

CURRENT SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Human Nature
21:730:203
Spring 2018
Professor Katalin Balog

IMPORTANT: please notice that this schedule is *TENTATIVE*. It will change frequently depending on the speed we proceed on the class, and on what we want to follow up on. Please check this document on a regular basis and especially before you start preparing for class.

Readings: assignments are either linked to the syllabus or available on Bb on the *Course Documents* page under *Readings*.

Week 1: *Introduction*

January 17 Look over syllabus; get acquainted with course on Bb

1. Morality and happiness: the ancient Greek tradition

Week 2:

January 22 *The Ring of Gyges*

* Plato, *Republic* 357b-368c

January 24 *Divisions of the soul*

*Plato, *Republic* Book IV 434d-445b

Week 3: *The value of justice, and divisions continued*

January 29 *Arguments for the intrinsic value of justice*

*Plato Book IX, 580d-592a

Recommended:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/10/05/heres-what-plato-had-to-say-about-someone-like-donald-trump/?utm_term=.f8b6f189c24c

January 31 *Different divisions*

*Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis*, Ch. 1

Week 4

February 5 *Different divisions continued*

*"Ego, super-ego, and id" from Anthony Storr, *Freud*

February 7 *Happiness and harmony*

*Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I. Ch. 1-3, Ch. 4 (first 3 paragraphs), Ch. 5, Ch. 7, Ch. 13

Week 5

February 12 **First in-class exam**

February 14 *Happiness and harmony continued*

* Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II. Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9

2. The Judeo-Christian tradition

Week 6

February 19

* The Gospel of John

3. Human nature: the Enlightenment, psychology and biology

February 21

*Enlightenment (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Week 7 *Humans in their natural state*

February 26

*Hobbes, *Leviathan* excerpts

February 28

*Frans de Waal, "Morally evolved: primate social instincts, human morality and the rise and fall of "Veneer Theory"" from *Primates and Philosophers*

Week 8

March 5 *Human bonds and happiness*

*Jonathan Haidt, Ch. 6

March 7 **Second in-class exam**

Week 9

SPRING RECESS

4. Existentialism

Week 10

March 19

*Kierkegaard, *The Sickness onto Death*, reading 1

March 21

*Kierkegaard, *The Sickness onto Death*, reading 1 continued NO NEW READING!

Week 11

March 26

*Kierkegaard, *The Sickness onto Death*, reading 2

March 28

*Kierkegaard, *The Sickness onto Death*, reading 3

Week 12

April 2

**The Sickness onto Death*, reading 4

April 4

Film screening: **THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE** (dir.: Coen brothers, 2001)

Week 13

April 9

Discussion of the movie in the light of Kierkegaard's philosophy

April 11

Third in-class exam

5. Buddhism

Week 14

April 16

Teasdale, "How does mindfulness transform suffering? I: the nature and origins of dukkha" (read only up to p. 100)

April 18

*Teasdale, "How does mindfulness transform suffering? I: the nature and origins of dukkha" continued **(NO NEW READING)**

Week 15

April 23

*Suzuki, Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, Part 1

April 25

*Suzuki, Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, Part 2

Week 16

April 30

Summary and recap

Short paper due May 5th