PHIL 421 / 521 – PERSONS AND PERSONAL IDENTITY – SU – SUMMER 2010

Info:
Instructor: Sinem Elkatip Hatipoglu
Office: To be announced
Office hours: Friday by appointment
Email: selkatip@gc.cuny.edu

Course description: This course consists of a philosophical inquiry into understanding what persons are and what the identity of a person consists in. Most of our psychological states such as the concern that we have for our future depend on the tacit assumption that we remain to be the same person through time. However what makes a person endure in time in the face of drastic physical and mental changes is far from clear. Philosophers have tackled with these issues for years. In this course we will critically examine some of the personal identity theories developed so far. Understanding the implications of a personal identity theory requires an understanding of personhood as well. Hence we are also going to be concerned with the question of what distinguishes persons from other sentient beings and consider the implications of different views on personhood and personal identity for the types of concerns and features that lie at the very core of human experience such as one’s concern for one’s future.

Requirements:
1) A 1500 word paper, 50% of grade, due Aug. 26th Thursday, by 15:00. Late papers will NOT be accepted.
2) A class presentation based on a draft for a paper, 30% of grade. The drafts need to be submitted on Wed. by 15:00 for the presentations of that week. You are responsible for sending your draft not only to me but to all members of the class.
3) Contribution to class discussion and a few brief written remarks (one or two) raising questions about, making criticisms of, or developing points concerning the readings and matters discussed in the class, 20% of grade.
4) Once I have a list of your email addresses, I may use email communication for various reason, and you’re responsible for any information that reaches you by email. In other words, you need to check your messages regularly and make sure that your inbox is never too full.

Reading List: Below is a suggestive reading list for the course. The first part is mainly from Personal Identity, 2nd ed. by John Perry (ed.), University of California Press 2008 - indicated by JP.

Introducing the issues in personal identity / Historical sources
   Locke (in JP), Of Identity and Diversity
   Butler (in JP), Of Personal Identity
Reid (in JP), Of Identity and Of Mr. Locke’s account of our personal identity
Hume (in JP), Our Idea of Identity, Of Personal Identity and Second Thoughts
Shoemaker (in JP), Persons and their Pasts
Williams (in JP), The Self and the Future
Parfit in (JP), Personal Identity

Personhood and the importance of personal identity
Elkatip, excerpts from *A neo-Humean Bundle Theory*