	PI Ch 3, pgs. 61-72 – Quinton cont.
2/16	PI Ch. 4, pgs. 73-85 – Grice on the “Pure Ego”
2/18	PI Ch. 4, pgs. 85-95 – Grice’s Logical Construction Theory
2/23	PI Ch. 5 – Butler’s Critique of the Memory Theory
2/25	PI Chs. 6 & 7 – Reid on Locke <i>[1st Short Papers Topics Handed Out]</i>
3/2	PI C. 8 – Shoemaker’s Critique of the Memory Theory
3/4	PI Ch. 9 – Perry on the Problem of Circularity
3/9	Part 2: Skepticism About the Metaphysics of Personhood
	PI Chs. 10 & 11 – Hume’s Skepticism about the Concept of a Person <i>[1st Short Papers Due]</i>
3/11	PI Ch. 12 – Hume cont.
3/16	SPRING BREAK
3/18	SPRING BREAK
3/23	PI Ch. 13 – Williams’s Skepticism of the Psychological Criterion
3/25	PI Ch. 13 – cont.
3/30	Dennett’s “Where Am I?” – Pragmatism About Personhood
4/1	Dennett’s “Where Am I? cont. <i>[2nd Short Paper Topics Handed Out]</i>
4/6	PI Ch. 14 – Parfit – What Matters to Persons
4/8	PI Ch. 14 – cont.
4/13	Part 3: Personhood as Lived
	A Ch. 1 – Events that Make Us Rethink Who and What We Are <i>[2nd Paper Topics Due]</i>
4/15	A Ch. 2 – A Critique of the “Philosophical” Treatments
4/20	A Ch. 3 – “Outliving Oneself”
4/22	A Ch. 3 – cont.
4/27	A Ch. 4 – The Place of Memory
4/29	A Ch. 4 – cont.
5/4	A Ch. 5 – Forgetting
5/6	A Ch. 6 – Retelling <i>[Final Paper Topics Handed Out]</i>
5/15	FINAL PAPERS DUE

Note that this is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion, but that every attempt will be made to stay on schedule.