



FINAL FACULTY SENATE APPROVAL ON FEBRUARY 13, 2018

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**MEMORANDUM**

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TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Jack Kirby *JK*

DATE: January 22, 2018

SUBJECT: Curriculum Proposal #17-18-16, REV #1

Philosophy

I recommend approval of the attached REVISION #1 of Curriculum Proposal 17-18-16. This proposal seeks to add a course, Theories of Human Nature, to the philosophy curriculum.

Dr. Christina Lavorata  
Dr. Adam Podlaskowski  
Dr. Deanna Shields  
Mr. Brian Floyd  
Ms. Laura Ransom  
Ms. Cheri Gonzalez



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## **MEMORANDUM**

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TO: Curriculum Committee

FROM: Jack Kirby *JKR*

DATE: November 16, 2017

SUBJECT: Curriculum Proposal #17-18-16  
Philosophy

I recommend approval of the attached Curriculum Proposal 17-18-16. This proposal seeks to add a course, Theories of Human Nature, to the philosophy curriculum.

Dr. Christina Lavorata  
Dr. Adam Podlaskowski  
Dr. Deanna Shields  
Mr. Brian Floyd  
Ms. Laura Ransom  
Ms. Cheri Gonzalez

**CURRICULUM PROPOSAL** (Submit one hard copy and an electronic copy to the Associate Provost by the second Tuesday of the month.)

**Proposal Number:** #17-18-16

**School/Department/Program:** College of Liberal Arts, Social Science, Philosophy

**Preparer/Contact Person:** Dr. Adam C. Podlaskowski

**Telephone Extension:** 4935

**Date Originally Submitted:** 11/09/2017

**Revision (Indicate date and label it  
Revision #1, #2, etc.):** 01/18/18 Revision #1

**Implementation Date Requested:** Fall 2018

- I. **PROPOSAL.** Write a brief abstract, not exceeding 100 words, which describes the overall content of the proposal.

The proposal is to add a course (Theories of Human Nature) to the curriculum. The course has already been taught online three times as a lower-level special topics course (PHIL 1199). The new course would be introduced into the catalog as PHIL 1150.

- II. **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL.** Provide a response for each letter, A-H, and for each Roman Numeral II–V. If any section does not apply to your proposal, reply N/A.

- A. Deletion of course(s) or credit(s) from program(s)

Total hours deleted. None

- B. Addition of course(s) or credit(s) from program(s)

Total hours added. None

- C. Provision for interchangeable use of course(s) with program(s)

N/A

- D. Revision of course content. Include, as an appendix, a revised course description, written in complete sentences, suitable for use in the university catalog.

N/A

- E. Other changes to existing courses such as changes to title, course number, and elective or required status.

N/A

- F. Creation of new course(s). For each new course

1. Include, as an appendix, a course description, written in complete sentences, suitable for use in the college catalog.

See Appendix A

2. Include, as an appendix, a detailed course outline consisting of at least two levels.

See Appendix B

3. In order to meet the requirements as outlined in Goal One of the Strategic Plan, please include Outcome Competencies and Methods of Assessment as an appendix. Examples are available upon request from the Chair of the Curriculum Committee.

See Appendix C

- G. Attach an itemized summary of the present program(s) affected, if any, and of the proposed change(s).

N/A

III. **RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSAL.**

- A. **Quantitative Assessment:** Indicate the types of assessment data, i.e., surveys, interviews, capstone courses, projects, licensure exams, nationally-normed tests, locally developed measurements, accreditation reports, etc., that were collected and analyzed to determine that curricular changes were warranted. Quantitative data is preferred.

The course has been offered online three times with a student cap of 35 per section, and there has been no problem filling the course.

- B. **Qualitative Assessment:** Based upon the assessment data above, indicate why a curricular change is justified. Indicate the expected results of the change. Be sure to include an estimate of the increased cost, or reduction in cost of implementation. FOR EXAMPLE: Will new faculty, facilities, equipment, or library materials be required?

Since the course has been taught three times as a Special Topics course, by FSU policy, it cannot be offered again until has been instituted as a separate course in its own right. Given that the course has continued to draw students, there is reason to continue offering it.

**Note:** No new faculty, facilities, or equipment will be needed to provide this course to the students at Fairmont State University.

- IV. Should this proposal affect any course or program in another school, a memo must be sent to the Dean of each school impacted and a copy of the memo(s) must be included with this proposal. In addition, the Deans of the affected schools must sign below to indicate their approval of this proposal.

By signing here, you are indicating your college's/school's approval of this proposal.

College/School	Dean	Signature
College of Liberal Arts	Dr. Deanna Shields	

- V. **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.**

N/A

By signing here, you are indicating your college's/school's approval of this proposal.

College/School	Dean	Signature
College of Liberal Arts	Dr. Deanna Shields	<i>Deanna Shields</i>

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.

N/A

## APPENDIX A

### Course Description:

Theories of Human Nature      PHIL 1150      FSU      3 hrs.

