

**St. Francis Xavier University**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**Course Outline**  
**Philosophy and Human Nature II**

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A continuation of Philosophy and Human Nature I. This class is intended to introduce students to the philosophical analysis of human nature. We shall begin by familiarizing ourselves with the Stoic response to the earlier theories of human nature expounded by Plato and Aristotle, and studied in the first semester. We then move on to Mencius. With Mencius' outline of human nature as fundamentally good in place, we shall return to the West, and investigate Hume's analysis of emotions, before finally moving on to Sartre. As in the first semester, by the end of the class students should be able to give a somewhat insightful response to the question, "What does it mean to be human?" from various philosophical perspectives.

**Schedule (subject to change):**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1 Jan 3	Impulse and Appropriateness	Stoicism (handout)
2 Jan 10	Value and Emotions	Stoicism
3 Jan 17	Happiness	Stoicism
4 Jan 24	The Good Human	<i>Mencius</i> bk. II
5 Jan 31	The 4 Sprouts	<i>Mencius</i> bk. V
6 Feb 7	Good Rule	<i>Mencius</i> bk. VI
7 Feb 14	Discriminating Love	<i>Mencius</i> bk. VII
8 Feb 28	Pride & Humility	Hume, <i>Treatise on Human Nature</i> II pt. 1, ch.1-3,7,8,10
9 Mar 7	Love and Hatred	Hume, <i>Treatise on Human Nature</i> II pt. 2, ch.1, 6-8
10 Mar 14	The Will	Hume, <i>Treatise on Human Nature</i> II pt. 3, ch.3, 9, 10
11 Mar 21	Existentialism	Sartre, <i>Existentialism &amp; Human Emotions</i>
12 Mar 28	Anguish, Forlornness, Despair	Sartre, <i>Existentialism &amp; Human Emotions</i>

The final classes will be spent catching up & reviewing for the final exam

**Assignments:** Students will be required to complete three short written responses to the ideas presented in the text and a final exam. Each response will be worth 20% of the final grade, and the final will be worth 40%. Responses consist of short essays replying to the response questions listed below. Students must provide a response to the question from each section or set of readings. The response should be a minimum of 4 pages in length **and you must complete an argument outline, to be handed in one week in advance.**

**Response Questions:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Section: Due Jan 31<sup>st</sup> (outline due Jan 24<sup>th</sup>)**

The Stoics seem to go out of their way to dissuade non-Sages from feeling emotions. Can you think of any emotions that the Stoics might find acceptable for the non-Sage to feel, and which the non-Sage is capable of feeling?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Section: Due Mar 7<sup>th</sup> (outline due Feb 28<sup>th</sup>)**

Mencius thinks that human nature is good, but it would seem that the analogue of flowing water might just as easily be used to illustrate the thesis that human nature is bad. Explain how Mencius might argue that the analogy of flowing water in fact cannot be used as an analogue for innate badness.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Section: Due Mar 28<sup>th</sup> (outline due Mar 21<sup>st</sup>)**

How are the emotions situated in relation to the other parts of the human mind? In answering this question students must make use of David Hume's text, arguing either for or against him, and the essay must have appended to it a diagram that depicts your understanding of the map of consciousness, plus a key to the diagram.

### **Technical Considerations for Written Assignments:**

- 1) All written assignments must be typed (black ink, please) and double-spaced on pages with at most 1 inch margins. No extra line spaces between paragraphs. Indent the first line of a paragraph. Printing on both sides of a sheet of paper is quite acceptable.
- 2) Please no title pages. Also no "Works Cited" or "Bibliography" pages referring to one work; do bibliographic references in a footnote if you must. Please no enormously large-fonted things like titles, names, dates, course numbers, student numbers, phone numbers, or due dates that take up half a page of space. Your title, name, and student number at the top of the first page is quite sufficient. Please visibly number any multiple-page assignments. If for some reason you must hand in the assignment to the office, please include my name at the top of the assignment as well.
- 3) No duo-tangs, folders, binders, or paperclips. Loose sheets are acceptable, but do remember to number them.
- 4) Under no circumstances will emailed assignments be accepted. Please hand in your assignments at the start of class on the day they are due.
- 5) For help on writing humanities papers, please consult the website <http://www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/general/writing.html>  
This site gives an excellent overview on what a philosophy paper is all about and how to write it.
- 6) The final page of this outline is the evaluation form that will be used in the assessment of your writing. This evaluation form provides the clearest explanation of my requirements for an essay. Please, study it carefully before you write your work.
- 7) The late policy is a deduction of 3% per day that the assignment is handed in late. This course outline lets you know when assignments are due, and you have been given plenty of time to complete them. Consequently last minute excuses for not completing assignments on time will be met with skepticism.
- 7) Many of the above requirements are arbitrary demands on my part, but they really do facilitate the assessment of your work. If you do not follow these guidelines, **YOUR MARK FOR ORGANIZATION ON THE EVALUATION FORM WILL SUFFER DRASTICALLY.**
- 8) Plagiarism is completely unacceptable. If you make use of an idea that is not of your own devising, you must cite the source of that idea. Failure to properly cite sources may result from removal from the course and expulsion from the school.

**EVALUATION FORM**  
(Late assignments will not receive comments)

Style:

Grammar: Are the sentences understandable? Are there any spelling mistakes? Is the diction clear and concise? Can the thought behind each sentence easily be grasped?

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Organization: Do the ideas logically follow each other, or were they haphazardly strewn together? Is there evidence of the student having constructed an argumentative outline? Is the structure of the argumentation explicitly stated and easily perceived?

/10

Content:

Argument Outline:

/10

Thesis: Does the assignment give an answer to a question or problem put forward? Is the answer more than a simple "yes" or "no"? Is the answer insightful, being an interpretive idea itself? Is the thesis explicitly stated?

/10

Arguments: Are there arguments presented in the paper? Are the arguments interesting or banal? Are the arguments incisive or superficial? Do the arguments explicitly outline broad premises that act as guides to understanding and reveal the unquestioned perspectives adopted in the paper?

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Originality: Does the student provide input into the conceptual debates the text engages in? Is there evidence of insight on the student's part into the topic? Are there any new ideas being explored in the assignment? Is the student able to go beyond ideas raised in class discussion?

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Evaluation: Does the student give a fair summation of the ideas contained in the texts used? Are passages from the text cited? Does the use of these ideas meaningfully contribute to the thesis of the essay, or is the use of material a mere addendum to the main arguments of the paper?

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/100