

**Introduction to Philosophy: Personal Identity**  
**Philosophy 020**  
**Summer 2021**

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Class Meetings: Monday–Thursday, 5:45 pm–7:45 pm, July 12–August 13  
Location: TBD

**Course Description**

This is an introductory course in philosophy. Philosophy is a broad field that covers many different themes and types of inquiry. For this course, the theme will be "personal identity." My hope is that a survey of texts related to this topic will not only introduce you to philosophical thinking as a practice and writing style, but will unearth further questions that you can pursue on your own and in other classes.

What is personal identity? Who am "I" and who are "we"? What are we talking about when we talk about the self and others, individuals and communities, humans and non-humans?

In keeping with the introductory purpose of this course, each of our five weeks will focus on a different era or tradition of inquiry into these questions.

**Course Requirements**

2 papers, 4–5 pages in length, as well as weekly discussion board posts of about 200 words. Exact due dates of the papers are TBD.

**Grading**

First paper 30%  
Second paper 40%  
Discussion posts + participation 30%

These percentages might shift per group discussions. Expect at least one peer-review exercise.

**Class Policies**

TBD as we get closer to the summer and Georgetown decides on a teaching modality. Expect standard rules regarding promptness, courtesy, and plagiarism.

Below is a tentative schedule of readings. This syllabus will be updated with more specific citations and excerpts as we approach the summer. My aim is to have no more than 20 pages of reading per class. CK 2/26/21

First week: Ancient & Medieval Accounts of Soul & Self	
Monday, July 12	Aristotle, De Anima (c. 350 BCE)
Tuesday, July 13	Plato, Phaedo (c. 360 BCE)
Wednesday, July 14	The Bhagavad Gita (c. 200–100 BCE)
Thursday, July 15	Saint Augustine of Hippo, Soliloquies II (c. 387 CE)

Second week: the Enlightenment Self	
Monday, July 19	Descartes, Meditations (1637)
Tuesday, July 20	David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature (1740)
Wednesday, July 21	Selections from Kant
Thursday, July 22	Christine Korsgaard, Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity (2009)

Third week: the Romantic & Existential Self	
Monday, July 26	Selections from Hegel
Tuesday, July 27	Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass (1855)

Wednesday, July 28	Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i> (1881)
Thursday, July 29	Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i> (1881)

Fourth week: 20th Century Analytic Inquiries	
Monday, August 2	P.F. Strawson, <i>Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics</i> (1959)
Tuesday, August 3	P.F. Strawson, <i>Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics</i> (1959)
Wednesday, August 4	Derek Parfit, <i>Reasons and Persons</i> (1984)
Thursday, August 5	Daniel Dennett, <i>The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity</i> (1986)

Fifth week: Social Categories & the Constructed Self	
Monday, August 9	Frantz Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> (1952)
Tuesday, August 10	Ian Hacking, <i>The looping effects of human kinds</i> (1995)
Wednesday, August 11	Judith Butler, <i>Undoing Gender</i> (2004)
Thursday, August 12	Donna Haraway, <i>The Companion Species Manifesto</i> (2003)