

Self and community (UNCP4603-01/PHIL4603-01)

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How does the human capacity to engage in acts of understanding help shape the world? How, conversely, do flights from understanding hinder human growth and progress?

These core questions offer us compass points for navigating this course. Fundamentally, its goals are to foster self-knowledge (or self-appropriation) and commitment to the practices that build and sustain flourishing communities through the accumulations of insights and the rejection of flights from understanding.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will develop familiarity with the heuristic method of Bernard Lonergan, a method which invites students to self-appropriation, good relationships, and participation in the work of building a good society.
- Students will engage different exercises and disciplinary practices (philosophy, theology, psychology, sociology, history, economics, mathematics, the sciences) in order to reflect on the various ways that insights lead to understanding.
- Students will use their enhanced self-knowledge for the sake of discerning goods of order and the larger human good.¹
- Students will gain deeper understanding of a pressing social issue, through work in teams to produce an interdisciplinary research project. Students will leverage the skills proper to their major, and work in a team comprised of students from different majors.

Course Format and Content

- The course will meet once per week.
- The first half of each class will involve a lecture, Q&A, exercises, and conversation. During some of the weeks, I will invite lecturers from different departments and divisions in the University. The weekly themes are based on the structure of Bernard Lonergan's *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*.
- The second half of class will involve teamwork and research for the research study (see below, assessment and evaluation).

¹ The terms "good of order" and "human good" are meant in the way that Bernard Lonergan, S.J., writes about them in his book *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*.

Assessment and Evaluation

- Students are expected to attend each class in person. As much of the class involves exercises and conversation in groups, exceptions are only made per university policies regarding sickness or approved university activities.
- All students will be assigned to interdisciplinary groups of 5 students to work together through the semester.
- All students will work individually or in groups to produce a project about an issue developed over the course of the first half of the semester. The project may take many forms: research paper, video, slideshow, podcast, TED talk, etc. Creativity is encouraged.
 - Students will have the choice about whether to work singly, in pairs, or in groups. During the semester, there will be surveys of interest for appropriate placement.
- The research will involve an annotated literature review which will be evaluated at the midterm, and a draft to be evaluated three weeks before the due date.

Texts

1. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge* (978-0-8020-7851-3)
2. Patrick Byrne, *The Ethics of Discernment* (selection, on Canvas)
3. Mack McCarter, with Tim Muldoon, *How to Remake the World Neighborhood by Neighborhood* (978-1-62698-500-1)

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. Please review [the policy of the University](#). The use of AI is permitted for research under the guidance of the professor, but is not permitted for note taking or daily assignments, except in the cases of approved academic accommodations. All written exercises are in aid of learning and therefore the use of AI as a substitute for writing will be considered cheating.

Remote learning

Students are expected to participate in live classroom learning as much as possible. However, you will receive no penalty for participating via Zoom rather than in person for any reason. Stay home if you are unwell. **Please note:** if you anticipate being away from the classroom for more than one class, please let me know. Remote learning is permitted only in the case of illness (or suspected illness).

Screens in the classroom

Students may not use screens of any kind in the classroom except when permitted by the professor for specific group work. Tablets are permitted, but not encouraged for note-taking. Exceptions are permitted for students with relevant accommodations.

Grading

20% class participation (includes attendance). Please bring a journal you can write in for each class.

1. Your presence in class is mandatory for all class meetings, without excuse (interviews, rehearsals, other lectures or student activities, etc.).

2. Absence policy: note that each class meeting is equivalent to three meetings of a MWF class or two meetings of a T-Th class. Unexcused absences detract 1/15th from the participation grade. Excused absences (illness, athletics, etc.) reduce the “countable” classes but otherwise do not reduce the final attendance grade.
3. Participation policy: grade is subjective, based on the following. Students will evaluate themselves at the midterm and at the final.
 1. Do I regularly participate in class discussion?
 2. Do my questions and contributions to discussion show evidence of critical reading of the texts?
 3. Do I show willingness to initiate new lines of conversations or raise perceptive questions?

20% Lecture responses/quizzes

1. Each student will write a response to the guest lecturers for each class. Responses will be 250 words each, and will show critical engagement with the content of the lecture.
2. There will be periodic short quizzes on the reading, due before class.

10% Response to the book *How to Remake the World Neighborhood by Neighborhood*.

50% final project due Monday of the final week of class. (See below.) Includes a 250 word reflection on the project: what did I contribute? What was the experience of the project like? How did members of the group work together (if applicable)?

