

Azusa Pacific University
Philosophy Department
COURSE INSTRUCTION PLAN
Concepts of Human Nature (PHIL 340-01)

Dr. Steve Wilkens

Spring 2017
Room: Darling 411

3 Units
TR 11:10-12:35

Note to students on syllabi and course assessments of all sorts: I am required to include in my syllabus course outcomes that are somehow measurable and to correlate these objectives to assignments in this course. This provides a quantifiable means for determining a particular type of success in your mastery of certain types of knowledge and information concerning the subject matter. It also provides a quantifiable means for making decisions about whether this course has successfully communicated this knowledge and information. What can be measured by these quantitative means is significant and should not be taken lightly. However, even if the course proves to be an extremely efficient vehicle for communicating this measurable information and you similarly prove to be extremely proficient in fulfilling all the assignments, it is still possible to completely miss what is important about this course. As Walker Percy puts it, you can get “A’s” in all your classes and still flunk life.

This is a philosophy class. Philosophy is about becoming a lover of wisdom. Therefore, if you fail to develop a love for wisdom or to grow toward wisdom (and the source of that wisdom), your education has been a failure regardless of the grades that show up on your transcript. The quality of your life, if you properly understand the qualities a good life should possess, cannot be reduced to quantifiable objectives and measurable benchmarks. I have no objective means of measuring whether you have become thirsty for wisdom, so I will have to grade you on something much less important.

APU Mission Statement:

Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

Course Description:

This course explores the significant questions concerning human nature. Special emphasis is placed on philosophical, theological, psychological, and sociological theories of the uniqueness of human activity.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This section used to be called “Course Objectives,” and I still prefer that label since objectives are very real goals, albeit goals that cannot always be measured in ways acceptable to current standards of assessment. Some of those unmeasurable goals are so essential that they are included below because I cannot imagine a decent Christian higher education that excludes them. However, other outcomes, also very important to this course, are also listed and do yield to some form of measurement.

Student Learning Outcome “By the end of this course, students should.....”	IDEA Objective	Assignments Used to Assess
Experience growth in the moral and intellectual virtues (e.g., honesty, courage, fairness, gratitude, etc.) that are essential to academic success and flourishing human existence.		Opportunities for doing this are available in every facet of class. I cannot assess virtue directly, but it should be evident in the effort and attitude with which you approach this and every course.
Gain a sense of wonder and gratitude at the mystery and complexity of human existence.		Opportunities for doing this are available in every facet of class. I cannot assess this, but few things are more important.
Utilize thoughtful and enduring views on human nature as a means of evaluating one’s own life and opening yourself to growth and transformation.		Opportunities for doing this are available in every facet of class. This is the hardest aspect of the course if you decide to do this,

		but I have no way to assess it.
Develop a sustained and orderly exposition and evaluation of a well-defined research question.	Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view	Research Essay
Demonstrate a capacity to recognize the structures of anthropological systems and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.	Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view	Class discussions; Research Essay
Develop a broad knowledge of human nature questions from a range of theories and disciplines.	Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity	Class discussions, Reading assignments, Examinations
Grasp a broad range of theories about human nature from the sciences, religion, and philosophy.	Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories	Examinations, Reading assignments

Desired Learning Outcome for Philosophy Courses

All students will demonstrate increased ability to understand, construct, and reflect critically on philosophical arguments, calling upon the best of the philosophical tradition and their own analytical and expressive skills towards application of such reflection to a current social or moral issue. This is an application of the university's goal for all students that graduates should practice a respect for the worth of all persons, with appreciation of individual and cultural differences, demonstrating truth-telling and grace in their relationships.

Desired Faith Integration Outcome for Philosophy Courses

All students will demonstrate increased confidence in the compatibility of sincere Christian faith and robust philosophical reflection, growing into a greater awareness of the intellectual depth, strength, and coherence that is possible for construction of a comprehensive Christian worldview. This outcome is specifically related to the university's goals that graduates should be able to articulate a Christian worldview of truth and life and apply biblically-based ethical reasoning skills to problems.

Requirements:

1. Examinations

There will be two examinations, each accounting for 30% of the final course grade. The examinations are mutually exclusive. Examinations will include questions drawn from reading assignments and lecture materials.

Every effort should be made to take examinations on the assigned day. Tests may be made up only in the event of:

1. Illness (Documentation should be provided)
2. Activities for other classes or official campus groups

Make up exams must be approved by the instructor. To schedule a make-up test, contact Laura Smith Webb in the Department of Philosophy.

See class schedule for examination dates.

2. Research Essay

A 15 page double-spaced, typewritten **research** essay will be required on a topic relevant to the seminar subject. Topics are to be approved by the instructor.

