

SSI1128B: The Philosophy and Science of Human Nature

A First Year Seminar in Scholarly Inquiry

Fall 2015

MWF, 10:00-10:50, Thompson 178

Instructor: Sara Protasi (you can call me Prof. or Dr. Protasi)

Office Hours: Tu. 4:00-5:00, W. 11:00-12:00, 2:00-3:00, and by appointment

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Description of the course's goals and content: This course is devoted to examining the interaction between philosophical and scientific approaches to the study of human nature. We are going to read central texts from the Western philosophical tradition and compare and contrast them with recent articles in cognitive science and related fields. Thus, you will:

- be introduced to traditional philosophical discussions that address questions about the human condition, and to the specific methodology that is used to (try to) answer them;
- be introduced to related discussions of these topics from the perspective of contemporary cognitive science and psychology, and to the specific methodology used in those disciplines;
- be encouraged to think about your own education in a synthetic way, by showing you how insights from one field may be echoed in, or illuminated by, insights from another.

Texts

Plato, *Republic*, translated by GMA Grube/CDC Reeve. (1992: Hackett) ISBN: 9780872201361.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by Terence Irwin. (2000: Hackett) ISBN: 9780872204645.

Epictetus, *The Handbook*, translated by Nicholas White. (1983: Hackett) ISBN: 9780915145690.

Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*. (2006: Basic Books) ISBN: 9780465028023.

Total cost of books (bought new at cover price): \$51.50. If you already happen to have these books in different editions and would like to use them, please get in touch with me.

Additional readings available through Moodle (<http://moodle.pugetsound.edu>—use your Puget Sound username and password to login).

“What skills am I expected to develop in this class?”

In this class you will engage in exciting and rigorous philosophical discussion of different kinds of text. You will be exposed to different positions and views, and to the arguments that support them.

Over the course of the semester, you can expect activities and exercises that aim to enable you, among other things, to:

- read and understand philosophical and scientific articles;
- develop a more thorough understanding of the issues and arguments;
- offer a plausible reconstruction of a philosophical argument;
- come up with your own view about a certain topic.

“How can I succeed in this class?”

- *Be there and come prepared.* Attendance and participation are part of your grade: any absence after your first two will lower your attendance and participation grade. But you won't be able to understand what's going on and participate meaningfully unless you read the material ahead of time. You might have to do the reading more than once and take notes. Always bring the readings with you!
- *Listen.* Listen to the instructor, but also to your peers. Understand when it's appropriate for you to jump in the discussion, without interrupting others.
- *Question.* If you don't understand what someone is saying, say so. If you have a doubt, express it. But again, be respectful of others' opinions and comments: in philosophy we question ideas, not people.
- *Discuss.* There will be space for group activities and lively discussions. Discussion is one of the best ways to learn philosophy! If you feel uncomfortable talking in class, for whatever reason, please let me know and we will work something out.

Academic Resources

Doing the readings and participating in class should suffice to satisfy the course requirements.

- If you feel the need of additional materials, please ask me directly. I strongly advise against using Wikipedia or sources other than those suggested by me during office hours. If you need to look up a technical term, use The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy:
http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/BOOK_SEARCH.html?book=t98&subject=s22
No matter what source you end up using (web or not, suggested by me or not), remember to cite it!
- Alex Plant, an advisor from the Center for Writing, Learning and Teaching, will be a writing liaison for the class. She will visit us, and provide more details about what she can do for you. You can find info about her and the other advisors at pugetsound.edu/cwltwriters. The CWLT email address is cwltappointments@pugetsound.edu

Office Hours, AKA: Come chat with me! ☺

You are warmly encouraged to attend office hours. I am looking forward to discussing topics pertaining to the course, but also any other philosophical or intellectual issue that interests you. Talking in person is often a good way to clarify doubts or confusions you may have, it's quicker than emailing, and it's fun! If you can't come to regularly scheduled office hours, please email me and we'll find a time.

