

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

**Instructor:** Doug Al-Maini

**E-mail:** dalmaini@stfx.ca

**Office:** NH717

**Office Hours:** Please check on-line schedule: <http://people.stfx.ca/dalmaini/Al-Maini/scheduleDA.htm>

**PLEASE NOTE: LAPTOP COMPUTERS AND PHONES ARE STILL NOT ALLOWED IN CLASS.**

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 5	Impulse and Appropriateness	Stoicism (handout)
2 Jan 12	Value and Emotions	Stoicism
3 Jan 19	Happiness	Stoicism
4 Jan 26	The Good Human	<i>Mencius</i> bk. II
5 Feb 2	The 4 Sprouts	<i>Mencius</i> bk. V
6 Feb 9	Good Rule	<i>Mencius</i> bk. VI
7 Feb 16	The Gentleman, Fate	<i>Mencius</i> , bk. VII
8 Mar 2	Pride, Benevolence, Love	Hume, <i>Treatise</i> II pt. 1, ch.1, 2, 7; pt. 2, ch. 1, 6-8
9 Mar 9	The Will, Hope, Fear	Hume, <i>Treatise</i> II pt. 3, ch.3, 9, 10
10 Mar 16	Existentialism	Sartre, <i>Existentialism &amp; Human Emotions</i>
11 Mar 23	Anguish, Forlornness, Despair	Sartre, <i>Nausea</i>
12 Mar 30	Freedom	Sartre, <i>Nausea</i>

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

**Assignments:** Students will be required to complete in-class work, two short written responses to the ideas presented in the text, and a final exam. The in-class work will be worth 20%, each response will be worth 25% of the final grade, and the final will be worth 30%. 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 1750 words in length and you must complete an argument outline, to be handed in one week in advance. **Please note that the argument outlines will be marked this semester based on their conceptual content, not their validity.**

**Response Questions:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Section: Due Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> (outline due Jan 26<sup>th</sup>)**

Do you think animals are capable of feeling emotions as the Stoics define such feelings? Any response here has to explain what a Stoic means by the term 'emotion,' and then explain how animals fit into this conception.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Section: Due Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> (outline due Feb 16<sup>th</sup>)**

Mencius is clearly of the view that one should obey one's parents, and it is striking just how far he is willing to take this principle. He also seems to accept that parents can be bad people, and that leaves him with the task of explaining what offspring are to do if their parents require them to do something evil. How are we to solve this dilemma? Is Mencius of any help here? In answering this question students must outline why Mencius believes filial piety is such an important moral principle.

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

- 1) All written assignments must be typed in 12pt. Times New Roman font (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) 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.
- 6) Many of the above requirements are arbitrary demands on my part, but they really do facilitate the assessment of your work. Please follow the guidelines.
- 7) 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.
- 8) Remember to **HAND IN YOUR OUTLINE WITH THE ESSAY SO THAT I CAN RECORD THE MARK!**