This course is an introductory survey on theories of human nature, covering a wide range of positions on what makes us human. The theories addressed in this course include positions coming from various religions (e.g., Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism), classic philosophical systems (e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Marx, Sartre), and leading scientific frameworks (e.g., Darwinian Evolution). Each theory represents a complete system of thought, incorporating views on the universe and how we fit into it, a diagnosis of the problems facing humanity, and a sense for how we should best live our lives. Emphasis will also be placed on students developing the analytical and argumentative tools required for properly assessing theories of human nature. Elective Course. No prerequisites.

## APPENDIX B

### Course Outline

#### Texts utilized in this example of an online version of the course:

- Leslie Stevenson, David L. Haberman, and Peter Matthews Wright, *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*
- Leslie Stevenson (editor), *The Study of Human Nature*

#### Week 1: The Tools for Assessing Rival Theories of Human Nature

##### Assigned Readings:

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Introduction, Rival Theories and Critical Assessments

#### Week 2: Confucianism on Human Nature

##### Assigned Readings:

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 1, Confucianism: The Way of the Sages
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Mencius, Human Nature Is Good
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Hsun-tzu, Human Nature Is Evil

#### Week 3: Hinduism on Human Nature

##### Assigned Readings:

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 2, Upanishadic Hinduism: Quest for Ultimate Knowledge

##### Optional Readings:

- *The Study of Human Nature*, Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Katha Upanishad

#### Week 4: Buddhism on Human Nature

##### Assigned Readings:

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Buddhism: In the Footsteps of the Buddha

#### Week 5: Plato on Human Nature

##### Assigned Readings:

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 4, Plato: The Rule of Reason
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Plato, Republic

#### Week 6: Aristotle on Human Nature

##### Assigned Readings:

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 5, Aristotle: The Idea of Human Fulfillment

#### Week 7: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam on Human Nature

##### Assigned Readings:

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 6, The Bible: Humanity in Relation to God
- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 7, Islam: Submission to God

##### Optional Readings:

- *The Study of Human Nature*, Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari, Man and Faith
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Genesis 1-3
- *The Study of Human Nature*, St. Paul, Letter to the Romans
- *The Study of Human Nature*, St. Paul, First Letter to the Corinthians

## **Week 8: Social Contract Theorists on Human Nature**

### ***Assigned Readings:***

- *The Study of Human Nature*, Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile

### ***Optional Readings:***

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Historical Interlude
- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 8, Kant: Reasons and Causes, Morality and Religion

## **Week 9: Marx on Human Nature**

### ***Assigned Readings:***

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 9, Marx: The Economic Basis of Human Societies
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Karl Marx, The Materialist Theory of History
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Karl Marx, Consciousness and the Division of Labor

## **Week 10: Sartre and Existentialism on Human Nature**

### ***Assigned Readings:***

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 11, Sartre: Radical Freedom
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Jean Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism

## **Week 11: Darwin and Evolutionary Theory on Human Nature**

### ***Assigned Readings:***

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 12, Darwinian Theories of Human Nature
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Charles Darwin, The Descent of Man

## **Week 12: Ideology and Interpretations of Evolutionary Theory on Human Nature**

### ***Assigned Readings:***

- *The Study of Human Nature*, Matt Ridley, The Origins of Virtue
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Steven Rose, Richard Lewontin, and Leon Kamin, Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology and Human Nature

## **Week 13: Human Nature and Sex/Gender**

### ***Assigned Readings:***

- *The Study of Human Nature*, Nancy Holmstrom, Do Women Have a Distinct Nature?
- *The Study of Human Nature*, Edward Wilson, On Human Nature

### ***Optional Readings:***

- *The Study of Human Nature*, John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of Women

## **Week 14: Human Nature and the Notion of 'Race'**

### ***Assigned Readings:***

- *The Study of Human Nature*, Henry Bracken, Essence, Accident, and Race

## **Week 15: Prospects for Combining Theories of Human Nature**

### ***Assigned Readings:***

- *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Conclusion: A Synthesis of the Theories?



## APPENDIX C

### Course Outcomes

1. Characterize and assess major theories of human nature, which can include general claims about the essence of being human, human society, and the human condition.
2. Identify the background assumptions made by theories of human nature, about the universe and humanity's place in it.
3. Evaluate major diagnoses of human defects, taken to be responsible for the ills of human life and society. (This often involves also evaluating the merit of derived prescriptions for how best to live one's life.)
4. Analyze evidence through conventions appropriate to the philosophical study of human nature (e.g., careful argumentation).

### Assessment of Outcomes

Example of a discussion-based online assignment bearing on **OUTCOME 1, 3, and 4**:

In his classic work, *The Republic*, the philosopher Plato distinguishes between three parts of the soul (or mental nature), and argues that the ills facing humanity are owing to these parts being out of harmony. Do you agree with this view (in part or completely)? Why or why not?