Please note: while I am happy to discuss also personal matters, if I am made aware of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or other crimes occurring at or in relation to University of Puget Sound I am bound by Title IX's mandatory reporting rules. Under Title IX representatives of the University are required to report violations to the Title IX coordinator within 24 hours of being made aware of the problem (notice that reports can be anonymous). If you ever need confidential counselors or resources, you can contact the Counseling, Health & Wellness Services (CHWS) x1555 chws@pugetsound.edu or David Wright, University Chaplain, x3374, dwright@pugetsound.edu

Course Policies

Grading

Short paper 1 (2-3 pages)	15%
Short paper 2 (4-5 pages)	20%
Final paper (6-7 pages)	25%
In-class assignments	10%
Presentation	10%
Attendance and participation	20%

Attendance and participation

You cannot succeed at this class without active and respectful participation to discussion. More than four absences are likely to impact your work and grade, and may lead to withdrawal from the class.

Extensions

I don't grant extensions, unless there are extremely grave circumstances. Papers will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each 24 hours (rounded up) that they are late (that is, an A will become an A-; a B+ will become a B; etc.). Please plan your work accordingly.

In-class assignments and Presentation

There will be a variety of in-class assignments, not all of which will be graded or announced ahead of time. One of the graded and scheduled assignments will be individual presentations. I will circulate a sign-up sheet on the second day of classes. Each presentation will last about five minutes, and consist of two parts: a review of the daily reading(s), and three questions to lead the discussion.

Electronic Devices

Empirical evidence shows that the use of electronic devices, even to take notes, is less conducive to effective learning for most people, and constitutes a powerful source of temptation and distraction for all (social media always being one click away...). If using electronic devices (including cellphone) is particularly suitable to your learning style, or is necessary to access the readings, you can do it, but I encourage you to not do so.

Communication

Please check your emails at least once a day. I will email you regularly with instructions concerning the class, reading guides, assignments, and the like. Coming to office hours is the best way to address doubts or confusion you may (and likely will) have about the class material. Email is the best way to communicate with me for any other issue you may have. If you are not familiar with how to write an email to a professor, you can find useful advice here: <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor> and here: <http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html> If you don't have a lot of time, or for a quick reminder, read this: <http://natrass.utk.edu/Etiquette.html>

In order to keep my life in balance, I usually don't respond to emails before 10am and after 5pm, and it may take me more up to 48 hours to get back to you, especially if you send me an email Friday afternoon. Please set your expectations accordingly.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

To use somebody else's words or ideas without citing their origin is plagiarism and is seriously penalized. If you are not sure you understand what plagiarism is, please review the following material:

- Puget Sound's guidelines on academic integrity and plagiarism:
<http://www.pugetsound.edu/studentlife/personal-safety/student-handbook/academic-handbook/academic-integrity/>
- The Center for Writing, Learning and Teaching document on how to avoid plagiarism:
<http://www.pugetsound.edu/academics/academic-resources/cwlt/writing/writing-resources/plagiarism/>
- The Library's guide to Academic Integrity: <http://research.pugetsound.edu/academicintegrity>

I am happy to discuss with you what counts as a legitimate and appropriate quotation and reference and what doesn't. When in doubt, always ask me!

Student Bereavement Policy

Upon approval from the Dean of Students' Office, students who experience a death in the family, including parent, grandparent, sibling, or persons living in the same household, are allowed three consecutive weekdays of excused absences, as negotiated with the Dean of Students. For more information, please see the Academic Handbook.

Accessibility and Accommodations

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Peggy Perno, Director of the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations, Howarth 105, (253) 879-3395. She will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

I am always happy to discuss any accessibility and accommodation issue, should you choose to do so.

Religious Commitments

If you think your religious commitments may impact your course work, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss the best strategy for accommodating your needs.

Classroom Emergency Response Guidance

Please review university emergency preparedness, response procedures and a training video posted at www.pugetsound.edu/emergency/. There is a link on the university home page. Familiarize yourself with hall exit doors and the designated gathering area for your class and laboratory buildings.

