

University of Oregon, PHIL 110, Human Nature, Summer 2009, Syllabus
Thomas Nail. (tnail@uoregon.edu) M 12:00–13:00, W 12:00 - 13:00, PLC 269.

Course Objective: To examine diverse accounts of what constitutes human beings and their nature. From a variety of viewpoints, this course takes up the question, “What is a human being?” Are there any essential forms or functions that can said be of all humans? What is the relationship between humans and nature? Can human nature be changed? Perspectives considered include genetics, psychoanalysis, classical Indian philosophy, French, German, and American philosophy. Problem areas include the nature of desire, existence, language, politics, animality, and gender. There are three goals of this class: (a) to obtain a working knowledge of a variety of influential political philosophers in the history of philosophy, (b) to develop the philosophical skills of close reading, written reflection/research, and discussion, and (c) to establish an intellectual community based on the revision of written work and the use of internet and course forums.

Requirements:

1. Participation – This is an intensive course and so even one absence can put you behind as well as compromise class discussion. You are allowed to miss two classes, after which your final grade will be dropped by a letter grade for each class missed after those two.
2. Critical Reflections and Peer Review (Maximum of 8 – 25%). There will be online writing assignments in which you will reflect upon the material and discuss with your peer community on Blackboard and in class. There will also be one take home peer review.
3. Short Argumentative Essay with an extended annotated bibliography (25%). You will write a short (4-5 page) argumentative essay with an accompanying annotated bibliography mapping out a program of further research. The essay itself need only engage with our primary readings but you are expected to go to the library and research additional secondary readings. This essay will be due (both hardcopy and electronically) a little more than halfway through the course and I will give you written feedback a few weeks later. You will then be expected to revise this essay and expand it into a longer final research essay due at the end of the term.
3. Final Research Essay (50%). You will write a final research essay of 6-7 pages or longer. This is expected to be a revision of, and improvement upon, your short argumentative essay from earlier in the term. This essay should engage with the assigned primary literature and some relevant secondary literature that I can help you locate.

Reading Schedule: (*we will read selections only from each of the following texts*)

Week 1	Introduction and Plan of the Course. Freud, <i>Civilization and its Discontents</i> .
	Freud cont. Marx, <i>Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts</i> .
Week 2	Marx, <i>The German Ideology</i>
	Nietzsche, <i>Genealogy of Morals & Beyond Good and Evil</i> .
First Short Paper Due [due date]	
Week 3	Foucault and Chomsky, <i>On Human Nature</i> .
	Foucault, <i>History of Sexuality</i> .
Week 4	Wilson, <i>Human Nature</i> , Toombs, <i>Disability and the Self</i> .
	Young, <i>Throwing Like a Girl</i> , Roberts, <i>Mark of the Beast: From Aristotle to Foucault</i> .
	Eribon, <i>Making of the Gay Self</i> . Aquinas, <i>The Purpose of Sex</i> .
Final Paper Due [due date]	

Suggested Supplementary Readings to be Posted on Blackboard