

## **Human Nature & Human Diversity**

Philosophy 253 (01:730:253)  
&  
Cognitive Science 253 (01:185:253)

**Spring Term 2018**

### **Syllabus – Part I: Information About the Course**

This syllabus has two Parts. This part, Part I, contains a lot of information about the course, including information about the goals of the course, the Sakai website, the grading system, the attendance policy, and the policy on cheating and plagiarism. You should read Part I carefully at the beginning of the term, and consult it again whenever you have questions about the course. If you can't find the answer to your questions, the course Instructors will be happy to help. Part II: Topics and Readings is a detailed list of the lecture topics and assigned readings, arranged by date. Part II may be revised and updated from time to time. You will be notified by e-mail whenever a revised version of "Topics and Readings" is posted on the course Sakai site.

### **How the Philosophy Course and the Cognitive Science Course are Related**

Officially, Human Nature & Human Diversity is two courses, Philosophy 253 and Cognitive Science 253. However, the Lectures and the Discussion Sections meet in the same rooms at the same time. There are Philosophy and Cognitive Science students in each Discussion Section. The courses have the same instructors and the requirements are identical. Students will get the same credit toward Core Curriculum requirements, Cognitive Science major & minor requirements, and Philosophy major and minor requirements regardless of whether they are enrolled in Philosophy 253 or Cognitive Science 253. So for all practical purposes, Philosophy 253 and Cognitive Science 253 are a single course.

### **Where and When the Course Meets**

The **Lecture** meets in 105 Voorhees Hall, Monday & Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> period (= 11:30 – 12:50)

There are 10 **Sections**. The time and location of the sections is as follows:

01	Monday	10:05 – 11:00	SC-214	Ms. Atina Knowles
02	Monday	10:05 – 11:00	SC-106	Mr. Pavel Temkin
03	Monday	10:05 – 11:00	FH-B6	Mr. Aaron Rabinowitz
05	Thursday	10:05 – 11:00	SC-106	Mr. Pavel Temkin
06	Thursday	10:05 – 11:00	SC-214	Ms. Atina Knowles
07	Thursday	10:05 – 11:00	SC-215	Mr. Danny Forman
08	Thursday	10:05 – 11:00	SC-201	Mr. Aaron Rabinowitz
09	Monday	1:25 – 2:20	CA-A2	Mr. Danny Forman
10	Monday	3:05 – 4:00	AB-3200	Mr. William Fleisher
11	Monday	1:25 – 2:20	FH-A6	Mr. William Fleisher

## **Instructors**

Prof. Stephen Stich

Office: 106 Somerset St., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, room 540

E-mail: [stich@philosophy.rutgers.edu](mailto:stich@philosophy.rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: Monday & Thursday, 1:15 – 3:15, and by appointment

Mr. William Fleisher

Office: 106 Somerset St., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, room 513

E-mail: [william.fleisher@rutgers.edu](mailto:william.fleisher@rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: Wednesday, 10:00 – 12:00, and by appointment

Mr. Danny Forman

Office: 106 Somerset St, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, room 533

E-mail: [mailto:dmf246@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:mailto:dmf246@scarletmail.rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: Monday, 3:00 – 5:00, and by appointment

Ms. Atina Knowles

Office: 106 Somerset St, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, room 540

E-mail: [ak1033@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:ak1033@scarletmail.rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: Monday & Thursday, 9:00 – 10:00, and by appointment

Mr. Aaron Rabinowitz

Office: 106 Somerset St, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, room 540

E-Mail: [aaron.rabinowitz@rutgers.edu](mailto:aaron.rabinowitz@rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: Wednesday, 9:30 – 10:30; Thursday 1:00 – 2:00, and by appointment

Mr. Pavel Temkin

Office: 106 Somerset St, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 540

E-Mail: [pavel.temkin@rutgers.edu](mailto:pavel.temkin@rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: Wednesday, 4:00 – 6:00, and by appointment

## **Core Curriculum Information**

Both Philosophy 253 and Cognitive Science 253 count as 3 credits toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges requirement of the Core Curriculum. More specifically they meet Goal a. “Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on the world” and Goal b. “Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective.”

Both courses also count as 3 credits meeting the Arts and Humanities Goal o Core Requirement: “Examine Critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.”

Assessment will be by an SAS generic rubric embedded in the evaluation criteria laid out in this syllabus.

### **The Goals of the Course**

The course has three goals.

1) To acquaint students with some of the descriptive facts about human diversity in a variety of domains including:

- i) mating (sex, love and marriage)
- ii) morality
- iii) religion
- iv) race

Students will also learn about some of the features of human psychology and human culture that are universal and thus, perhaps, a reflection of an innate human nature.

