

# Philosophy 110: Human Nature

Instructor: Goehring, Billy Dean

Office Hours: TBA

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CRN: 26632, 13:00 – 13:50 MTWH

## Course Description

This is a course about human nature. Obviously. Obviously? We will certainly read authors who hold different opinions about human nature, but what we'll discover is that few agree on what "talking about human nature" means. "What is human nature?" What does that question mean? Who is asking, what motivates them, what consequences follow from their answer(s), and what implications are built into their approach? Our authors have different projects and belong to different conversations. One goal in this course is to see that the *way* a question is asked and answered can be just as important as the question (or answer) itself.

## Required Materials

1. Readings on Canvas – **must** be printed out by end of Week 1. I highly recommend you staple or somehow bind your copy; it will be hard to keep track of otherwise. The Copy Shop by campus offers binding options, but other printers like FedEx Office will, too. At any rate, having you print your own copy is *\*much\** cheaper (for you) than having it produced by the UO Duck Store!
2. Standard-size composition notebook. Grab a "decomposition notebook" downstairs at the Duck Store, for example.
3. Stardew Valley – a videogame available for Windows, OS X, Linux, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, PlayStation Vita, iOS, and Android. I've chosen this game because it is fairly inexpensive, does not impose demanding system requirements, and is available on very many platforms (in addition to the fact that it meets the thematic needs of our course).  
*If you have already played a lot of Stardew and/or have a legitimate reason for not wanting to play this game, please speak with me about coming up with an appropriate alternative game.*

## Schedule

|       |        |     |   |                               |
|-------|--------|-----|---|-------------------------------|
| One   | Jan 7  | Mon | Introduction to the course                      | <b>Do you have a journal?</b> |
|       | Jan 8  | Tue | Hobbes, 82-86                                   |                               |
|       | Jan 9  | Wed | Hobbes, 86-95                                   |                               |
|       | Jan 10 | Thu | Hobbes, <i>continued</i><br>and Rousseau, 87-89 |                               |
| Two   | Jan 14 | Mon | Rousseau, "First Part," 89-101                  | <b>Turn in journal</b>        |
|       | Jan 15 | Tue | Rousseau, "First Part," 101-113                 |                               |
|       | Jan 16 | Wed | Rousseau, "Second Part," 113-126                |                               |
|       | Jan 17 | Thu | Rousseau, "Second Part," 126-138                |                               |
| Three | Jan 21 | Mon | <b>MLKJ: No class</b>                           | <b>Turn in journal</b>        |
|       | Jan 22 | Tue | Mitsue, "Illuminating <i>Kojiki</i> ," 494-499  |                               |
|       | Jan 23 | Wed | Mitsue, "On <i>Kotodama</i> ," 499-503          |                               |
|       | Jan 24 | Thu | Mitsue, "Distinguishing <i>Kami</i> ," 503-508  |                               |

|       |        |     |                             |                        |
|-------|--------|-----|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Four  | Jan 28 | Mon | Mengzi, 2A6, 4B19, 4B28     | <b>Turn in journal</b> |
|       | Jan 29 | Tue | Mengzi, 6A1-15, 7B31        |                        |
|       | Jan 30 | Wed | Xunzi, 257-260, 284-285     |                        |
|       | Jan 31 | Thu | Xunzi, 285-291              |                        |
| Five  | Feb 4  | Mon | Sartre, 17-26               | <b>Turn in journal</b> |
|       | Feb 5  | Tue | Sartre, 26-35               |                        |
|       | Feb 6  | Wed | Sartre, 35-44               |                        |
|       | Feb 7  | Thu | Sartre, 44-54               |                        |
| Six   | Feb 11 | Mon | Butler, 519-523             | <b>Turn in journal</b> |
|       | Feb 12 | Tue | Butler, 523-527             |                        |
|       | Feb 13 | Wed | Butler, 527-531             |                        |
|       | Feb 14 | Thu | Flusser, "War and..." 30-34 |                        |
| Seven | Feb 18 | Mon | Flusser, 43-54              | <b>Turn in journal</b> |
|       | Feb 19 | Tue | McLuhan, 3-10               |                        |
|       | Feb 20 | Wed | McLuhan, 10-16              |                        |
|       | Feb 21 | Thu | McLuhan, 16-21              |                        |
| Eight | Feb 25 | Mon | Play Stardew Valley         | <b>Turn in journal</b> |
|       | Feb 26 | Tue | Play Stardew Valley         |                        |
|       | Feb 27 | Wed | Play Stardew Valley         |                        |
|       | Feb 28 | Thu | Play Stardew Valley         |                        |
| Nine  | Mar 4  | Mon | Chomsky-Foucault, 1-10      | <b>Turn in journal</b> |
|       | Mar 5  | Tue | Chomsky-Foucault, 10-20     |                        |
|       | Mar 6  | Wed | Chomsky-Foucault, 20-30     |                        |
|       | Mar 7  | Thu | Chomsky-Foucault, 30-40     |                        |
| Ten   | Mar 11 | Mon | Chomsky-Foucault, 40-50     | <b>Turn in journal</b> |
|       | Mar 12 | Tue | Chomsky-Foucault, 50-59     |                        |
|       | Mar 13 | Wed | <i>That depends....</i>     |                        |
|       | Mar 14 | Thu | <i>That depends....</i>     |                        |