Post your own entry in response to this question. In many respects, you should think of your discussion post as a short (2-4 paragraph) essay. Make sure to provide thoughtful reasons behind your response. This will require reconstructing enough of Plato's position in order to evaluate it. When presenting Plato's view, do not just rely on direct quotations; if you include any, be sure to provide an accompanying paraphrase. (You are demonstrating that you understand the position, after all!) And when provide your evaluation, be sure to show how your case directly addresses part(s) of Plato's position. That is, identify the reasons for his position, and defend or attack those reasons.

Example of a discussion-based online assignment bearing on **OUTCOME 1, 2, and 4**:

Sartre explicitly denies that there is any human nature whatsoever. But he still speaks at length on the human condition, one which includes our possessing a radical form of freedom, being faced with the responsibility of one's being free, being in conflict with others, and so on. Has Sartre just replaced "human nature" with "human condition", so that he really is committed to our possessing a human nature after all? Or is Sartre right that we possess no nature (with all this entails)?

Post your own entry in response to these questions. In many respects, you should think of your discussion post as a short (2-4 paragraph) essay. Make sure to provide thoughtful reasons behind your response, as well as citing the appropriate parts of Sartre's position. You will also likely find helpful the excerpt on "Existentialism and Humanism", found in *The Study of Human Nature*.

Example of a rubric for discussion-based online assignment (which is regularly qualified with written comments):

#### SPELLING, GRAMMAR, AND WRITING QUALITY

- **Exceptional**, 2 points: The discussion posting is very well-written (including both good spelling and grammar).
- **Meets Expectations**, 1 points: The discussion posting is fairly well-written (including fair spelling and grammar).
- **Needs Improvement**, 0 points: The discussion posting is not well-written (failing to include good spelling and/or grammar).
- **Not Completed**, 0 points: The student didn't make a post whatsoever.

#### CONTENT OF DISCUSSION POST

- **Exceptional**, 8 points: The student's post exhibits the marks of critical thinking--e.g., application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Postings are characterized by clarity of expression, depth of insight into the issue(s) relevant to the assignment, originality of treatment, and relevance. The post precisely applies the concepts particular to the assignment. (Attempts to refine one's post, in light of replies to one's post, will also be considered.)
- **Meets Expectations**, 6 points: The student's post exhibits some of the marks of critical thinking, though postings also tend to address peripheral issues. The post fails at times to apply correctly the concepts particular to the assignment. Though generally accurate, the student's post could be improved with more analysis and creative thought. (Attempts to refine one's post, in light of replies to one's post, will also be considered.)
- **Needs Improvement**, 4 points: The student's post requires more depth, clarity of expression and/or doesn't attend much to the criteria for the assignment (or, for that matter, the relevant concepts).
- **Not Completed**, 0 points: The student didn't make a post whatsoever.

#### CONTENT OF REPLIES TO OTHER STUDENT POSTS

- **Exceptional**, 4 points: The student makes the required number of replies to other students' posts, and does so thoughtfully.
- **Meets Expectations**, 3 points: The student makes the required number of replies to other students' posts (though leaving room for improvement in terms of quality of response).
- **Needs Improvement**, 1 points: The student doesn't make the required number of replies to other students' posts and/or fails to do so with much degree of thought.
- **Not Completed**, 0 points: The student doesn't make any replies whatsoever.

**Subject:** FW: Curriculum Proposal - PHIL course number - CORRECTION  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 12:15:19 PM Eastern Standard Time  
**From:** Gonzalez, Cheri  
**To:** Podlaskowski, Adam

Hi Adam,

You may use PHIL 2150.

Thank you  
Cheri

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**From:** FSU Office of Enrollment Services  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 09, 2017 1:12 PM  
**To:** Gonzalez, Cheri <Cheri.Varkonda@fairmontstate.edu>  
**Subject:** FW: Curriculum Proposal - PHIL course number - CORRECTION

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**From:** Podlaskowski, Adam  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 09, 2017 1:11 PM  
**To:** FSU Office of Enrollment Services <[registrar@fairmontstate.edu](mailto:registrar@fairmontstate.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Curriculum Proposal - PHIL course number - CORRECTION

Hi Cheri,

My apologies, but my previous email listed the course number at issue as PHIL 1150, when in fact it should have read PHIL 2150. Again, my apologies if this causes any confusion or inconvenience on your part! (In any case, in case you're interested, I also attached the curriculum proposal to this message.)

Best,

Adam

Adam Podlaskowski  
Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Fairmont State University

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**From:** Adam Podlaskowski <[apodlaskowski@fairmontstate.edu](mailto:apodlaskowski@fairmontstate.edu)>  
**Date:** Thursday, November 9, 2017 at 12:57 PM  
**To:** FSU Office of Enrollment Services <[registrar@fairmontstate.edu](mailto:registrar@fairmontstate.edu)>  
**Subject:** Curriculum Proposal - PHIL course number

Hi Cheri,

I'm putting together a curriculum proposal for a course entitled "Theories of Human Nature", with the expectation that it will be assigned the course number: **PHIL 1150**. If you can find the time, please let me know if there is any conflict on your end by my using this course number. There are no courses using it. Still, the chair of the Department of Social Sciences (Josh Smallridge) requested that I contact you to avoid any otherwise unforeseen conflicts.