2) To examine and critically assess some of the theories that have been proposed to explain why various sorts of human diversity exist. The theories considered will be:

- i) evolutionary psychology
- ii) environmental variability and cultural materialism
- iii) gene-culture co-evolution and the tribal instincts hypothesis
- iv) social construction

3) To explore some of the philosophical issues that are linked to various aspects of human nature and various sorts of human diversity. Issues that will be considered include:

- (i) The role of reason, emotion and intuition in moral judgment
- (ii) Moral objectivity vs. cultural relativism vs. moral skepticism
- (iii) How should we deal with the diversity of moral, religious and political views in our culture and around the world?
- (iv) Moral controversies about polygamy, female genital mutilation, the legitimacy of appeals to disgust or repugnance in the law, and the advisability of retaining racial categories

### **Important Note About E-mail**

You will be getting lots of e-mails about the course. These e-mails can only be sent to your official Rutgers e-mail address. So you should monitor that e-mail account frequently. If you usually use a non-Rutgers e-mail account (e.g. Gmail or Hotmail) you should arrange to have your Rutgers e-mail forwarded to the account you usually use.

### **Sakai Site**

Much of the material needed for the course will be available on [Rutgers Sakai](#), one of the electronic course platforms offered by Rutgers. To access this material, go to

<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/>

or just Google “Rutgers Sakai”. You will need a Rutgers NetID to enter Sakai. Once you’re on Sakai you should see a tab that says “HUMAN NATURE & HUMAN DIVERSITY”. If that tab

is not visible on the top of the Sakai screen, click on  on the upper right of the screen. If “HUMAN NATURE & HUMAN DIVERSITY” is not there either, ask one of the course Instructors for help.

When you get to the “HUMAN NATURE & HUMAN DIVERSITY” page, there will be a column on the left with a number of buttons. Much of the material you will need in the course, *including most of the readings*, can be found in the Resources folder that you can reach by clicking on “Resources”.

### **Required Textbook**

Though most of the course readings will be available on Sakai, there are two books that you will need to rent, buy or borrow:

1. Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided By Politics and Religion*. Random House/Vintage Books. ISBN for the paperback edition: 9780307455772.

The list price for this book is \$16.95. However, you may be able to get it for less from an online bookseller. In mid-December, 2017, Amazon was offering the book for \$14.26. Less expensive used copies are widely available.

2. Joseph Henrich, *The Secret of Our Success: How Culture Is Driving Human Evolution, Domesticating our Species, and Making Us Smarter*. Princeton University Press. ISBN for the paperback edition: 9780691178431

The list price of this book is \$19.95. However, you may be able to get it for less from an online bookseller. In mid-December, 2017, Amazon was offering the book for \$13.89. Less expensive used copies are widely available.

### **Grading**

Your grade for the course will be determined by your grade on the following five components of the course:

1) Mid-Term exam

Date: Thursday, March 8. This will be an essay exam. All the questions will be distributed in advance and discussed in the Discussion Sections. The Mid-term exam will held in our regular lecture room, Voorhees 105, at our regular lecture time, 11:30 – 12:50.

2) Final exam

Date: Thursday, May 3; Time: 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM. This will be an essay exam. All the questions will be distributed in advance and discussed in the Discussion Sections. The Final exam is NOT cumulative. It will cover the

material from the Mid-term onward. The Final exam will held in our regular lecture room, Voorhees 105.

**PLEASE NOTE: We cannot give make-up exams to accommodate your vacation travel plans. If your travel plans make it impossible for you to take the Mid-Term or the Final, you should DROP THE COURSE.**

3) I>Clicker quizzes

Starting on Thursday, February 1, there will be two I>Clicker quizzes in each lecture. The first will begin about 5 minutes after the beginning of the lecture. The second will be at the end of the lecture. There will be three multiple choice questions in each quiz. You will get 1 I>Clicker point for every question you answer (whether or not your answer is correct). If your answer is correct, you will get 2 additional I>Clicker points. Thus you can earn a maximum of 18 I>Clicker points in each lecture (6 quiz questions each worth 3 points). Some of the I>Clicker quiz questions will be based on the assigned readings & videos; some will be based on the material in the lecture or in the preceding lecture. A day or two before each lecture, you will receive an e-mail telling you what will be covered in the quizzes in the upcoming lecture. The “curve” mapping I>Clicker scores to the 40 point grading scale used in this course will be posted on Sakai and updated periodically. **In computing your final I>Clicker score, the 4 lowest days will be dropped.**

4) Discussion section presentation

Each student will participate in the preparation of a presentation on some aspect of human nature or human diversity. Topics are posted in the Resources folder on Sakai. Students are welcome to propose additional topics. The presentations will be prepared by groups of 2 to 6 students. The presentation will be graded “collectively” – all the students in the group will receive the same grade. Students can volunteer to participate in more than one presentation. If you participate in several presentations, only your highest grade will count in computing your course grade. Students doing presentations before February 19 will get an extra 2 points added to their presentation grade. Students doing presentations between February 19 & March 8 will get 1 extra point added to their grade.