Because this is an upper-division writing intensive course, special consideration will be given to this project. A portion of the grade will be determined by writing mechanics, research skills, and critical capacity.

This essay will account for 40% of the final grade, and is due on **April 18**. A hard copy should be handed in at the beginning of class on this day. In addition, an electronic copy must be submitted through Turnitin. It is expected that essays will be turned in on time. In the event that they are late, a penalty of **one full grade level per week** for that assignment will be assessed. Papers are considered one week late if they are turned in after the beginning of class on the date due. Loss of material due to computer failure, heavy class load/work/video-gaming schedule/hungry dogs, etc. are not acceptable excuses for late work.

See attached schedule for benchmarks in essay preparation. Part of the grade for this assignment will be determined by the timeliness and adequacy with which these benchmarks are met.

Since this is a research paper, a bibliography and footnotes are required. For assistance on style, writing mechanics, and bibliographical/footnote format, see Joseph Gibaldi's, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (Modern Language Association of America, 2009).

3. Reading Assignments

Required Texts:

Leslie Stevenson, et.al., Twelve Theories of Human Nature. 6th ed. (New York: Oxford, 2013).

Leslie Stevenson, The Study of Human Nature. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford, 2000).

4. Attendance & Participation

A seminar class relies heavily on the informed participation of all members. If you must be absent from any portion of class, the instructor should be notified beforehand. Otherwise, an absence will be counted as unexcused. You will be considered tardy if you arrive after the scheduled beginning of class. Tardies are counted as 1/2 of an absence. More than 2 unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade, and chronic absences can result in removal from the roster. You are responsible for all information presented in sessions from which you are absent.

10% of the course grade will be determined by participation in class discussions and preparation of assigned readings.

Unless you are using your laptop to take class notes, and for nothing other than class notes, do not bring a laptop to class.

Credit Hour Information

The ideal of Christian scholarship is that students would be so motivated by a deep, God-centered desire to more fully understand creation that the sort of information that follows would be viewed as completely unnecessary and absurd. I hope you are something like that ideal Christian scholar and will enjoy a hearty laugh after reading the following paragraph.

Following the APU Credit Hour Policy, to meet identified student learning outcomes of this course, the expectations are that this 3 unit course, delivered over a 15 week term, will approximate:

- 3 hours weekly classroom time
- 3.5 hours weekly reading & preparation time
- 1.5 hours weekly research & writing for research essay
- 1 hour weekly review/test preparation

Weighting of Course Requirements

Examination #1	3/2	30%
Final	TBD	30%
Research Essay	April 18	40%

General Grading Criteria

- A** Superior knowledge regarding details, assumptions, implications, history; superior thinking with information relevant to application, critique, and relationship to other information.
- B** More than adequate knowledge regarding technical terms, distinctions, and possesses an ability to use information.
- C** Basic knowledge needed to function and carry on learning regarding major principles, central terms, major figures, also possesses an awareness of field or discipline.
- D** Serious gaps in knowledge, confusion of concepts and categories, inability to recall basic information.
- F** Absence of knowledge, incapable of carrying on a conversation about the subject, misunderstands most concepts, confuses all categories

Grading Scale

93-100=A	87-89=B+	77-79=C+	67-69=D+	0-59=F
90-92=A-	83-86=B	73-76=C	63-66=D	
	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-	

Support Services

Students in this course who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center (ext. 3849) as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

Information Literacy and Use of the Library

Information literacy is defined as “a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (American Library Association, 1989). In this course, teaching and learning processes will employ the following information literacy standards, as endorsed by the American Association for Higher Education (1999), the Association of College and Research Libraries (2000), and the Council of Independent Colleges (2004). The students in this course will:

- determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
- access needed information effectively and efficiently.
- evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

This course requires students to complete course assignments using resources available from the University Libraries. Research assistance and subject guides for this course are available at <http://apu.libguides.com/>

Academic Integrity

The mission of Azusa Pacific University includes cultivating in each student not only the academic skills that are required for a university degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are integral to a sound Christian education. It is therefore part of the mission of the university to nurture in each student a sense of moral responsibility consistent with the biblical teachings of honesty and accountability. Furthermore, a breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire university. A complete copy of the Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Office of Student Life, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and online.

Expectations for this course regarding academic integrity in this class

The expectations are consistent with those outlined in the academic integrity policy.

Consequences for violations of academic integrity in this class

Academic dishonesty harms the guilty student, classmates, and the institution, and will be dealt with severely. Any instance will result in an “F” for the entire course.

Professor Access

Office Hours – Duke 239

Monday 8:00-10:30

Friday 1:00-2:30

Phone

Office ext. - #5633

Home - (626) 359-6415

Email – swilkens@apu.edu

Class Schedule

(This schedule is open to modification by the instructor, and is only to be a general guide to reading and preparation.)

