



# University of New Haven

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

---

Program of Philosophy

PHIL 2215, Section 01  
Nature of Self  
Fall 2018  
M/W from 12:15 to 1:30  
103 Charger Plaza  
3 Credit Hours

Dr. Douglas Ficek  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
210-5 Kaplan Hall  
203-932-1177 (Office)  
[DFicek@newhaven.edu](mailto:DFicek@newhaven.edu)  
Office Hours: Tuesdays from 10:00 to 3:00

## Undergraduate Course Syllabus

### Course Description:

Investigation of personal identity, human nature, and the mind from ancient, modern, Western, and Eastern perspectives.

### Extended Course Description:

Who am I? Who are we? What does it mean to be a human being in this world? Is there some kind of human nature, good or bad? Or are we fundamentally empty beings, perpetually (and freely) recreating ourselves as we see fit? Questions like these – and there are many others – are undeniably philosophical, and in this introductory course, we will explore them critically and with open minds. In short, we will investigate *our own humanity*.

There are many different ways of approaching these questions, and we will consider quite a few of them: from Confucianism and Hinduism to Christianity and Islam, from Plato and Aristotle to Freud and Sartre, from ancient Buddhism to contemporary Darwinism. You might find some of these approaches insightful; you might find some of them perfectly ridiculous – if not downright offensive. The point, in the end, is to understand them and to develop a richer conception of the human condition, *whatever that means for you*.

### Required Text:

- *Philosophy and the Human Condition: An Anthology* edited by Brian R. Clack and Tyler Hower (ISBN: 0190253584)

### Course Objectives:

- Students will learn (and hopefully appreciate) what it means to do philosophy.
- Students will discover new (and possibly profound) concepts, ideas, and theories.
- Students will become better arguers (in the sense making and evaluating arguments).

### Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to explain course readings in pop quizzes and written papers.
- Students will be able to evaluate course readings in class discussion and written papers.
- Students will be able to develop their own arguments in class discussion and written papers.

**Course Requirements:**

We will be doing lots of reading in this course, and it is your responsibility to read the assigned pages *before class begins*. To this end, I will be giving you several pop quizzes throughout the semester, on which you may use your notes but not the texts themselves. These quizzes will usually be on new material, but expect questions on older material, too. Also, they cannot be made up, so do not make lateness a habit.

In addition to these pop quizzes, I will be assigning three papers, which will be six-to-eight pages in length. You will have several choices with respect to the questions, so start thinking about the philosophical issues that interest you the most.

And finally, there will be a comprehensive final exam, which will include both multiple-choice and short answer questions.

**Grading:**

- Attendance – 10%
- Pop Quizzes – 20%
- First Paper – 15%
- Second Paper – 15%
- Third Paper – 15%
- Final Exam – 25%

**Undergraduate Grading System:**

<http://www.newhaven.edu/UGGradingSystem>

**Caveats:**

As an instructor, I am pretty easy-going. I do, however, insist upon a respectful atmosphere in the classroom. What does this mean? It means: no phone calls, no texting or Facebooking, no sleeping, and no ridiculously long bathroom breaks. If your phone does go off during class, you have a choice: You can either sing a song for the class, or I can assign an additional paper that everybody must do. This is not a joke.

Also, “My flash drive broke” has become the new “My dog ate my homework,” and I will no longer accept it as an excuse for late or incomplete work. Please use [www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com) (or something similar) to ensure the security of your written work.

**2018-2019 Academic Calendar:**

<http://www.newhaven.edu/AcademicCalendar>

**Course Outline:**

- August 27 – Course Introduction
- RELIGIOUS
- August 30 – The Hebrew Bible, pp. 51-65, The New Testament, pp. 105-115, and The Qur’an, pp. 116-122
- September 3 – NO CLASS
- September 5 – Confucian Sources, pp. 75-80 and Film: *Genius of the Ancient World: Confucius*
- September 10 – Buddhist Scriptures, pp. 81-98 and The Bhagavad Gita, pp. 99-104

#### CLASSICAL

- September 12 – Plato, pp. 125-156
- September 17 – Aristotle, pp. 157-179
- September 19 – Epicurus, pp. 180-189 and Lucretius, pp. 190-196
- September 24 – Seneca, pp. 197-200 and Epictetus, pp. 209-212

#### MEDIEVAL

- September 26 – Boethius, pp. 229-235
- October 1 – Maimonides, pp. 236-241 and Aquinas, pp. 242-255

#### RENAISSANCE & EARLY MODERN

- October 3 – Montaigne, pp. 259-262 and Shakespeare, pp. 263-265
- October 8 – Hobbes, pp. 266-273, Rousseau, pp. 380-393, and Burke, pp. 425-427
- October 10 – Descartes, pp. 274-286 and Elizabeth and Descartes, pp. 287-291
- October 15 – Leibniz, pp. 317-323 and Voltaire, pp. 328-331
- October 17 – Hume, pp. 360-379
- October 22 – NO CLASS
- October 24 – Kant, pp. 412-424