## Assignments

### Reading Quizzes – 25%

At the beginning of nearly every class, we will take a very short quiz (2-4 questions). Since I have to make so many quizzes, there is a chance that some of the questions are *too hard*—I sometimes adjust/curve grades to compensate. Ideally, they will be difficult enough that you can't guess the right answer without doing the reading but easy enough to be obvious to those who *have* done the reading. This is also meant to replace the "attendance and participation" grades you'll find in other courses, so I'll drop your lowest three (3) scores. If you're absent, you get a zero on the day's quiz; in effect, I'm offering everyone three free unexcused absences.

### Journal – 45%

The quizzes will indicate whether you are doing the reading; your journal will show me that you are *engaged* in the material—really thinking about it and making it your own. See Canvas for more detailed instructions. You have a lot of freedom and many different options regarding what you write, for how long, and how often, but as a basic rule of

thumb: you must write more than one entry a week and it should be obvious to me how your journal entries are relevant to the week's reading/discussion. You will hand in your journals on Wednesday and get them back the following day on Thursday.

- If you forget to bring your journal Wednesday, you can turn it on the *following* Wednesday. I don't consider this "late," and you will not be penalized. Bear in mind: if you skip a week, I will then grade you for two weeks of material—do not procrastinate and complete a ton of sloppy journal entries at the last minute!
- If you turn in your journal on Wednesday and then miss class on Thursday, I will bring your journal with me to class on Monday. If you are ever separated from your journal for an extended period of time, you are still expected to write journal entries.

### Show-Me – 10%

I'm from Missouri, the "Show Me State." The state's nickname either means that we're too skeptical to believe something without proof, or that we're unimaginative and need things spelled out to us. For this part of your grade, you'll need to **show me** what you're getting out of the course, what you're improving and how you're improving it. This can take the form of a *written paper*, a *class presentation*, a *graded conversation...* or something else! Pick an option that you believe will challenge you and which plays to your interests and goals. You can complete your assignment at any time but need to decide (and schedule, if applicable) your Show-Me before the end of Week 3. See Canvas for more detailed instructions.

### Final Paper – 20%

A classic argumentative essay as you'll find in any philosophy course—at least 6 pages long. Prompts and further instructions will be announced on Canvas and discussed in class.

## Policies

### Attendance, Participation, Electronics

While attendance and participation do not *directly* affect your grade, please be aware of your responsibility in this class. If you miss class, I expect you to keep up with the reading and with your journal. Students who attend regularly and participate sincerely are more likely to succeed (in this or other courses).

*Note: Repeated instances of disruptive behavior (sleeping, interrupting others, **the use of electronics**) may affect your final grade.*

### Grades

|            |           |             |
|------------|-----------|-------------|
|            | F: 0-59%  |             |
| D-: 60-62% | D: 63-66% | D+: 67-69%  |
| C-: 70-72% | C: 73-76% | C+: 77-79%  |
| B-: 80-82% | B: 83-86% | B+: 87-89%  |
| A-: 90-93% | A: 94-98% | A+: 99-100% |

### Plagiarism

Please do not plagiarize in your journal, Show-Me, or final paper. It is often obvious, can sometimes compromise your academic standing at UO, and always defeats the purpose of the assignment(s). Plagiarism may result in a zero for the assignment or for the entire course, and cases may be referred to the university. Please do not plagiarize; it's not worth it!