If building evacuation becomes necessary (e.g. earthquake), meet your instructor at the designated gathering area so she/he can account for your presence. Then wait for further instructions. Do not return to the building or classroom until advised by a university emergency response representative.

If confronted by an act of violence, be prepared to make quick decisions to protect your safety. Flee the area by running away from the source of danger if you can safely do so. If this is not possible, shelter in place by securing classroom or lab doors and windows, closing blinds, and turning off room lights. Lie on the floor out of sight and away from windows and doors. Place cell phones or pagers on vibrate so that you can receive messages quietly. Wait for further instructions.

Schedule of Classes, Readings, and Assignments
(may be subject to change, so always check your email for updates)

M= available on Moodle

<i>Topics by week</i>		<i>Readings by day</i>
Week 1: Overarching theme: Parts of the soul.	Weekly sub-theme: A divided soul, a split mind, part I.	Aug. 31: No readings required. Sept. 2: Chapter 1 of Haidt. Sept. 4: Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> , 253d-256e (M); J. Evans, “In two minds: dual-process accounts of reasoning” (M).
Week 2. Overarching theme: Parts of the soul.	Weekly sub-theme: A divided soul, a split mind, part II.	Sept. 7: Labor day, no class: yay! Sept. 9: Plato, <i>Republic</i> , <u>Book IV</u> 435b-445b (pp.110-121); <u>Book VIII</u> , 588b-592a (pp. 259-263). Sept. 11: T. Gendler, “Alief and Belief” (M). Workshop on sources with Katy Curtis, philosophy liaison librarian!
Week 3. Overarching theme: Flourishing.	Weekly sub-themes: The well-ordered soul. Happiness and harmony.	Sept. 14: Chapter 5 of Haidt. Sept. 16: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , <u>Book I</u> , <u>Chapters 1-5</u> , 1094a1-1096a-10 (pp. 1-5), <u>7-9</u> , 1097a15-1100a9 (pp. 7-12), <u>13</u> , 1102a5-1103a14 (pp. 16-18). <u>Book II</u> , all, <u>except ch. 5</u> , 1105b20-1106a14 (p. 23) (you are welcome to read both books in their entirety). Sept. 18: <u>Re-read Aristotle’s passages</u> . Also, watch Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s TED talk, “Flow” at http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow.html Workshop for first paper with Alex Plant, our CWLT liaison!
Week 4. Overarching theme: Flourishing.	Weekly sub-themes: The disordered soul. The value of suffering.	Sept. 21: J. Shay, excerpts from <i>Achilles in Vietnam</i> (M). Sept. 23: S. Milgram, “Behavioral Study of Obedience” (M). Sept. 25: Chapter 7 of Haidt.
First short paper due: Sept. 27, 5pm.		
Week 5. Overarching theme: Flourishing.	Weekly sub-themes: Happiness and detachment. Mindfulness.	Sept. 28: Epictetus, <i>The Handbook</i> (all). Sept. 30: B. Bodhi, “What does mindfulness really mean? A canonical perspective.” Oct. 2: R. J. Davidson and A. Lutz, “Buddha’s Brain: Neuroplasticity and Meditation.” (M)

