

Wake Forest University School of Divinity
Philosophy of Human Nature
Professor Kevin Jung

Course Description

The nature of the human person is a hotly debated subject among scientists, philosophers, and theologians. As science and technology advance, they seem to raise more questions than they answer about the nature of the human person. This course probes the question of what the human person essentially is, engaging with a number of scientific, philosophical, and theological perspectives. What is a human person? Is the human person merely a biological organism? Is life after death possible? What is the nature of personal identity? What is the relationship between mind and body? How is consciousness possible? We will carefully consider a number of different views on these questions.

Required Texts

Owen Flanagan, *The Problems of the Soul*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.
E. O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
Nancey C. Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*, New York: Oxford, 2012.
Anthony Flew, *There Is A God*, HarperOne, 2007.

Recommended Texts

Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*. New York: Mariner Books, 2008.
Patricia Churchland, *Braintrust*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
Lynne Rudder Baker, *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*. Cambridge studies in philosophy. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
Kevin Corcoran, ed., *Soul, Body, and Survival*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
Peter van Inwagen, *Material Beings*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1990.
Peter van Inwagen and Dean W Zimmerman, eds. *Persons: Human and Divine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
Jaegwon Kim. *Philosophy of Mind*. 3rd ed. Boulder: Westview Press, 2011.
Eric T. Olson, *What Are We?: A Study in Personal Ontology*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
Derek Parfit, "The Unimportance of Personal Identity," in H. Harris (ed.), *Identity*. Oxford University Press, 1995.

Learning Goals

This course is designed to help students

- (1) become familiar with some of the major scientific and philosophical views on human nature;
- (2) learn how to analyze and evaluate various arguments for and against dominant

- scientific or philosophical views on human nature; and
(3) develop one's own perspective on the nature of the human person.

Course Requirements

All students must read the assignment for each class, attend lecture regularly and participate actively in class discussions.

Midterm Paper. Write a reflection paper on Murphy's *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* The paper should analyze her argument and offer a critical response to it. The paper should be 7-8 pages long, double-spaced. It is due on Oct. 15, 9:30 am.

Final Paper. Please write a critical essay, examining a particular topic or issue covered in this course and engaging with assigned readings and lectures. In your essay, please explain the philosophical and theological significance of the topic/issue and how to approach it. The paper should be about 10 pages long, double-spaced. It is due on December 10, 12pm.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. For the second and each subsequent unexcused absence, the final grade will be lowered by one-third of a letter grade, each for a single absence.

Course Schedule

Aug. 25 Introduction

- E. O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*, 1-52.

Aug. 27 Human Nature

- E. O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*, 53-98.

Sept. 1 No class (Labor Day)

Sept. 3 Human Person

- Michael Lacewing, "Substance and Property Dualism."
(http://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk/handouts_religion/Dualism.pdf)
- Flanagan, *The Problems of the Soul*, ch.1.

Sept. 8-10 Mind and Body

- Michael Lacewing, "Mental Causation"
(<http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/alevelphilosophy/data/A2/Mind/MentalCausation.pdf>)
- Flanagan, *The Problems of the Soul*, ch.3.

Sept. 15 Personal Identity

- Michael Lacewing, "Personal Identity: Physical and Psychological Continuity Theories."

<http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/alevelphilosophy/data/AS/Persons/Personalidentitycontinuity.pdf>)

- Lynne Rudder Baker, "When Does a Person Begin?" *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 22:25–48, 2005.

Sept. 17 Personal Identity

- Eric T. Olson, "Was I Ever a Fetus?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 57 (1):95-110, 1997.

Sept. 22-24 Personal Identity and Resurrection

- Richard Swinburne, "Personal Identity," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol. 74 (1973 - 1974), 240-47.
- Michael Lacewing, "Body, Mind, and Death."
(http://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk/handouts_religion/ResurrectionBody.pdf)
- Nancey C. Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* chs.1-2, 4.

Sept. 29-Oct.1 Consciousness

- Steven Pinker, "The Mystery of Consciousness" *Time Magazine* (Jan. 19, 2007) (<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1580394,00.html>)
- David Chalmers, "The Puzzle of Conscious Experience," *Scientific American*, 273 (1995)
(<http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rarneson/Courses/chalmersphil1.pdf>)
- Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*, ch.3.

Oct. 6 Consciousness

- Stuart Hameroff, "Whitehead and quantum computation in the brain: Panprotopsyism Meets the Physics of Fundamental Spacetime geometry," in *Whitehead Process Network Compendium*, ed. M. Weber (2003)
(<http://www.quantumconsciousness.org/Whitehead.htm>)

Oct. 8 Cognition

- "Can Animals Think?" *Time*, Aug. 29, 1999.
<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,30198-2,00.html>
- Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*, ch.4.

Oct. 13-15 Free Will

- Sam Harris, "Life without a Free Will" (<http://www.samharris.org/blog/item/life-without-free-will>)
- Flanagan, *The Problems of the Soul*, ch.4.

Oct. 20 Free Will

- Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" *The Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 66, No. 23. Dec. 4, 1969.

Oct. 22 Morality

- E. O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*, 99-148.

- (Recommended reading) Flanagan, *The Problems of the Soul*, ch.7.

Oct. 27 Morality

- Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*, ch.5.

Oct. 29 Evolution and Religious Beliefs

- E. O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*, 169-194.
- Richard Dawkins, "God's Utility Function" in Eleonore Stump & Michael J. Murray (eds.), *Philosophy of Religion: The Big Questions*. Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

Nov. 3-5 Evolution and Religious Beliefs

- Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*, ch.2.
- William Dembski, "Unintelligent Evolution"
(http://www.designinference.com/documents/2004.12.Unintelligent_Evolution.htm)
- BBC, Our Secret Universe The Hidden Life of the Cell
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFrKN7hJm64>)
- BBC Two, The Cell Secret Immune System - Secret Universe: The Hidden Life Of The Cell (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1MnNO4I9aU>)
- The Inner Life of the Cell (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJyUtbn0O5Y>)

Nov. 10 Guided Tour of WFIRM (Wake Forest Institute of Regenerative Medicine) Posthuman Nature

- Recommended reading
"2045: The Year Man Becomes Immortal" *Time*. Feb. 10, 2011.
(<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2048299,00.html>)

Nov. 12 Rationality of Religious Belief

- W. K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"
(https://people.brandeis.edu/~teuber/Clifford_ethics.pdf)

Nov. 17 Rationality of Religious Belief

- William P. Alston, "Religious Experience and Religious Belief," *Noûs*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1982. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2215404?origin=api&>)

Nov. 19 Rationality of Religious Belief

- Richard Dawkins, "What Use is Religion?" *Free Inquiry*, vol. 24 No. 5.
- Anthony Flew, *There Is A God*, 83-160.

Nov. 24 Human Nature and Enhancement

- Michael Sandel, "The Case against Perfection" *The Atlantic*. April. 1, 2004.
(<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/04/the-case-against-perfection/302927/>)
- Allen Buchanan, "Human Nature and Enhancement," *Bioethics* 23 (3):141-150, 2009.

Nov. 26 Thanksgiving Holidays

Dec. 1 Joint Class Discussion with Dr. Michelle Voss Robert's Class
11am, Wingate 302

Dec. 4 Final Reflection