

## **PHIL 110 Philosophy of Human Nature**

Professor Alejandro A. Vallega

FALL Semester, 2011. M-W-F 11:00-11:50; 180PLC

What does it mean to be human? What makes us “human”? What is the place of humans in the world? This course will explore influential traditional, modern, and contemporary approaches to human nature. Thinkers examined include Plato, Hobbes, and Foucault. The course will consist on a close reading of Plato’s *Republic* in contrast with other ancient, modern, and contemporary ways of understanding the many senses of being human.

### **Required Texts**

Plato, *The Republic* Tr. R. E. Allen (Yale University Press), ISBN 978-0-300-13637-1

Hobbes, *The Leviathan* (Penguin Classics, 1982), ISBN 0140431950

Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* (Pantheon, 1984), ISBN 0394713400

### **Contact Information and Office Hours**

**PLC 328, M-W 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m., or by appointment.** Email: avallega@uoregon.edu (In your emails please specify your full name, the title of the course you are attending, and who is your section leader). Section leaders’ office hrs. and information will be available from each of them.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **1. Quizzes on the assigned readings for that day**, or week. (20%)

These quizzes will show that you have done the assigned reading/s before attending class and that you have general comprehension of the main themes and issues discussed in them. There will not be any makeup quizzes. You are allowed two missed quizzes due to class absence or tardiness. The two will not be calculated as part of your grade. You will be expected to write a well-structured paragraph, with complete and grammatically correct sentences, and clearly legible calligraphy.

**2. Two class reports** (the two are worth 30%). For each week you will be expected to have one-page. The page will include: 1. A paragraph that identifies and defines the main ideas discussed in the lectures and discussion groups, 2. The main issues or questions raised about those concepts, 3. A brief paragraph explaining which was the most interesting issue for you and why. **The first half** of the reports (6 pages covering the first 6 weeks) will be collected on **Monday of week seven (November 7th)**, and will serve as your midterm. **The second part** will be collected on **the last Monday of classes (Monday November 28th)**. Each page should be well written, grammatically correct, and part three should have the form of an argument, that is, a conclusion followed or preceded by clear premises or reasons for your position. The class report should be typed, and written in your own words. All criteria of academic honesty apply to these as well as any other class assignments.

**3. Paper and work sheet.** (20%) The topic will be assigned by the instructor. The paper should be three pages long (not including bibliography or title page), double spaced, font 12, standard margins . All answers in the worksheet should be clearly answered in full sentences and typed. As with all other assignments, the paper

should be written in your own words and all the outlined criteria for academic honesty apply. The paper and the worksheet comprehend one assignment, papers without the worksheet or vice versa will not be accepted.

**4. A Comprehensive Final.** (20%) You will have a comprehensive exam covering all material and discussions from the lectures. This will be on **Friday Dec 2nd<sup>th</sup>**. **There will not be any makeup tests**, unless you have a documented emergency and you have contacted and secured permission from both, your assigned discussion leader and the professor. Decisions concerning such exceptional cases will be taken by both of your instructors in conjunction, and it will be subject to your performance in your discussion group.

**5. Attendance to lectures and participation in discussion sections** (10%) You are expected to participate actively in completing assignments in class and in the discussion sections. Keep in mind that this is a philosophy course, and this means that you must take the time to digest the ideas and themes of the course and to develop your understanding of them and your ability to think critically. This is accomplished in part by participating in lectures and in your discussion section: both, by offering your understanding of the material and issues in a clear manner, and by listening carefully to your fellow students. During class discussion you will be expected to refer to and respond to your peers with respect.

Additional Requirements:

Any short writing in class must be clearly legible. All assignments outside of class are to be typed and turned in when due, unless you have a documented excuse. All late assignments are to be turned in no later than a lecture day after their original due date and with the permission of the professor and or discussion leader.

### **Course Policies**

**1. This course is structured as a lecture and discussion group course. This means that you will be responsible for attending all lectures and all meetings of your discussion group. This also means that you have the fortune to have two instructors, the lecturer and the discussion group leader. You are expected to treat the discussion group leaders with the same respect as any professor. They are the key to your success in the course, and their knowledge and experience in philosophy affords you the opportunity of getting deep insight into the study of philosophy and for the kind of self-observation the central question of this course demands, namely the question of the meaning of being human.**

### **2. Attendance**

**It is the student's responsibility to be in all lectures and discussion group meetings and to make up missed assignments. Make sure you have at least one person in class who can provide you with notes and assignment information.** Once you have worked on the material you missed, if you do not understand it or need clarification make sure you see your discussion leader during office hours.  
**Two consecutive unexcused absences will result in a "D" or lower grade for the**

**course.** If you know that you will be absent from class or if you have an emergency, notify your discussion leader before class or as soon as you can, make sure that you speak with him/her in person. Only serious emergencies will be considered as sufficient reason for an excused absence. Those who must be absent from class for athletic activities or other responsibilities related to the university will be expected to make up all work and may be required to meet with the instructor/discussion leader in order to discuss in detail their understanding of the material covered in class.

**Unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade.**

### **3. Computer, Cell Phone, and Electronic Equipment Policy**

The use of computers, cell phones, or any other electronic equipment not specifically allowed by the instructor is not permitted during class.

