

PHIL 110: HUMAN NATURE

Summer 2018
Online
CRN 41753

Instructor: L. Busk
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Susan Campbell Hall, 161
Office Hours: By appointment

“Human nature is not black and white, but black and gray.”
—Graham Greene

COURSE DESCRIPTION: “Human nature” is evoked to support or defend certain political institutions and ways of life and to criticize or reject others. It is used to excuse or explain certain behaviors and to demonize others. It is a phrase we have all heard, in many different contexts and for many different reasons: “It’s just human nature.” But what does it mean to be human? How can *we* approach this question, if we are the very thing being asked about? Can we decide what form of social and political organization to have based on our “human nature,” or are our ideas of what it means to be human always already influenced by whatever social/political situation we happen to find ourselves in? We will approach these questions through short readings and discussions. Student evaluation will be based on participation, online reading quizzes, and a final paper.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: At the end of this course, students are expected to:

- Identify core philosophical problems in the concept of “human nature” from various historical periods and cultural contexts
- Understand the practice of philosophy through argumentation, dialogue, and critical listening and reading
- Develop capacities for critical and creative philosophical thinking in relation to the world in which they live

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) is strictly prohibited and may result in severe penalties, including a failing grade for the course. Definitions, procedures, and penalties for such cases are spelled out on the UO website for academic dishonesty.

If you require an accommodation of any kind, please let me know as soon as possible.

Contacting Your Instructor

Because this is an online course, I will not hold regular office hours. I will be available to meet by appointment only at my office on campus or through the discussion and chat functionalities on Canvas. I will also be reachable by email at **lbusk@uoregon.edu**

Late Assignments and Extensions:

NO late assignments and NO extensions will be given unless you have proof of a documented emergency.

Grade Breakdown:

10 Discussion Assignments	%50 (%5 each)
4 Reading Quizzes	%20 (%5 each)
Final Paper	%30

Texts and Lectures:

All texts and lectures will be made available on Canvas. Lectures will consist entirely of slides. You will be expected to read the lectures slides and the assigned text. Since each unit is 5 days long, prepare to complete one lecture with its accompanying reading assignments per day. Due to the structure of this course, you are expected to take on the responsibility of self-study.

Weekly Discussions:

Discussion is an extremely critical component of learning and doing philosophy. Since the course is online, discussion posts will take the place of class participation and will be your way of demonstrating your engagement with the texts and your classmates throughout the course.

You are to contribute to *three discussion* posts per week. They should be thoughtful, articulate, and substantive.

The “week” begins on Mondays at 12:01AM and ends on Sundays at 11:59PM (so your three discussion posts for Week 1 could occur any time between Monday the 23rd and Sunday the 29th)

****During Week 4, the discussion requirement is only *ONE* post, instead of three****

Each week you will need to write (at least) one of the following types of discussion posts:

- (1) A question that emerged from the reading
- (2) A response to a question posed by a classmate
- (3) A response to a question posed by the instructor

Basic requirements of each post:

- * Posts should be around 150-200 words
- * Use language that is professional and respectful of the texts and your classmates
- * Include at least one quotation from the reading that is accompanied by the page number and a brief explanation of the quotation

Each post will be graded on a 5-point scale:

5 = Very thoughtful and well-articulated, makes an original point, offers a clear and strong analysis of a central idea or key passage of the text or raises a relevant and meaningful question, respectful and charitable, shows exemplary understanding of texts and lectures

4 = Thoughtful, offers a clear analysis with textual support or raises a good question, charitable, few writing mistakes, has few inaccuracies, demonstrates good understanding of texts and lectures, meets requirements

3 = Not very clear, provides only a surface analysis or asks a superficial question, meets requirements, is somewhat accurate, has some writing mistakes, demonstrates some understanding of texts and lectures

2 = Poorly articulated and unclear, missing components, inaccurate, disrespectful, does not meet requirements, demonstrates little understanding of texts or lectures

0 = No post

Weekly Reading Quizzes:

These will be *timed, 10 - 15 minute* multiple-choice quizzes geared towards testing your comprehension of the week's readings and lectures. These will be available to you on Canvas and should be taken after you have completed all of your readings, discussion posts, and lectures for that week. **Weekly reading quizzes are due on Friday of each week by 11:59 PM.**

Final Paper

A 4-6 page final paper will be due at the end of week 4. Details forthcoming.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

(subject to change)

WEEK 1: (7/23-7/27)	Introduction to course. What is philosophy? What is human nature?
Monday	
Tuesday	Tolstoy, <i>A Confession and other Religious Writings</i> , 17-30
Wednesday	Tolstoy, 30-52
Thursday	Tolstoy, 52-68
Friday	Tolstoy, 68-79
WEEK 2: (7/30-8/3)	Freud, <i>Civilization and its Discontents</i> , 23-37
Monday	
Tuesday	Freud, 39-56
Wednesday	Freud, 57-75
Thursday	Freud, 131-145
Friday	Review
WEEK 3: (8/6-8/10)	Beauvoir, <i>The Second Sex</i> , 3-17
Monday	
Tuesday	Beauvoir, 266-274
Wednesday	Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> , 1-23
Thursday	Fanon, 89-105
Friday	Review

WEEK 4: (8/13-8/17)	<i>The Chomsky-Foucault Debate, 1-25</i>
Monday	
Tuesday	The Chomsky-Foucault Debate, 25-50
Wednesday	The Chomsky-Foucault Debate, 50-67 Course conclusion

****Thursday and Friday of week 4 are 'free days' to give you time to work on your final paper.**