#### LATE MODERN

- October 29 – Bentham, pp. 440-443 and Mill, pp. 479-490
- October 31 – Malthus, pp. 458-461 and Darwin, pp. 499-513
- November 5 – Douglass, pp. 514-519 and Marx, pp. 520-525
- November 7 – Nietzsche, pp. 526-532
- November 12 – Freud, pp. 535-556
- November 14 – Sartre, pp. 588-592 and Camus, pp. 602-606
- November 19 – Wollstonecraft, pp. 453-457, Beauvoir, pp. 598-601, and Collins, pp. 651-656
- November 21 – NO CLASS
- November 26 – Du Bois, pp. 557-559 and Mills, pp. 669-678
- November 30 – Maistre, pp. 446-452 and Arendt, pp. 593-597
- December 3 – Film: *Flight from Death: The Quest for Immortality*
- December 5 – Price, pp. 570-578, Williams, pp. 612-20, and Churchland, pp. 641-645
- December 10 – Catch-Up and Discussion
- December XX – FINAL EXAM

#### UNIVERSITY POLICIES

##### Academic Policies:

<http://www.newhaven.edu/UGAcademicRegulations>

##### Adding and Dropping Classes:

<http://www.newhaven.edu/studenthandbook>

The final day to drop a course without it appearing on your transcript is Tuesday, September 4th. During the second week of classes, further adjustment requires the approval of the chair of the department offering the course.

**Attendance Regulations:**

<http://www.newhaven.edu/studenthandbook>

All students are expected to attend regularly and promptly all their classes, appointments, and exercises. While the university recognizes that some absences may occasionally be necessary, these should be held to a minimum. A maximum of two weeks of absences per semester (or its equivalent for shorter terms) will be permitted for illness and emergencies. The instructor has the right to dismiss from class any student who has been absent more than the maximum allowed. After the last date to drop as published in the academic calendar, a student will receive a failure (F), if failing at that point, or a withdrawal (W), if passing at the time of dismissal.

**Withdrawal Deadline:**

<http://www.newhaven.edu/studenthandbook>

Students wishing to withdraw must submit a request for an official course withdrawal in writing using the Course Withdrawal Form. The final date to request a withdrawal for this semester is Tuesday, October 30th. This request must be submitted to the Registrar's Office and signed by the International Office if you are an international student. The grade of W will be recorded, but the course will not affect the GPA.

**Course Withdrawal Form:** <http://www.newhaven.edu/907680.pdf>

**Incomplete:**

A grade of Incomplete (INC) is given only in special circumstances and indicates that the student has been given permission by the instructor to complete required course work (with the same instructor) after the end of the term. In the absence of the instructor a student should contact the Department Chair.

**Academic Integrity Policy:**

<http://www.newhaven.edu/studenthandbook>

"Academic integrity is a core university value which insures respect for the academic reputation of the University, its students, faculty and staff, and the degrees it confers." It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the UNH policy on Academic Integrity. Please ask about my expectations regarding permissible or encouraged forms of student collaboration if they are unclear. Students are required to adhere to the Academic Integrity Policies found in the Student Handbook.

**Commitment to Positive Learning Environment:**

The University adheres to the philosophy that all community members should enjoy an environment free of any form of harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or intimate partner violence. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct we encourage you to report this. If you report this to a faculty/staff member, they must notify our college's Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose to request confidentiality from the University). If you encounter sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability please contact the Title IX Coordinator, Caroline Koziatek, at 203-932-7479 or [ckoziatek@newhaven.edu](mailto:ckoziatek@newhaven.edu).

**Title IX at the University of New Haven:** <http://www.newhaven.edu/about/title-IX/>

**Coursework Expectations:**

This course will require significant in-class and out-of-class commitment from each student. The University estimates that a student should expect to spend two hours outside of class for each hour she or he is in a class. For example, a three credit course averages six hours of additional work *outside* of class.

Bottom line: *If you cannot fully commit yourself to this course, then you should not take it.*

**University Support Services:**

The University recognizes that students can often use some help outside of class and offers academic assistance through several offices.

The Academic Success Center provides a wide range of academic support to day and evening undergraduate students beyond their first year of college.

**Academic Success Center:** <http://www.newhaven.edu/AcademicSuccess>

The Center for Learning Resources (CLR), located in the Peterson Library, provides academic content support to the students of the University of New Haven using metacognitive strategies that help students become aware of and learn to apply optimal learning processes in the pursuit of creating independent learners CLR tutors focus sessions on discussions of concepts and processes and typically use external examples to help students grasp and apply the material.

**Center for Learning Resources:** <http://www.newhaven.edu/CLR>

Writer to Writer is a peer-tutoring program inspired by the belief that all writers struggle and can benefit from talking through their ideas. Tutors are undergraduate students trained to work with you at any stage in the writing process.

**Writer to Writer:** <http://www.newhaven.edu/writertowriter/>

**Accessibility Resources Center:**

<http://www.newhaven.edu/AccessibilityResources>

Students with disabilities are encouraged to share, in confidence, information about needed specific course accommodations. The Accessibility Resources Center, located in Sheffield Hall, is responsible for and committed to providing services and support that serve to promote educational equity and ensure that students are able to participate in the opportunities available at the University of New Haven. Accommodations cannot be made without written documentation from the Accessibility Resources Center.

**Religious Observance Policy for Students:**

<http://www.newhaven.edu/studenthandbook>

The University of New Haven respects the right of its students to observe religious holidays that may necessitate their absence from class or from other required university-sponsored activities. Students who wish to observe such holidays should not be penalized for their absence, although in academic courses they are responsible for making up missed work.