Recording

Meetings of this course may be recorded. Any recordings will be available to students registered for this class. This is intended to supplement the classroom experience. Students are expected to follow appropriate university policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Recordings may not be reproduced, shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments. If the instructor plans any other uses for the recordings, beyond this class, students identifiable in the recordings must be notified to request their consent prior to such use. In keeping with state recording law, students cannot create video or audio recordings of the course — including Gen AI created transcripts — without permission from the instructor and other students or a registered accommodations communication from the [Disability Services Office](#) or the [Connors Family Learning Center](#).

Research project

During the sixth class meeting of the semester, students will be randomly assigned to groups of five who will begin work on the research project. Note that these randomly assigned groups need not stay together for the entire semester, but they will provide

Class participation rubric

A/A-

1. Always comes to class on time

2. Is always well-prepared to discuss assigned readings: student can answer questions, point to relevant examples from the text, and relate topics to prior class readings. Student's participation advances the level and depth of the dialogue
3. Participates (speaks) in every discussion in a manner that reflects (b).
4. Encourages the participation of others through positive body language, thoughtful feedback, engaged listening (your attention is fully on the speaker), and responding to or drawing out the comments of other students. NOTE: Talking too much can shut down dialogue: good participation means good listening!

B+/B

1. Habitually comes to class on time and well-prepared.
2. Makes an earnest attempt to advance the dialogue and engage others.
3. Makes relevant comments based on the discussion or reading, participating in almost every discussion.
4. Body language and listening skills neither advance nor obstruct the participation of others.
5. The group dynamic is occasionally better, and never worse, because of the student's presence.

B-/C+/C

1. Habitually comes to class and is on time, but is not consistently prepared to participate in a significant way.
2. Although participation is not consistent in discussion or class, when student is prepared, student participates actively.
3. Body language and listening skills neither advance nor obstruct the participation of others. The group dynamic is not affected by student's presence.

C-/D/F

1. Student does not consistently come to class on time.
2. Rarely participates and at times comments are vague or do not reflect adequate preparation.
3. Little to no interaction with peers in discussion.
4. Occasionally demonstrates a noticeable lack of interest or lack of respect during discussion (e.g., talks while speaker is talking, falls asleep, does not pay attention to speaker).
5. Group dynamic and level of discussion is occasionally harmed by student's presence through lack of engagement, negative body language, inattentiveness or dismissive comments.

Course Summary

Week	Content
1	Introductions. Do we know ourselves? Can AI help? Why is self-knowledge important? How can self-knowledge impact others? Recommended reading: Flanagan, <i>Quest for Self-Knowledge</i> , Introduction
2	What's an insight? How to ask a question. Read Flanagan, chapter 1 Background reading: Plato, <i>Meno</i> ; <i>Euthyphro</i> ; Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> .
3	Overview of self-appropriation. Reading: Patrick Byrne, <i>The Ethics of Discernment</i> , chapter 1 (on Canvas). Meet in groups to begin discussion of research project.
4	Insight in mathematics. Guest lecturer from Mathematics, Computer Science, Physics, Human Centered Engineering departments. Reading: Joseph Flanagan, chapter 2.1 (32-46). Background reading: Euclid, <i>Elements</i> .

5	Insight in the sciences. Guest lecturer from one of the sciences or colleagues in the philosophy of science. Flanagan, chapter 2.2 and 2.3 (46-68).
6	Common sense insights. Guest lecturer from one of the departments in the Division of Student Affairs. Flanagan, chapter 3.1 to 3.3 (69-79) Group work: literature review.
7	Discernment of social decline and growth. Guest lecturer from Political Science, Sociology, Social Work, Economics, or CSOM. Flanagan, chapter 3.4 (79-85). Literature review due.
8	Discernment of social decline and growth. Guest lecturer from Political Science, Sociology, Social Work, Economics, or CSOM. Flanagan, 3.5 and 3.6 (86-94)
9	Ethics. Flanagan, chapter 7.1 to 7.3 (194-213)
10	Moral philosophy of history. Flanagan, 7.4 (213-223)
11	Human freedom. Flanagan 7.5-7.6 (223-230)
12	The hope for community. McCarter/Muldoon. Research draft due
13	Method as conversion. Flanagan, epilogue. Response to McCarter/Muldoon due.
14	Presentations of research projects. Lonergan, "Healing and creating in history" (on Canvas).
15	Presentations of research projects