

Philosophy of Psychology (730:328)

Spring 2020
MW 2:50 – 4:10
Scott 220, CAC

1. **Instructor:** Professor Frances Egan
Room 532, 106 Somerset Street
Email: fegan@philosophy.rutgers.edu

Office hours: Mondays 4:30 – 6:00, and by appointment.

Sakai website: Course announcements, assignments, etc. will be posted on the course's Sakai website. Email notification of these postings will be sent to your RU email address.

2. **Course description:** The study of a variety of conceptions of *human nature*, both historical and contemporary. We will consider such questions as: Is there really a distinctive, fixed human nature? To what extent is human psychology determined by genetic factors? By environmental factors? What are the prospects for a *science* of human nature?

Some evidence suggests that humans are unique among animal species in possessing (1) the capacity for *language*, and (2) the ability to shape behavior according to the dictates of *morality*. In addition to the above general questions we will examine attempts to explain these (apparently) distinctive human capacities.

3. **Course Learning Goals:** Mastery of the material covered in class, and related assigned material, as measured by required coursework (see below).

4. **Required coursework:** Final grades will be based on mid-term and final examinations, and a paper (6-8 pages in length) on an assigned topic.

Students are expected to attend all classes, and to read assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned. If you anticipate missing a class, please use the University's absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to report the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Any violation of academic integrity (e.g. plagiarism, cheating on exams) will be dealt with strictly in accordance with published University policies.

5. **Required texts:** There is one required textbook – Richard Joyce's *The Evolution of Morality*. Additional required material will be available on the Sakai website.

6. **Tentative syllabus and readings.**

Plato, *Republic* (excerpt)

Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (excerpt)

B.F. Skinner, *About Behaviorism* (excerpt)

Noam Chomsky, "A Review of B.F. Skinner's *About Behaviorism*
"Language and the Human Mind"

Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (excerpt)

Richard Joyce, *The Evolution of Morality* (chs. 1-4)

David Buller, *Adapting Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Persistent Quest for Human Nature* (ch. 8)

There will be no class Monday April 6th

Student-Wellness Services:

Just In Case Web App

<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and lastly engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.