

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

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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):

| Week | Topic | Readings |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 Jan 4 | Impulse and Appropriateness | Stoicism Handout, chapters 57, 39, 40, 41 |
| 2 Jan 11 | Emotions | Stoicism Handout, chapter 62 |
| 3 Jan 18 | Value and Indifference | Stoicism Handout, chapters 58, 61 |
| 4 Jan 25 | The Good Human | <i>Mencius</i> bk. II |
| 5 Feb 1 | The 4 Sprouts | <i>Mencius</i> bk. V |
| 6 Feb 8 | Good Rule | <i>Mencius</i> bk. VI |
| 7 Feb 22 | The Gentleman, Fate | <i>Mencius</i> , bk. VII |
| 8 Feb 29 | Pride, Benevolence, Love | Hume, <i>Treatise</i> II pt. 1, ch.1, 2, 7; pt. 2, ch. 1, 6-8 |
| 9 Mar 7 | The Will, Hope, Fear | Hume, <i>Treatise</i> II pt. 3, ch.3, 9, 10 |
| 10 Mar 14 | Existentialism | Sartre, <i>Existentialism & Human Emotions</i> (whole essay) |
| 11 Mar 21 | Anguish, Forlornness, Despair | Sartre, <i>Nausea</i> |
| 12 Mar 28 | 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 30%, each response will be worth 20% 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 2000 words in length and you must complete an argument outline, to be handed in two weeks in advance. **Please note that the argument outlines will be marked this semester based on their conceptual content, not their validity.**

Response Questions:

1st Section: Due Feb 8th (outline due Jan 25th)

1) 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, one way or the other.

2) Alternatively, you may write an essay that investigates Stoicism and answers a question of your own design. Please clear your essay topic with the instructor by Jan 20th, and an argument outline is still due on Jan 25th.

2nd Section: Due Mar 14th (outline due Feb 22th)

1) 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. According to Mencius, how are we to respond to this dilemma? In answering this question students must outline why Mencius believes filial piety is such an important moral principle.

2) Alternatively, you may write an essay that investigates Mencius and answers a question of your own design. Please clear your essay topic with the instructor by Mar 9th, and an argument outline is still due on Mar 14th.

Technical Considerations for Written Assignments:

1) All written assignments must be typed in 12 pt. 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!**