Professor Kara Richardson kricha03@syr.edu (I check e-mail on work days only.)
Office hours: by Zoom; email me to make an appointment.

**Welcome to PHI 197 Human Nature!**

In this course, we will study major philosophical theories of human nature and their normative implications. We will address the following questions:

- What is reason? What role should it play in our lives?
- What is anger? Is it always bad or dangerous?
- Is reason uniquely human? Does it belong to other animals?
- Are mind and body distinct?
- Do machines have minds?
- How should we treat non-human animals?
- What attitude should we take toward our own deaths?
- How should we make significant life choices, e.g., whether to marry, become a parent, become a doctor, fight in a war, etc.?
- What is a leap of faith?
- What is human freedom?
- If we knew doomsday was coming soon, how would, and how should, this affect the way we live?

**N.B. All course materials, including the readings, are on the course Blackboard site.**

## I. Assignments and Grading

Grading Table

| A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 94-100 | 90-93 | 87-89 | 83-86 | 80-82 | 77-79 | 73-76 | 70-72 | 60-69 | 0-59 |

A. Worksheets (75%)

The worksheets will ask you to do three sorts of things:

1. Answer questions about assigned readings. The readings will be posted as .pdf or Word documents on Blackboard. This part of the assignment involves quoting and citing these documents. Do not use alternative versions of the readings. Answers which do not reflect assigned readings will not receive points.
2. Answer questions about a philosophical view. Use the course slides and assigned readings to answer these questions. Answers which do not reflect course slides and assigned readings will not receive points.
3. Write a short response. Each response should:

- reflect course slides and assigned readings
- quote and cite relevant assigned readings at least twice
- be 250-300 words long, excluding quotations
- be polished, i.e., free from grammatical and spelling errors

B. First essay (10 %) 800 words (excluding quotations), due Oct. 20
C. Second essay (15%) 1000 words (excluding quotations), due Dec. 15

## II. Academic integrity

As a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research institution, Syracuse University considers academic integrity at the forefront of learning, serving as a core value and guiding pillar of education. Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy provides students with the necessary guidelines to complete academic work with integrity throughout their studies. Students are required to uphold both course-specific and university-wide academic integrity expectations such as crediting your sources, doing your own work, communicating honestly, and supporting academic integrity. The full Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy can be found by visiting class.syr/edu, selecting, "Academic Integrity," and "Expectations and Policy."

Upholding Academic Integrity includes the protection of faculty's intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or share instructors' course materials, including presentations, assignments, exams, or other evaluative materials without permission. Using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course material (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others, which are then presented as your own violates academic integrity expectations in this course and may be classified as a Level 3 violation. All academic integrity expectations that apply to in-person assignments, quizzes, and exams also apply online.

Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered. Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

**All generative-AI tools are prohibited in this course because their use inhibits achievement of the course learning objectives. This policy applies to all stages of project and writing processes including researching, brainstorming, outlining, organizing, and polishing. Do not use Generative-AI tools to create any content (i.e., images and video, audio, text, code, etc.). If you have any questions about a feature and whether it is considered Generative-AI, ask your instructor.**

## III. Students with disabilities/special needs

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course. I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process. If you would like to discuss disability-accommodations or register with CDR, please visit Center for Disability Resources. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

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## IV. Course learning objectives

Students who complete course assignments with care and attention will learn how to:

1. Analyze arguments
   - Distill the central argument of a text to its essentials, making clear its basic argumentative structure.
   - Interpret charitably in order to understand a view in its most cogent form before subjecting it to criticism.

2. Express ideas and arguments in writing
   - Explain and defend a philosophical claim in writing that is clear, informed and engaging.
   - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of rival positions.

3. Participate in constructive debate.
   - Express ideas and arguments in discussion with others.
   - Identify strengths and weaknesses of claims made by one's peers.
   - Communicate disagreement in a civil manner.