

LSC Use Only Proposal No:  
LSC Action-Date:

UWUCC Use Only Proposal No: 13-191F  
UWUCC Action-Date: App-4/8/14 Senate Action Date: App-4/29/14

Curriculum Proposal Cover Sheet - University-Wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

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Proposing Department/Unit Philosophy	Phone 7-2310

Check all appropriate lines and complete all information. Use a separate cover sheet for each course proposal and/or program proposal.

1. Course Proposals (check all that apply)

New Course       Course Prefix Change       Course Deletion  
 Course Revision       Course Number and/or Title Change       Catalog Description Change

Current course prefix, number and full title: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed course prefix, number and full title, if changing: PHIL 390 Philosophy of Human Nature

2. Liberal Studies Course Designations, as appropriate

This course is also proposed as a Liberal Studies Course (please mark the appropriate categories below)  
 Learning Skills     Knowledge Area     Global and Multicultural Awareness     Writing Intensive (include W cover sheet)  
 Liberal Studies Elective (please mark the designation(s) that applies – must meet at least one)  
 Global Citizenship     Information Literacy     Oral Communication  
 Quantitative Reasoning     Scientific Literacy     Technological Literacy

3. Other Designations, as appropriate

Honors College Course       Other: (e.g. Women's Studies, Pan African)

4. Program Proposals

Catalog Description Change     Program Revision     Program Title Change     New Track  
 New Degree Program     New Minor Program     Liberal Studies Requirement Changes     Other

Current program name: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed program name, if changing: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Approvals	Signature	Date
Department Curriculum Committee Chair(s)		3/13/14
Department Chairperson(s)		3-13-14
College Curriculum Committee Chair		3-26-14
College Dean		3/26/14
Director of Liberal Studies (as needed)		
Director of Honors College (as needed)		
Provost (as needed)		
Additional signature (with title) as appropriate		
UWUCC Co-Chairs		4/8/14

Received

MAR 27 2014

Liberal Studies

## **I. Catalog Description**

PHIL 390 Philosophy of Human Nature

3c-01-3cr

Examines philosophical theories of human nature, including how traditional philosophical debates about the mind, morality, persons, and freedom are informed by recent empirical work in the cognitive sciences. Topics covered may include philosophical and scientific debates about the innate content and structure of the human mind, moral judgment, the possibility of free will, the extent to which human beings are rational, and the nature of the self and self-knowledge. Connections between conceptions of human nature and political philosophy, as well as bioethical issues concerning enhancement and transhumanism, may also be discussed.

## **II. Course Outcomes**

At the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Explain key concepts of historical and contemporary theories of human nature, e.g., theories of mind, morality, persons, and free will.
2. Explain how empirical work in the sciences informs traditional philosophical debates about human nature.
3. Explain potential connections between theories of human nature and political philosophy.
4. Analyze and evaluate arguments about human nature.

## **III. Detailed Course Outline**

Relevant authors are included; see bibliography below for details.

### **A. Rationalist Approaches to Human Cognition**

8 hours

1. Innateness: Poverty of Stimulus Arguments
2. Adaptationism
3. Domain Specificity
4. Massive Modularity

*Relevant authors:* Plato, Noam Chomsky, Fiona Cowie, Jerry Fodor, Elliot Sober, Richard Samuels, Daniel Dennett, Leda Cosmides, John Tooby, Peter Godfrey-Smith, Peter Carruthers

### **B. Empiricist Approaches to Human Cognition**

8 hours [16]

1. British Empiricism
2. Empiricist Replies to Poverty of Stimulus Arguments
3. Anti-Adaptationism
4. Domain Generality

*Relevant authors:* David Hume, John Locke, David Pears, Steven Pinker, David Buller, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin, Stephen Downes, Jerry Fodor

### **C. The Philosophy and Science of Free Will**

8 hours [24]

1. Traditional Philosophical Views
  - a. Libertarianism
  - b. Compatibilism

c. Hard Determinism

*Relevant authors:* A.J. Ayer, Robert Kane, Galen Strawson, Derk Pereboom

2. Experimental Philosophy and Neuroscience

a. "Folk" concepts of free will and the self

b. Neuroscience of free will

*Relevant authors:* Shaun Nichols, Joshua Knobe, Benjamin Libet, Eddy Nahmias, Alfred Mele, Daniel Wegner

D. The Philosophy and Science of Morality

8 hours [32]

1. The Nature of Moral Judgment

a. Reason and Emotion in Moral Judgment

b. Trolley Problems and Cognitive Neuroscience

c. The Linguistic Analogy

*Relevant authors:* Jonathan Haidt, David Pizarro and Paul Bloom, Susan Dwyer, John Mikhail, Jesse Prinz, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, Kwame Appiah, Joshua Greene

2. Meta-Ethical Implications of the Science of Morality

a. Grounding Ethics in Biology?

b. Evolutionary De-Bunking Arguments

*Relevant authors:* Francisco Ayala, Michael Ruse, Sharon Street, Paul Griffiths, Elliot Sober

E. Human Nature, Gender, and Race

6 hours [38]

1. Feminist Theory and Human Nature

2. Race: Eliminativism, Constructionism, and Naturalism

*Relevant authors:* Louise Antony, Nancy Holmstrom, Sally Haslanger, Philip Kitcher

F. Enhancement and Human Nature

4 hours [42]

1. Biotechnology and Perfection

2. Posthuman Dignity

*Relevant authors:* Leon Kass, Norman Daniels, Nick Bostrom

G. Final Exam

2 hours [44]

**IV. Evaluation Methods:**

Evaluation methods may vary. The following is a sample evaluation method:

Summary Papers	20% of grade
Short Analysis Paper	25% of grade
Thesis Paper	25% of grade
Final Exam	20% of grade
Participation	10% of grade

*Summary Papers:* Students will turn in a one-page paper each week that summarizes an argument from the assigned reading. These papers will focus on a question that is provided in class. The best ten papers will count towards 20% of the final grade.

