Azusa Pacific University  
COURSE INSTRUCTION PLAN  
Concepts of Human Nature (PHIL 340)  

Dr. Steve Wilkens

Spring 2008  
Room: Duke 605  
3 Units  
TR 1:05-2:30

APU Mission Statement:

Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

Course Description:

This course explores the significant questions concerning human nature. Special emphasis is placed on philosophical, theological, psychological, and sociological theories of the uniqueness of human activity.

Objectives:

1. To understand the nature and significance of human social relationships.

2. To examine how the philosophical investigation of human nature relates to other disciplines.

3. To consider important concepts that have exerted influence on our understanding of human nature.

4. To consider Christian perspectives on the nature of human existence.

Desired Learning Outcome for Philosophy Courses

All students will demonstrate increased ability to understand, construct, and reflect critically on philosophical arguments, calling upon the best of the philosophical tradition and their own analytical and expressive skills towards application of such reflection to a current social or moral issue. This is an application of the university’s goal for all students that graduates should practice a respect for the worth of all persons, with appreciation of individual and cultural differences, demonstrating truth-telling and grace in their relationships.
Desired Faith Integration Outcome for Philosophy Courses

All students will demonstrate increased confidence in the compatibility of sincere Christian faith and robust philosophical reflection, growing into a greater awareness of the intellectual depth, strength, and coherence that is possible for construction of a comprehensive Christian worldview. This outcome is specifically related to the university’s goals that graduates should be able to articulate a Christian worldview of truth and life and apply biblically-based ethical reasoning skills to problems.

Requirements:

1. Examinations

There will be two examinations, each accounting for 25% of the final course grade. The examinations are mutually exclusive. Examinations will include questions drawn from reading assignments and lecture materials.

Every effort should be made to take examinations on the assigned day. Tests may be made up only in the event of:

   1. Illness (Documentation should be provided)
   2. Activities for other classes or official campus groups

Make up exams must be approved by the instructor. To schedule a make-up test, contact Marilyn Moore in the Department of Philosophy.

See class schedule for examination dates.

2. Research Essay

A 20 page double-spaced, typewritten essay will be required on a topic relevant to the seminar subject. Topics are to be approved by the instructor.

Because this is an upper-division writing intensive course, special consideration will be given to this project. A portion of the grade will be determined by writing mechanics, research skills, and critical capacity.

This essay will account for 40% of the final grade, and is due on Thursday, April 10. It is expected that essays will be turned in on time. In the event that they are late, a penalty of one full grade level per week for that assignment will be assessed. Papers are considered one week late if they are turned in after the beginning of class on the date due. Loss of material due to computer failure, heavy class/work schedule, hungry dogs, etc. are not acceptable excuses for late work.
See attached schedule for benchmarks in essay preparation. Part of the grade for this assignment will be determined by the timeliness and adequacy with which these benchmarks are met.

For assistance on style, writing mechanics, and bibliographical/endnote format, see Joseph Gibaldi’s, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th ed.* (Modern Language Association of America, 2003)

### 3. Reading Assignments

**Required Texts:**


### 4. Attendance & Participation

A seminar class relies heavily on the informed participation of all members. If you must be absent from any portion of class, the instructor should be notified beforehand. Otherwise, an absence will be counted as unexcused. You will be considered tardy if you arrive after the scheduled beginning of class. Tardies are counted as 1/2 of an absence. More than 2 unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade. You are responsible for all information presented in sessions from which you are absent.

20% of the course grade will be determined by participation in class discussions and preparation of assigned readings.

**Weighting of Course Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination #1</td>
<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>May 1 (12:15-2:15)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students with Disabilities

Any student in this course who has a disability that might prevent him/her from fully demonstrating his/her abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that might be necessary to ensure your full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

Academic Integrity

The mission of Azusa Pacific University includes cultivating in each student not only the academic skills that are required for a university degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are integral to a sound Christian education. It is therefore part of the mission of the university to nurture in each student a sense of moral responsibility consistent with the biblical teachings of honesty and accountability. Furthermore, a breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire university. A complete copy of the Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Office of Student Life, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and online.

Expectations for this course regarding academic integrity in this class

The expectations are consistent with those outlined in the academic integrity policy.

Consequences for violations of academic integrity in this class

Academic dishonesty harms the guilty student, classmates, and the institution, and will be dealt with severely. Any instance will result in an “F” for the entire course.

Professor Access

Office Hours – Duke 239
Monday 9:00-11:30
Friday 1:00-2:30

Phone
Office ext. - #5633
Home - (626) 359-6415
Email – swilkens@apu.edu
Class Schedule

(This schedule is open to modification by the instructor, and is only to be a general guide to reading and preparation.)