5) Research paper / video / poster / etc.

Each student will write a paper of roughly 2500-4000 words on some aspect of human nature or human diversity. Topics will be posted in the Resources folder on Sakai. Students are welcome to suggest additional topics. With the consent of the discussion section instructor, students may create a video, prepare a poster or present their research in some other format instead of writing a paper. The due date for papers, videos and posters is April 19. Late papers, videos and posters will lose 2 points (on the 40 point scale) for every day the paper is late. Students who submit their papers, videos or posters before March 22 will get an extra 2

points added to their paper or project grade. Students who submit their papers between March 22 and April 12 will get 1 extra point added to their grade.

In computing your grade for the course, each of the 5 items above will be counted equally:

Mid-term exam	20%
Final exam	20%
I>Clicker quizzes	20%
Discussion section presentation	20%
Research paper	20%

**Extra Credit for Discussion Section Participation:** After your final grade has been computed, as outlined above, your discussion section instructor may add up to 3 points (on the 40 point scale) for constructive participation in section.

**Important note on I>Clickers:** I>Clicker quizzes will be an important part of your grade. **So you must obtain and register an I>Clicker.** The quizzes will be designed for the I>Clicker Gen 1 and the I>Clicker+, not for the newer and more expensive I>Clicker 2. However, the I>Clicker 2 can also be used. Pictures of the I>Clickers that can be used in the course appear on the following page. I>Clickers can be purchased at campus area bookstores. They can also be purchased on-line. The I>Clicker company has recently introduced an App for smart phones and laptops called I>Clicker REEF. **The I>Clicker REEF cannot be used in this course.** **I>Clicker quizzes will start on Thursday, February 1. So you should be sure that you have your Clicker before class on February 1. In previous years, a number of students who ordered their Clickers from on-line vendors did not get their Clickers on time. Thus we advise that you buy your Clicker from a local vendor. If you come to class on February 1 (or on any other class day) without your Clicker, your Clicker grade for that day will be ZERO.**

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance statement required by Rutgers: “Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.”

OK. Now that you have read the statement required by Rutgers, here is an explanation of how attendance will be handled in this course.



**LECTURE ATTENDANCE POLICY:** There is no formal attendance requirement in the LECTURE for this course. However, starting on Thursday, February 1, there will be two I>Clicker quizzes in each class. If you miss class, your grade for those two quizzes will be zero. Even if you have not done the reading assigned for a lecture, you would be wise to attend the lecture and take the quizzes, since you will get one I>Clicker point for each question you answer, even if your answer is wrong. At the end of the term, your quiz grades for the lowest four days will be dropped before computing and curving your I>Clicker grade for the term. Thus you will, in effect, have four automatically excused absences. You might think of them as “free passes.” But it would be wise to use these free passes VERY cautiously since, as explained below, if you are ill or absent for a religious holiday, the first four lectures you miss will not be excused. You will be expected to use your free passes for them.

If you have a legitimate excuse for missing a lecture (e.g., a documented medical excuse or family emergency or a religious holiday) you should print **two** copies of the Excused Absence Form available in the Sakai Resources folder and give them to Prof. Stich along with appropriate documentation, like a letter from your health care provider. Prof. Stich will keep one copy on file and return the other copy to you. You should keep it until after your final grade has been recorded. If, at the end of the term, you have more than four excused absences, you will be expected to use your free passes for the first four. Quiz grades for additional excused absence days will be dropped before computing your average quiz grade for the term.

**SECTIONS ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Starting on Thursday, February 1, attendance will be taken at every section meeting. You can miss two section meetings with no penalty. (So you have two “free passes” for missed sections.) For each additional section meeting you miss, one point will be deducted from your final grade on the 40 point scale used in this course. If you have a legitimate excuse for missing a section, you should follow the procedure described in the previous paragraph. For your first two excused section absences, you will be expected to use your free passes. Additional excused absences will incur no penalty.

### **Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism**

The policy on cheating and plagiarism in this course is very simple. **If you cheat or plagiarize you will fail the course.** You will also be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Early in the term, the TAs will explain how plagiarism rules are interpreted at Rutgers. It is important to keep in mind that if you use material from an on-line source, you *must* acknowledge this and provide a reference to the source. Changing a few words in the material that you have borrowed does *not* exempt you from this requirement. For additional information on the Rutgers University policies on academic integrity, go to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

Since I>Clicker quizzes determine a substantial part of students’ grades in this course, at the end of a lecture we will sometimes randomly select 10 or 15 names and ask those students to identify themselves and show photo ID before leaving the lecture room. If a student is not present and his or her I>Clicker has been used during the class, the student will fail the course and be reported to the university authorities.

For additional information on the Rutgers University policies on academic integrity, go to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.