*Short Analysis Paper:* The short analysis paper is a four-page writing assignment in which students must critically analyze and evaluate an argument or position of their choosing. This paper is worth 25% of the final grade.

*Thesis Paper:* Students will write an eight-page paper on a topic of their choosing. Students will be given a detailed handout with instructions and a list of suggested topics. This paper is worth 25% of the final grade.

*Final Exam:* The final exam will consist of short answer and essay questions and is worth 20% of the final grade.

*Participation:* Active participation during class sessions counts for 10% of the final grade. Participation will be assessed in terms of attendance and student contributions to in-class discussions.

#### **V. Example Grading Scale**

90-100% A, 80-89% B, 70-79% C, 60-69% D, 59% or less F.

#### **VI. Undergraduate Course Attendance Policy**

This course will follow the official IUP attendance policy as described in the IUP Undergraduate Catalog.

#### **VII. Required Textbooks, Supplemental Books and Readings.**

Examples of current texts:

Downes, S. and E. Machery (2013). *Arguing About Human Nature: Contemporary Debates (Arguing About Philosophy Series)*. New York: Routledge.

Radcliffe-Richards, J. (2005). *Human Nature After Darwin: A Philosophical Introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Examples of supplemental books:

Dupre, J. (2002). *Human Nature and the Limits of Science*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Pinker, S. (2003). *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature*. New York: Penguin Press.

Stevenson, L., Haberman, D., and Wright, P. (2012). *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## VIII. Special Resource Requirements: None.

## IX. Bibliography

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## **COURSE ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **A. Details of the Course.**

A1. The course is a controlled elective in our revised BA program. The course content is drawn primarily from the areas of philosophy of biology and philosophy of cognitive science, two areas of increasing importance in our discipline that are not represented in our current course offerings. There are no existing courses into which this content can be integrated.

A2. This course does not require changes in any existing Philosophy Department courses.

A3. This course has been offered twice on a trial basis, in spring '08 and fall '12.

A4. This is not a dual-level course.

A5. This course may not be taken for variable credit.

A6. Institutions that offer similar courses include:

University of Missouri: PHIL 2300 Philosophy and Human Nature

<https://philosophy.missouri.edu/philosophy-courses/undergraduate-courses.html>

North Carolina State University: PHIL 447 Philosophy, Evolution, and Human Nature

[http://www.ncsu.edu/chass/philo/phil\\_courses.html](http://www.ncsu.edu/chass/philo/phil_courses.html)

University of Kentucky: PHIL 310 Philosophy of Human Nature

<http://philosophy.as.uky.edu/courses/2013/Spring/PHI/310>

University of Puget Sound: PHIL 103 Philosophy and Science of Human Nature

<http://www.pugetsound.edu/academics/departments-and-programs/undergraduate/philosophy/course-descriptions/>



University of Texas: PHIL 303 Human Nature  
<https://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/philosophy/undergraduate-program/courses.php>

Yale University: PHIL 181 The Philosophy and Science of Human Nature  
<http://oyc.yale.edu/philosophy/phil-181>

A7. This specific course is not required by the American Philosophical Association.

**B. Interdisciplinary Implications.**

B1. This course will be taught by one instructor at a time, and always by the Philosophy Department.

B2. Most of the topics covered in this course are inherently interdisciplinary. Although some of the topics overlap with those covered in psychology courses, the course does not duplicate any psychology course offerings. A letter of support from the Psychology Department is included.

B3. This course will not be cross-listed.

**C. Implementation.**

C1. With our current complement and staffing commitments, the department can reasonably expect to staff and fill at least one section of this course at least once every four years.

C2. No additional space, equipment, supplies, or library materials are needed.

C3. None of the resources for this course is funded by a grant.

C4. We expect to offer at least one section every four years.

C5. One section of the course will be offered each semester the course is taught.

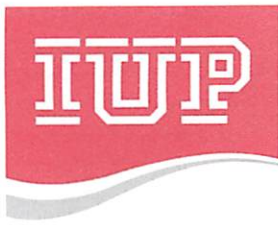
C6. 25 students is the current maximum we set for upper-level writing-intensive classes.

C7. The American Philosophical Association does not recommend maximum enrollments for this type of course.

C8. This is not a distance education course.

**D. Miscellaneous.**

None



# Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Department of Psychology  
Uhler Hall  
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P 724-357-2426  
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SUBJECT: New Course Proposal - PHIL 390 Philosophy of Human Nature  
TO: University-Wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee  
FROM: Dr. Raymond Pavloski, Chair – Psychology Department  
DATE: Feb. 17, 2014

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raymond Pavloski', written over the 'FROM:' line of the header.

I wish to lend my strong support to the proposal for an undergraduate course entitled, "Philosophy of Human Nature." The topics and approaches considered within the proposed course overlap with many issues that are considered within psychology as a natural and social science. This is appropriate, as these issues are central to what it means to be human. As such, they are also considered within disciplines that include anthropology and biology. These issues are best tackled from multiple perspectives, and our students will benefit from the philosophical perspective to be provided in this course.

There is no infringement whatsoever on any courses offered in the psychology department. In fact, a course in philosophy of human nature will be very helpful to psychology majors who have serious interests in understanding the depth and breadth of many important issues that arise in their psychology coursework (including developmental psychology, social psychology, biopsychology, learning, memory and thinking, psychology of women, and others). I would expect that the Psychology faculty will advise interested students to register for this course, given its clear relevance to our subject matter.