PHI 197: HUMAN NATURE
FALL 2023
TIME: MONDAY & WEDNESDAY 12:45 – 2:05PM
LOCATION: HB CROUSE 213A

Instructor: Roger Rosena

Email: rdrosena@syr.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 10:00am to 11:00 am, Tuesdays 1:00pm to 2:00 pm at Bird Library and by Appointment

Course Description: In this course we will be discussing various topics related to what defines us as humans. Questions include: What is a mind? What is happiness? How do we relate to other humans? What are things like gender, race, and sexuality? What does it mean to be free?

In the process of investigating these questions, you will learn how to think and write philosophically. By the end of this course, you will be able to articulate your philosophical beliefs clearly and concisely, construct and defend positions, and reason persuasively.

This course is a writing intensive course. This means that writing is an extensive part of the grade and your grades will be linked to the quality and content of your written work. The key goal of this class is to develop your voice as a writer, and to develop critical thinking and reasoning skills as a thinker.

Course Material: All readings will be made available electronically and posted on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to make sure that you read the material and ask questions if necessary.

Technology: The use of technology is permitted and encouraged. However, this use is intended for the purpose of enriching the classroom experience. What this means is that non-classroom related activities (ex. texting, social media, buying clothes, etc.) is not tolerated. These activities are disrespectful to me and a distraction to the students around you. If you have an emergency and use your phone or other items, please step out of the room first.

Attendance and Class Participation: I expect that you will attend every class and arrive on time. You will not do well in this class unless you show up to this class. In this course, attendance also means that you are not only *physically* present, but you are also *actively engaging* with the course material. Your participation grade will be based primarily on the quality and quantity of your engagement in the class. If you are sick or have a legitimate reason for missing class, let me know as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism of any form and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to complete assignments is prohibited. The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work, the integrity of work submitted in exams, and assignments. This policy extends to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as well. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. Information concerning academic integrity at SU is available at http://academicintegrity.syr.edu.

Accommodations: Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations should register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Please provide me with a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS so I am aware of your accommodations. Planning for accommodations as early as possible is best. I'd be happy to meet with you to discuss how I can help.

Religious Observations: The university recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under this policy, students have an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify the instructor no later than the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes and by the submission deadline for flexibility classes.

Guidelines for Classroom Behavior: I intend to have a civil and inclusive classroom throughout the semester. A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed, especially in a course that focuses on a variety of controversial issues. Each student is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities. Honest and respected dialogue is expected. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behavior is not tolerated.

Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our views, we must reciprocate and listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them. However, in this class, our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of issues as presented in the course readings as scholars rather than in defending points of view we have formed outside of the classroom.

Grading and Evaluation: *I expect all assignments to be turned in on time. If you have any issues, let me know in advance*

10% Attendance and Participation
40% Unit Assessments/Quizzes: 5 in total [worth 8% each]

50% Short Papers: 4 in total [worth 12.5% each]

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

Course Schedule: *This schedule may change and all changes will be communicated through Blackboard and email*

8/28: Introduction to the Course
No Readings

UNIT 1: THE HUMAN MIND AND PSYCHOLOGY
8/30: Intro to Moral Psychology
Plato – The Republic Book IV (pgs. 1067-1072)

9/4: No Class – Labor Day

9/6: Intro to Moral Psychology (cont.)
Sigmund Freud – The Anatomy of the Mental Personality

9/11: Metaphysics of the Mind
Rene Descartes – Meditations on First Philosophy (1st Meditation)

9/13: Metaphysics of the Mind (cont.)
Rene Descartes – Meditations on First Philosophy (2nd Meditation)
Elizabeth of Bohemia – Letters to Descartes of May 6, 1643 (pgs. 61-62)

QUIZ 1 DUE 9/15

9/18: Metaphysics of the Mind (cont.)
Alan Turing – Computing, Machinery, and Intelligence (pgs. 433-435 & pgs. 450-451)

UNIT 2: WELL-BEING, HAPPINESS, AND FLOURISHING
9/20: What is a Human's Function?
Aristotle – Nicomachean Ethics I.7

9/25: What is Happiness?

John Stuart Mill – What Utilitarianism Is

9/27: Is Death Bad?
Epicurus – Letter to Menoeceus

PAPER 1 DUE 9/29

10/2: Should We Want to be Immortal?
Bernard Williams – The Markopoulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality

10/4: What About Animals?
Peter Singer – All Animals are Equal

QUIZ 2 DUE 10/6

UNIT 3: HUMAN AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

10/9: Are Humans Always in Competition?
Thomas Hobbes – Selections from The Leviathan
Ruger Bregman – The Real Lord of the Flies

10/11: Are Humans Always in Competition? (cont.)
Hobbes (cont.) and Class Activity

10/16: Love and Happiness?
Carrie Jenkins – Love isn't About Happiness. It's About Understanding and Inspiration

10/18: Friends and Enemies?
Sara Protasi – Love Your Frenemy

PAPER 2 DUE 10/20

10/23: Work and Labor
Karl Marx – Alienated Labor (pgs. 85-91)
Video David Graeber on Shit and Bullshit Jobs

10/25: TBD

QUIZ 3 DUE 10/27

UNIT 4: PERSONAL IDENTITY AND SOCIAL IDENTITIES

10/30: What Makes Us Who We Are?

Marya Schectman – Personal Identity and the Past (pgs. 1-6)

11/1: What Makes Us Who We Are? (cont.)
Marya Schectman (pgs. 6-14)
Jay Garfield – "Why There is No Self: A Buddhist View for the West"

11/6: Gender and Identity
Simone de Beauvoir – Intro to Second Sex (pgs. 1-4 & 34-38)

11/8: Race and Identity
Charles Mill – What Race are You Really? (pgs. 50-66)

PAPER 3 DUE 11/10

UNIT 5: FREE WILL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

11/13: Making Sense of Free Will
Adina Roskies – Neuroscientific Challenges to Free Will and Responsibility

11/15: Genetic Engineering and Determinism
Michael Sandel – What's Wrong with Enhancement?

QUIZ 4 DUE 11/17

11/20 and 11/22: No Class – Thanksgiving

11/27: Compatibilism
Harry Frankfurt – Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person

11/29: Hard Determinism
Derk Pereboom – "Hard Incompatibilism" (Sections 1, 4, 10-11)

QUIZ 5 DUE 12/1

12/4: Free Will and Moral Responsibility (cont.)
Gary Watson – Responsibility and the Limits of Evil: Variations on a Strawsonian Theme (pgs. 127-130)

12/6: Free Will and Moral Responsibility (cont.)
Gary Watson (pgs. 130-132)

PAPER 4 DUE 12/11