Week 6. Overarching theme: Flourishing.	Weekly sub-theme: Virtue and Habit in Aristotle.	Oct. 5: Chapter 2 of Haidt. Oct. 7: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , <u>Book III, Ch. 1-5</u> , 1109b30-1115a7 (pp. 30-40). <u>Book X, ch. 2</u> , 1179a34-1180a5 (pp. 167-168, up to §9 included). Oct. 9: J. Doris, “Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics” (M).
Week 7. Overarching theme: Emotions.	Weekly sub-theme: Love and attachment.	Oct. 12: Chapter 6 of Haidt; <u>and</u> Wong, D. “The Different Faces of Love in a Good Life” (M) Oct. 14: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , <u>Book VIII, ch. 1-5</u> , 1155a4-1158a1 (pp. 119-125), <u>12</u> , 1161b12-1162a34 (pp.132-134). <u>Book IX, ch. 3-4</u> , 1165b1-1166b29 (pp. 140-143), <u>8</u> , 1168a29-1169b2 (pp. 146-148). Oct. 16: Baumeister et al. “Unrequited Love: On Heartbreak, Anger, Guilt, Scriptlessness, and Humiliation” (M). <u>Also:</u> Sappho, fragments 1 and 31: (M) Peer-review workshop for second paper!
Week 8. Overarching theme: Emotions.	Weekly sub-theme: Envy and rivalry.	Oct. 19: Fall break, no class: happy break! Oct. 21: M. Miceli and C. Castelfranchi, “The envious mind” (M). Oct. 23: S. Protasi, “Varieties of Envy” (M).
Second short paper due: Oct. 25, 5pm.		
Week 9. Overarching theme: Emotions.	Weekly sub-theme: Emotions and critique of the status quo.	Oct. 26: A. Jaggar, “Emotion and Knowledge” (M). Oct. 28: M. Bell, “A Woman’s Scorn: Toward a Feminist Defense of Contempt as a Moral Emotion” (M). Oct. 30: A. R. Fisher and G. E. Good, “Women’s Feminist Consciousness, Anger, and Psychological Distress” (M); <u>and</u> K. Borgwald, “Women’s anger, epistemic personhood, and self-respect: an application of Lehrer’s work on self-trust” (M)
Week 10. Overarching theme: Human diversity.	Weekly sub-themes: “Weird” people. Gender and sex.	Nov. 2: Henrich et al. “The weirdest people in the world?” (M); <u>and</u> Haidt, Ch. 2, re-read pp. 26-28. Nov. 4: C. Fine “We Think, Therefore You Are” (M), and take any one implicit bias test at: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html Nov. 6: W. Wilkerson, “Is It a Choice? Sexual Orientation as Interpretation” (M).

Week 11. Overarching theme: Human diversity.	Weekly sub-themes: Trans Identity. Race.	Nov. 9: T. M. Bettcher, “Trans Identities and First-Person Authority” (M) Nov. 11: Excerpts from N. Zack, <i>Thinking About Race</i> (M). Nov. 13: C. Mills “What Are You <i>Really?</i> ” (M)
Week 12. Overarching theme: Human diversity.	Weekly sub-themes: Gender and race. Passing.	Nov. 16: S. Haslanger, “Race and Gender: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?” (M) Nov. 18: D. Silvermint, “Passing as Privileged” (M). Nov. 20: A. Galinsky et al., “Gendered Races: Implications for Interracial Marriage, Leadership Selection, and Athletic Participation” (M).
Week 13. Overarching theme: Human diversity.	Weekly sub-theme: Disability, part I.	Nov. 23: E. F. Kittay, and L. Kittay, “On the Expressivity and Ethics of Selective Abortion for Disability: Conversations with My Son” (M). Nov. 25, 27: traveling day, and Thanksgiving holiday, no class: happy holidays!
Week 14. Overarching theme: Human diversity.	Weekly sub-themes: Disability, part II; The ethics of implicit bias.	Nov. 30: E. Barnes, “Valuing Disability, Causing Disability” (M). Dec. 2: D. Kelly and E. Roedder, “Racial Cognition and the Ethics of Implicit Bias”. Dec. 4: J. Holroyd, “Responsibility for Bias” (M).
Week 15. Overarching theme: Reactions.	Weekly sub-themes: The ethics of implicit bias. Summing up.	Dec. 7: C. Lai et al. “Reducing Implicit Prejudice” (M). Follow instructions sent via email, then re-take (the same) implicit bias test at: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html Dec. 9: Final discussion.
Final Exams Week		Final paper due on Dec. 18th at 5pm.