PHIL108601 ETHICAL IDENTITIES & PERSONHOOD
Summer 2015: 6/23 to 7/30, 3 Credits

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Office Hours: N/A  Room: Stokes 215N
Schedule (class times and day(s): Tues/Thurs 6-9:15pm

Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation’s finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description
This course explores contemporary approaches to personhood, including philosophical, theological, and scientific contributions to concepts such as uniqueness and particularity, subjectivity and desire, relationality and communion; freedom and ethical responsibility. In the second half of this course, we address the implications of our investigations to specific contemporary issues, including the influence of technology (e.g. social media, artificial intelligence), market economies, and consumerism on our self-understanding as persons and ethical beings. Throughout this course, we will continually return to two fundamental questions: 1) *Who am I?* and 2) *Who should I become?* Our readings and class discussion will assist in formulating answers to these fundamental questions, helping to uncover some of the hidden assumptions guiding our understanding of ourselves.

Course Objectives
1. Understand and describe contemporary philosophical, theological, and scientific methods for understanding what it means to be a person. Students will read introductory and primary texts across these disciplines and class time will include comparing and contrasting their respective merits and limitations. Exams will assess the students ability learn and critically think about these different approaches to understanding personhood.
2. Examine the particular areas of continued debate surrounding our understanding of the human person and understand how specific thinkers have attempted to resolve these debates. We will discuss the relevance of these debates in class and students will be asked to provide their own well-reasoned arguments for or against certain positions.
3. Demonstrate knowledge concerning how history, culture, and gender impact our understanding of the human person. In particular, we will be reading texts that explore how changes in technology, economy, and gender constructs have led to momentous shifts in our self-understanding. One paper assignment will require students to critically think about one particular social issue in light of how personhood is understood.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how identity relates to ethical values and norms. In particular we will read texts that inquire into the role that ethics plays in forming our identity and consider different ethical theories as they help us to answer questions concerning our ultimate purpose of life. Students will be assessed for their ability to think about different ethical perspectives and their ability to apply one or more of these approaches to their own lives.
Grading
Take home Midterm essay exam 20%
Take home Final essay exam 20%
Eight Response Papers 60%

WCAS Grading System
The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Text(s)/Readings (Required)
Turkle, Sherry. Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other.
Basic Books

Important Policies
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.
Request for Accommodations
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. For further information, you can locate the disability resources on the web at http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

Attendance
Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, the student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, points are given for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class.

Consistent with BC’s commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

No other absences are excused. However, built into the absence policy is leniency should a class be missed. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class. The attendance policy is the following: 1 class missed is 1% off your final grade. 2 classes missed is 5% off your final grade. 3 classes missed is 15% off your final grade. A fourth missed class leads to an automatic failure. These deductions in your grade do not include points that can also be lost for not turning in an assignment or participating in class the day you miss.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the Summer Session Office at 617-552-3800 for consultation.

Class Preparation and Participation:
Students are expected to have read the assigned materials due that day before class. You should take notes as you read, paying particular attention to ideas you find interesting, questions you are left pondering, and criticisms that arise in your minds. Class participation is defined as attentiveness, raising questions, and making insightful comments and connections.

No cell phone or electronic device usage is permitted in class. The exception is that you can use a laptop computer to take notes only. If you do use a laptop to take notes, internet usage for non-class items is prohibited. Please turn off the sound of your cell phones before class. Also, do not engage in side conversations during class. Any form of repeated distraction will be noted and will impact my qualitative assessment of your participation at the end of the semester.
I evaluate class participation based upon the following qualitative criteria:
Frequent Distraction and/or inattention: Can substantially hurt grade pending severity of problem
Completely silent but attentive and non-distractive = No grade change
Regular class participation that is engaged, asks good questions, makes highly relevant comments, and brings in helpful ideas learned from other classes/sources to supplement discussion = up to 4% point increase pending overall contribution.

As a standard part of every class, I will provide the opportunity for any general questions at the beginning. This will be followed by an introduction of main topics being lectured on that day. Feel free to make relevant associations with other areas of knowledge you have. In most classes I have incorporated time for class discussion but always feel free to raise your hand and I will call on you at an appropriate stopping point.

**Deadlines**
Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly.

[Add any specific policies you have about grading of late material.]

**Course Assignments** (readings, exercises and/or experiences)
It is expected that 8 hours per week of your study time out will be spent on out of class assignments and exercises. These are listed below. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time but the average is approximately 8 hours per week over the semester.

**Midterm & Final Exams**
These will be take home exams in which you will be asked to provide a 3-4 page response that will require you to critically engage the ideas and thinkers addressed in the course. The essay should demonstrate your understanding of the thinkers we cover and to appropriately utilize source material/primary texts to support your arguments. Midterm exam question will be provided on 7/09 and due 7/14. Final exam question will be provided 7/30 and due 8/6.

**Weekly Response Papers (eight in total)**
This assignment will require that you respond to the readings due that day for class. You will write a 1 page, double spaced, 12 font, 1 inch margin, paper in which you summarize what you thought was the main idea in the text you read. You should support your summary with quotes and citations from the assigned text. You will do this assignment for the reading on Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, Sandal, Scheler, Sartre, Merleu-Ponty, and Levinas. You will pass in the assignment at the beginning of class that day. A large part of your grade will be based upon how much you demonstrate familiarity with the text and your ability to push yourself to understand what they say. All papers should be written without grammatical and spelling errors.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Thinker</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>6/23</td>
<td>Introduction:</td>
<td>Sources of the Contemporary Self</td>
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<td>Reading Due: Continental Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction</td>
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<td>6/25</td>
<td>Introduction:</td>
<td>Existential Phenomenology: Terms and Methods</td>
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<td>Reading Due: Existentialism: A Very Short Introduction</td>
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<td>6/30</td>
<td>Kierkegaard:</td>
<td>Subjectivity and Ethics</td>
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<td>Reading Due: Basic Writings in Existentialism</td>
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<td><strong>Weekly Response Paper Due</strong></td>
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7/02  Nietzsche:  Power and Ethics
Reading Due: Basic Writings in Existentialism
Weekly Response Paper Due

7/07  Freud:  The Unconscious and Ethics
Reading Due: Selected Reading from Civilization & Its Discontents
Weekly Response Paper Due

7/09  Marx:  Ideology; Markets & Morals
Reading Due: Sandal: What Money Can’t Buy
Weekly Response Paper Due; Midterm Exam Provided

7/14  Heidegger & Marcel:  Technology & Selfhood
Reading Due: Turkle: Alone Together
MIDTERM DUE

7/16  Scheler & Stein:  On Love and Empathy
Reading Due: Essay: Ordo Amoris
Weekly Response Paper Due

7/21  Sartre:  On Freedom
Reading Due: Basic Writings in Existentialism
Weekly Response Paper Due

7/23  Merleu-Ponty:  On being a body and gendered
Reading Due: Essays on the body
Weekly Response Paper Due

7/28  Contemporary Issues: Otherness and Impossibility
Reading Due: TBD
Weekly Response Paper Due

7/30  Conclusions

FINAL EXAM DUE: August 6