

1/10/2017

Human Nature & Human Diversity

Philosophy 253 (01:730:253)
&
Cognitive Science 253 (01:185:253)
Spring Term 2018

Syllabus – Part II: Topics & Assignments

Part II of the Syllabus is a WORK IN PROGRESS; it will be updated frequently during the term. Assigned readings and videos will change as we discover better material. (Suggestions are ALWAYS welcome!) Dates will inevitably be adjusted as we find that some topics need extra discussion and debate while others can be covered more quickly. Changes in Part II of the Syllabus will be announced in lecture, in the Announcements on Sakai, and via e-mail.

Books to buy:

1. Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, Pantheon Books, 2012.
2. Joseph Henrich, *The Secret of Our Success: How Culture Is Driving Human Evolution, Domesticating our Species, and Making Us Smarter*. Princeton University Press.

These books are available at the Rutgers Barnes & Noble bookstore. They can also be purchased on-line and are often less expensive on-line. **All other readings for the course will be available on the Sakai site for the course.**

Topics & Readings:

January 18

Lecture topic: Introduction to the Course:

- A Very Brief Discussion of the Mechanics of the Course
- What Is Human Nature?
- An Overview of the Topics We'll Be Exploring (Part 1)

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

Course Syllabus, Parts I & II; Policies on Behavior in the Classroom; Grading Scale
Videos

- i) To be viewed before the lecture: *Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial* (available on Sakai in the Streaming Video folder) – from the beginning thru 1:00:25
- ii) In lecture: *The Science of Sex Appeal*: Part 1.

January 22

Lecture topic: Introduction to the Course:

An Overview of the Topics We'll Be Exploring (Part 2)

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

Workman & Reader, *Evolutionary Psychology*, Ch. 1

Videos

i) To be viewed before the lecture: *Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial*

(available on Sakai in the Streaming Video folder) – from 1:00:25 to the end

ii) In lecture: *The Science of Sex Appeal: Part 2.*

January 25

Lecture topic: Evolutionary Psychology. Part I: Evolution & Natural Selection

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

Workman & Reader, *Evolutionary Psychology*, Ch. 2

Video (in lecture): *The Science of Sex Appeal*, Part 3

January 29

Lecture topic: Evolutionary Psychology. Part II: Some Important Ideas from Cognitive Science – Descartes' Challenge & Functionalism

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

(i) Anderson, "Introduction to Functionalism"

(ii) Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, selections from Ch. 2 "Thinking Machines"

Videos (in lecture): *The Science of Sex Appeal*, Part 4

February 1

Lecture topic: Evolutionary Psychology. Part II: Some Important Ideas from Cognitive Science – The Computational Theory of Cognition & Nativism

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

Cosmides & Tooby, "Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer"

Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, Ch. 1, pp. 15-24

Video (in lecture): *The Science of Sex Appeal*, Part 5

I>Clicker quizzes begin on February 1. Attendance will be taken in discussion sections beginning on February 1.

February 5

Lecture topic: Evolutionary Psychology. Part II: Some Important Ideas from Cognitive Science: Nativism (continued) & Modularity

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, Ch. 2, pp. 25-54

Video (in lecture): *The Science of Sex Appeal*, Part 6

February 8

Lecture topic: Evolutionary Psychology: Part III: Darwinian Modules, Stone Age Minds & How Evolution Has Shaped Our Emotions and Desires

Video (to watch on-line prior to the lecture):

“Why Everyone (else) is a Hypocrite” a lecture by Prof. Robert Kurzban
Video (in lecture): *The Science of Sex Appeal*, Part 7

February 12

GUEST LECTURE: Prof. Alan Leslie (Dept. of Psychology & Center for Cognitive Science, Rutgers University)
Lecture Topic: “How Pre-Schoolers Think About Thinking in Other Minds”
Reading: TBA

February 15

Lecture topic: Sexual Selection, Parental Investment and Human Mate Choice – The Theory & The Evidence
Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):
Workman & Reader, *Evolutionary Psychology*, Ch. 3
Video (to watch on-line prior to the lecture):
“Why Sex?” (available on Sakai in the Streaming Video folder)
Video (in lecture): *The Science of Sex Appeal*, Part 8

February 19

GUEST LECTURE: Prof. Daniel Fessler (Dept. of Anthropology, UCLA).
Lecture Topic: “Psychological and Evolutionary Explanations of Homosexuality”
Reading: TBA