Week 1 - Introduction to Problems in Human Nature

Week 2 - Plato and Human Nature

Twelve Views, pp. 79-96; Study, pp. 34-55

Week 3 - Eastern Concepts of Human Nature

Twelve Views, pp. 18-78; Study, pp. 10-33

Week 4 - Human Nature in Christian Thought

Twelve Views, pp. 115-136; Study, pp. 2-8; 56-68

Week 5 – Aristotle & Kant

Twelve Views, pp. 97-114; 168-186; Study, pp. 84-138; 153-161

Week 6 - Humanity as Power and Will

Week 7 – Economic Interpretations of Human Nature

Twelve Views, pp. 187-204; Study, pp. 139-152

Mid-term – March 2

Week 8 – The Sociologists Check in

Week 9 – Freud & James

Twelve Views, pp. 205-226; Study, pp. 169-184

Week 10 - Sartre & Existentialism

Twelve Views, pp. 227-244; Study, pp. 185-206

Week 11 - Darwin & Evolutionary Views

Twelve Views, pp. 245-279; Study, pp. 162-168; 222-236

Week 12 - Skinner & Behaviorism

Study, pp. 207-221

Essay Due – April 18

Week 13 - Mind-Brain Identity, Artificial Intelligence and Critiques

Final - TBD

Essay Schedule

Feb. 16 – Essay topic

An essay topic should be submitted for approval by the instructor. Do not attempt to cover the entire thought system of a given thinker. Instead, select a topic within their legacy to examine.

March 18– Bibliography

The bibliography should give evidence that the research process is underway. It should reflect an awareness of which general sources, secondary sources, journal articles, and primary sources are relevant for addressing your selected topic.

April 4 – Annotated Outline

The outline should indicate that you are far enough along in your research and writing process to understand how the essay will need to be structured. It should provide evidence that you understand the flow in the development of ideas within the essay and offer sufficient detail to demonstrate that you recognize the issues that require examination within each section.

For each major section of the outline, you should provide a one paragraph summary of the content of the section.

April 4 – Rough Draft (Optional)

I will read through a rough draft of the entire essay and provide suggestions for improvement if it is submitted by this date.

April 18 – Final Essay Due

Human Nature Inventory

1. What is real about a human being?
 - a. Reality consists of only physical things
 - b. The primary human reality is nonphysical
 - c. There is no real person as traditionally conceived?
 - d. Human beings are unitary, but cannot be fully described in physical terms
 - e. Our genome
2. How do we learn?
 - a. Reason (a priori)
 - b. Observation (A posteriori)
 - c. Instinct
 - d. Conditioning
 - e. Intuition
 - f. Relationship
3. What is a human being's natural moral state?
 - a. Good, society messes it up
 - b. Evil, but redeemable/controllable
 - c. Neutral, current condition depends on influences
 - d. Originally good, but spoiled
 - e. "Moral" has no moral meaning
5. How do we discover the good?
 - a. Acting according to our highest function
 - b. We create the good
 - c. Revelation/Denial of human efforts
 - d. Careful observation of the world
6. What makes us do wrong?
 - a. Acting unreasonably/ignorance
 - b. Poor social environment
 - c. Poor conditioning
 - d. Love of the lesser things
7. Of what components are we comprised?
 - a. An aspect of the divine reality
 - b. Mind only
 - c. Body only
 - d. Interacting body & soul
 - e. Single substance with multiple aspects
8. What is our problem?
 - a. Repression of unpleasant experiences
 - b. Wrong social/economic systems
 - c. Inadequate understanding of brain functions
 - d. Ignorance

9. What constitutes salvation?
- Economic/Social freedom
 - Survival
 - Merging with the All
 - The rational life
 - No salvation
10. Are we free?
- We are determined by our history
 - We are free to the extent that we act rationally
 - We are free to choose what we want, and we want only evil
 - We make individual decisions, but the processes around us are determined
 - We are determined by neuro-physiological causes
 - We are free to choose, but freedom is a burden
11. What is the origin of human spiritual sensitivity?
- Result of Alienation
 - Projection of human goodness
 - A desire to return to daddy's protection
 - Natural response of the demands of reason
 - A natural response to the observation of the universe
12. What is the individual's status in relation to society?
- It creates us
 - It enslaves us
 - Destroys our freedom
 - Necessary for survival
 - Required for full development of our humanity
13. How are we related to the physical world?
- Part of it
 - It is a hindrance/seek to escape it
 - We are a part of it, but have a unique role in it
 - It is an illusion
14. What is death?
- The end
 - Release of soul
 - Nothing
 - Real, but not Final
15. Anything beyond death?
- Decomposition
 - Ultimate salvation
 - Release of aspects of personality leading to return within the circle of life