

Fall 2024 PHIL 201 Course Descriptions

Arango Vargas, Alejandro (PHIL 201.7 & PHIL 201.15):

The 201 Philosophy of Human Nature class taught by Professor Arango is discussion-based, and students are expected to be prepared by doing readings for every class and participating in the conversation. In class discussions, we keep an eye on how the topics we study connect to our lives today.

Thematically, a central topic is the social aspect of the human being. When it comes to the texts, the class focuses on writings from the Latin American philosophical tradition, as opposed to the standard focus on European philosophy.

Bowman, Mark (PHIL 201.13 & PHIL 201.14):

This course employs a seminar/discussion-based approach to explore themes centering around the pursuit of truth, fulfillment, good/evil, commitment to others/community, freedom, finding meaning in suffering, etc. We will use classic philosophy texts from authors such as: Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Dostoevsky, and Camus among others. Course requirements include reading reflection papers, analysis papers, and a final exam. (The Community Engaged Learning version of the course will also require about 20 hours of community service in the Spokane Community as well as a final project.)

Dan Bradley (PHIL 201.16):

We will read the primary source texts of the thinkers who have been most influential in shaping Classical as well as Modern (and now global) thought, and we will read many of the most important classical and contemporary Indigenous philosophers of the American West. However, it is to be hoped that this course will also have an existential component. Through the study of these thinkers, I hope you will be inspired to begin to live more fully and to see more intimately the sacramental nature of the Cosmos and your place within it.

Braune, Joan (PHIL 201.17 & PHIL 201.18):

This course begins with a unit on philosophy of law. What is law, how is it connected to human nature, and when should law be disobeyed? The second unit looks at the questions pertaining to the search for knowledge, through the works of Plato, Medieval philosopher Boethius, and Descartes. The final unit explores oppression and liberation, including readings from Frederick Douglass and Angela Davis. The philosophical life journey and philosophy in relation to prisons are course themes.

Calhoun, David (PHIL 201.6 & PHIL 201.10):

Ancient philosophers and traditional religions frame accounts of human nature in terms of the soul, understood as a principle of life, personality, and intellect. Modern understanding of human nature has been deeply affected by science, especially evolutionary biology and study of the brain. This version of PHIL 201 traces that shift from ancient thinkers like Plato and Aristotle through early modern figures associated with the scientific revolution to modern scientific naturalists and concludes by considering if there is continuing value in the concept of the soul.

DiMaria, Ted (PHIL 201.1 & PHIL 201.2):

Philosophers can be divided into two basic camps in their understanding of human nature. In one camp are those who explain human beings and human life in purely naturalistic and materialistic terms as a distinctive type of animal living within our environments. In the other camp are those who think there is something in human nature and our understanding of reality that points human life towards higher truths and meaning than is available to naturalists. The course will survey philosophical views of human nature from the ancient (Plato and Aristotle) to the modern (Descartes, Hume, and Kant) to the more contemporary (Sartre, Beauvoir, E.O. Wilson).

Lafore, Greta (PHIL 201.20):

This course asks the question, "What does it mean to be human?" Thinkers like Kant, Augustine, Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes provide their responses and we develop our own answers to the framing question by thinking alongside them. Assignments include team-based in-class games, argumentative papers, and intensive primary source reading. Grading structure is gameful and gives students ownership and responsibility for the grades they receive. Class times are lively and discussion based. There may even be togas involved!

Kries, Doug (PHIL 201.3 & PHIL 201.4):

Mr. Kries's course features the close study of crucial texts on human nature drawn from within the history of philosophy. From ancient philosophy, students study Plato's *Alcibiades*, *Apology of Socrates*, and *Republic*; from medieval philosophy, they read Augustine's *Confessions*; and from modern philosophy, they study both Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, and Jean-Jaques Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Inequality*. Students complete daily reading assignments and discuss the texts they have read during class meetings. There are also daily quizzes based on previously disseminated discussion questions.

Layne, Danielle (PHIL 201.5):

Thematic and ever-changing, this iteration of Human Nature focuses on inspiring students to live the examined life, questioning - no matter the topic - the things we often take for granted. Utilizing both contemporary and classical texts/methods, the unity of the course may be summed up by the Epicurean mantra: "Vain are the words of philosophy, if they do not heal the human soul."

Liu Quanhua (PHIL 201.8 & PHIL 201.9):

This course covers four topics respectively: 1) human nature and human good (The major reading is Plato's *Republic*, Books 2, 4, 6 and 7), 2) determinism and freedom (The readings include Hard Determinism, Libertarianism and Compatibilism) , 3) human nature and knowledge (the major readings are Descartes' Meditation and Hume's Inquiry), and 4) human nature and artificial intelligence (The readings are articles of Turing, Searle and Lycon on AI). The format of the course will be a combination of the professor's lectures and class discussions. The lectures intend to make difficult readings understandable; discussions (both online and in class) encourage students to articulate and exchange their thoughts. The required textbook is Joel Feinberg & Russ Shafer-Landau: *Reason & Responsibility* (sixteen edition) and some online reading material.

Rogers, Chandler (PHIL 201.19):

This PHIL 201 course covers key movements in the history of western thought through six thinkers who ask what it means to be human: Plato, Boethius, Descartes, Nietzsche, DuBois, and Weil. We work to understand their ideas in context so that we can locate the beginnings of currents of thought that have shaped our society, while also reflecting on their respective shortcomings, and on ways that our present reality falls short of the ideals of justice and a commitment to the common good.

Spearman, Darien (PHIL 201.11 & PHIL 201.12):

No description.