February 22

Lecture topic: Sexual Selection, Parental Investment and Human Mate Choice – The Experimental Findings of David Buss and Others
Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):
Workman & Reader, *Evolutionary Psychology*, Ch. 4
Video (in lecture): *The Science of Sex Appeal*, Part 9

February 26

Lecture topic: Another Key Component of Human Nature: Culture, Cultural Learning and Culture-Gene Coevolution – Part I: The Cultural Inheritance System
Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):
Henrich, *The Secret of Our Success*, Chs. 1-4

March 1

Lecture topic: Culture, Cultural Learning and Culture-Gene Coevolution – Part II: How Culture Has Shaped Our Bodies & Our Genes, and Why Following Local Traditions Can Often Be A Very Good Idea
Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):
Henrich, *The Secret of Our Success*, Chs. 5-7

March 5

Lecture topic: Culture, Cultural Learning and Culture-Gene Coevolution – Part III:
Prestige, Taboos & Intergroup Competition

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

Henrich, *The Secret of Our Success*, Chs. 8 & 9 & Ch. 10, pp. 166-169

March 8

MIDTERM EXAM

March 10-18 [Spring Break]

March 19

Lecture topic: Culture, Cultural Learning and Culture-Gene Coevolution – Part IV: Self-
Domestication & Our Collective Brain

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

Henrich, *The Secret of Our Success*, Chs. 11-12

March 22

GUEST LECTURE: Q&A with Prof. Joseph Henrich (Dept. of Human Evolutionary
Biology, Harvard University)

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

Henrich, *The Secret of Our Success*, Chs. 14 & 17

March 26

Lecture topic: Some Basic Concepts in Moral Philosophy: Moral Realism, Cultural
Relativism & Moral Skepticism

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture)

Shafer-Landau, *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* selections

Video (to watch on-line prior to the lecture):

“Blood Feuds in Albania” (available on Sakai)

March 29

GUEST LECTURE: Prof. Lee Cronk (Department of Anthropology, Rutgers University)

Lecture topic: The Psychology & Evolution of Generosity

Reading: TBA

April 2

Lecture topic: Moral Philosophy Meets Cognitive Science – Part 1: Explaining Moral
Progress

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

(i) Harris, *Good to Eat*, Ch. 10, “People Eating”

(ii) Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, Ch. 1 & 2

April 5

Lecture topic: Moral Philosophy Meets Cognitive Science – Part 2: Is Morality Innate?

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture)

Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, Chs. 3 & 4

Video (to watch on-line prior to the lecture):

“Elements of Moral Cognition: Universal Moral Grammar & Universal Human Rights” a lecture by Prof. John Mikhail

April 9

Lecture topic: Moral Philosophy Meets Cognitive Science – Part 3: Moral Disagreement

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture)

Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, Chs. 5, 6 & 7

April 12

GUEST LECTURE: Prof. Julien Musolino (Dept. of Psychology & Center for Cognitive Science, Rutgers University)

Lecture topic: The Psychology of Religion

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture)

Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, Chs. 9, 10 & 11

April 16

Lecture topic: Religion: Why Do People Believe in God?

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

(i) Barrett, *Why Would Anyone Believe in God*, Chs. 2 & 3

(ii) Bloom, “Is God an Accident?”

April 19

Lecture topic: Religion: How Has Religion Contributed to Human Evolution? Is Religion a Good Thing in the Modern World?

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture):

Norenzayan, *Big Gods*, Chs. 1, 2 & 7

Video to watch before class: Dawkins, “The Root of All Evil,” Part 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nAos1M-Ts>

April 23

Lecture topic: Race & Biology

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture)

Boyd & Silk, “Explaining Human Variation” & “The Race Concept”

April 26

Lecture topic: The Social Construction of Race: Making Race Out of Nothing

Video to watch before class: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Part 1 “The Difference Between Us” (from the beginning to 56:00) & Part 2 “The Story We Tell” (from 57:45 to 1:54:30) available in the video folder on Sakai

April 30

Lecture topic: Race & IQ,

Reading (to be completed prior to the lecture)

Nisbett, *Intelligence and How to Get It*, Ch. 1 “Varieties of Intelligence, & Ch. 2
“Heritability and Mutability”

The Final Exam is on Thursday, May 3, from 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM in our regular lecture room, Voorhees 105.