### **4. Grade Breakdown**

Weekly quizzes 20%; two journals combined 30% (15% each); paper with work sheet 20%; comprehensive final 20%; attendance and class participation 10%. Each part fulfills a different aspect of the course: **Therefore, failure to complete any one of the requirements will result in a “D” for the semester or failure of the course.**

Grade Rubric:

**A** = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

**B** = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

**C** = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

**D** = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

**F** = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Please note that the grades refer to the expected level of general performance, and to the understanding and articulation of the material covered in this course.

### **5. Rules of Academic Honesty**

The following acts of academic dishonesty will result in course failure, i.e., an “F”

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, one certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Verbatim statements by others must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from the regular text as indented extracts.

Students will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever: 1) one quotes another person’s actual words or replicates all or part of another’s product; 2) one uses another person’s ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one’s own words; 3) one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material—unless the information is common knowledge.

*Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism.* If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (68 PLC, 346-3226). In addition, it is plagiarism to submit as your own any academic exercise

prepared totally or in part by another person, even if that person is acting as a tutor or editor (and ends up substantially producing part of the work).

*Fabrication:* Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples include, but are not limited to: 1) citing information not taken from the source indicated; 2) listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise; 3) inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises.

*Cheating:* Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise. Examples include but are not limited to: 1) copying from another student's work; 2) collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one's work in a test situation; 3) using the course textbook or other material not authorized for use during a test; 4) using unauthorized material during a test; for example, notes, formula lists, cues on a computer, photographs, symbolic representations, and notes written on clothing; 5) resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor; 6) taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

## READING SCHEDULE

### Week I-

9/26 Syllabus. The question of "human nature."

28- What makes us human? *Anthropos, logos, and polis*. Reading from the first chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone*. (Hand out)

30- The place of the human: the Greek *kosmos* and the indigenous (Aymara and Quechua) *pachamama*.

### Week II- Justice or, the question of the good life

10/3- Introduction to reading Plato's *Republic*. Book I. Introduction, 327A- 328B.

5- Cephalus: justice is telling the truth and paying one's debts, 328B-331D;  
Polemarchus: helping friends and harming enemies, 331E-336A.

7- Thrasymachus: the advantage of the strong, power and violence, 336B-345E.

### Week III- The Soul writ large: the soul and the city

10- Thrasymachus continued.

12- *The Republic*, Book II. The question of justice rephrased: in itself in the soul, 357A-358E.

Glaucon's challenge: injustice as the best life, 358E-362C. Ring of Gyges, 360B.  
Adeimantus: being unjust but seeming just is best? The problem of living by what seems just, 362D-367E.

14- Justice writ large in the state, 367E-369B; building a city 369B-372A; luxury and war 372A-373D; guardians' nature and education 373D-378E.

### Week IV- The composition of the Soul

17- Lecture overview *The Republic* Book III: turns towards knowledge beyond seeming.

19- *The Republic*, Book IV, 435A-441C: Structure of the human soul.

21- **Class CANCELLED**

Week V-

24-26 *Antigone* [PAPER ASSIGNMENT AND WORKSHEET]

28 Nussbaum Lecture on *The Fragility of Goodness*

Week VI- The just life of the compromised-soul: The good, the divided line, and the allegory of the cave.

31 *The Republic*, Book V: Theory of forms, difference between perception and ideas. 475D-476B; wakeful-life, 476B-D; knowledge and opinion, 476D-477B.  
*The Republic*, Book VI: the longer way; the sun and the idea of the good, 502C-509C. [PAPER WITH WORKSHEET DUE]

11/2 *The Republic*, Book VI: The divided line, 509C-511E.

4 *The Republic*, Book VII: The allegory of the cave, beginning to 517A-517A.

Week VII- Modern Humanity: *Homo homini lupus*; the Sovereign Leviathan; Justice a Matter of Contracts; Liberty under the Leviathan.

7 From the Ancient to the Modern World View.

Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Introduction (p.81-83). [FIRST JOURNAL DUE]

9 Part I, ch.xiii (p.183-188): Natural condition of mankind; ch.xiv (p.189 to bottom of p.192): Natural Law and contracts.

11 Part II, ch.xvii (p.223 to bottom of p.232): Cause, generation, and definition of the Common-Wealth, and rights of sovereigns.

Part II, ch. xxi (p.261 to bottom of p.269): Of the Liberty of subjects.

Week VIII- De-constructing the Modern subject: Normalization, Disciplining, Power, and Knowledge

14 Introduction: Foucault's Questions.

*Foucault Reader*, "Right of Death and Power of Life" (p.258-267)

16 *Foucault Reader*, "Docile Bodies" (p.179-187).

*Foucault Reader*, "The Means of Correct Training" (p.188-193)

18- *Foucault Reader*, "The Means of Correct Training" (p.193-205).

Week IX- Global Normalization: Panopticism and World-System Theory

21- *Foucault Reader*, "Panopticism" (p.206-213);

23- Globalization, coloniality, and colonialism.

Suggested reading: "Coloniality of Power" by Quijano on blackboard.

World-system Theory.

### 24-25 Thanks Giving break

Week X- The Question of "Being Human" in a Global World

28- Biopolitics and globalization.

First part of "Life and Debt" [WORKSHEET HANDOUT] [2<sup>ND</sup> JOURNAL DUE]

30- Second part "Life and Debt." Film discussion: Being Human in a Global world.

12/2- IN-CLASS COMPREHENSIVE FINAL (BLUE BOOK). [TURN IN FILM SHEET]