Week 1 - Introduction to Problems in Human Nature

Week 2 - Plato and Human Nature
   Ten Views, pp. 69-86; Study, pp. 34-55

Week 3 - Eastern Concepts of Human Nature
   Ten Views, pp. 10-46; Study, pp. 10-33

Week 4 - Human Nature in Christian Thought
   Ten Views, pp. 47-68; Study, pp. 2-8; 56-68

Week 5 – Aristotle & Kant
   Ten Views, pp. 87-104; 119-137; Study, pp. 84-138; 153-161

Week 6 - Humanity as Power and Will

Week 7 - Marxist Interpretations of Human Nature
   Ten Views, pp. 138-155; Study, pp. 139-152

Mid-term – Tuesday, Feb. 28

Week 8 – The Sociologists Check in

Week 9 - Freud
   Ten Views, pp. 156-175; Study, pp. 169-184

Week 10 - Sartre & Existentialism
   Ten Views, pp.176-195; Study, pp. 185-206

Week 11 - Darwin & Evolutionary Views
   Ten Views, pp. 196-235; Study, pp. 162-168; 222-236

Essay Due April 10

Week 12 - Skinner & Behaviorism
   Study, pp. 207-221

Week 13 - Mind-Brain Identity, Artificial Intelligence and Critiques

Final - Thurs, May 1 (12:15-2:15)
Essay Schedule

Feb. 5 – Essay topic

An essay topic should be submitted for approval by the instructor. Do not attempt to cover the entire thought system of a given thinker. Instead, select a topic of their legacy to examine.

Feb. 25 – Bibliography (See Sample “B”)

The bibliography should give evidence that the research process is underway. It should reflect an awareness of which general sources, secondary sources, journal articles, and primary sources are relevant for addressing your selected topic.

March 11 – Annotated Outline

The outline should indicate that you are far enough along in your research and writing process to understand how the essay will need to be structured. It should provide evidence that you understand the flow in the development of ideas within the essay and offer sufficient detail to demonstrate that you recognize the issues that require examination within each section.

For each major section of the outline, you should provide a one paragraph summary of the content of the section.

March 11 – Rough Draft (Optional)

I will read through a rough draft of the entire essay and provide suggestions for improvement if it is submitted by this date.

April 10 – Final Essay Due
Human Nature Inventory

1. What is real about a human being?
   a. Reality consists of only physical things
   b. The primary human reality is nonphysical
   c. There is no real person as traditionally conceived?
   d. Human beings are unitary, but cannot be fully described in physical terms
   e. Our genome

2. How do we learn?
   a. Reason (a priori)
   b. Observation (A posteriori)
   c. Instinct
   d. Conditioning
   e. Intuition
   f. Relationship

3. What is a human being’s natural moral state?
   a. Good, society messes it up
   b. Evil, but redeemable/controllable
   c. Neutral, current condition depends on influences
   d. Originally good, but spoiled
   e. "Moral" has no moral meaning

5. How do we discover the good?
   a. Acting according to our highest function
   b. We create the good
   c. Revelation/Denial of human efforts
   d. Careful observation of the world

6. What makes us do wrong?
   a. Acting unreasonably/ignorance
   b. Poor social environment
   c. Poor conditioning
   d. Love of the lesser things

7. Of what components are we comprised?
   a. An aspect of the divine reality
   b. Mind only
   c. Body only
   d. Interacting body & soul
   e. Single substance with multiple aspects

8. What is our problem?
   a. Repression of unpleasant experiences
   b. Wrong social/economic systems
   c. Inadequate understanding of brain functions
   d. Ignorance
9. What constitutes salvation?
   a. Economic/Social freedom
   b. Survival
   c. Merging with the All
   d. The rational life
   e. No salvation

10. Are we free?
   a. We are determined by our history
   b. We are free to the extent that we act rationally
   c. We are free to choose what we want, and we want only evil
   d. We make individual decisions, but the processes around us are determined
   e. We are determined by neuro-physiological causes
   f. We are free to choose, but freedom is a burden

11. What is the origin of human spiritual sensitivity?
   a. Result of Alienation
   b. Projection of human goodness
   c. A desire to return to daddy’s protection
   d. Natural response of the demands of reason
   e. A natural response to the observation of the universe

12. What is the individual’s status in relation to society?
   a. It creates us
   b. It enslaves us
   c. Destroys our freedom
   d. Necessary for survival
   e. Required for full development of our humanity

13. How are we related to the physical world?
   a. Part of it
   b. It is a hindrance/seek to escape it
   c. We are a part of it, but have a unique role in it
   d. It is an illusion

14. What is death?
   a. The end
   b. Release of soul
   c. Nothing
   d. Real, but not Final

15. Anything beyond death?
   a. Decomposition
   b. Ultimate salvation
   c. Release of aspects of personality leading to return within the circle of life