

PHL1901E: Foundations in the Humanities

King's Wemple Building, room 175, Tuesday and Thursday, from 3.30-5 p.m.,
and the Foundations in the Humanities seminar (Dante Lenardon Hall, room, 114, on Thursday, from
2.30-3.30 p.m).

Registration

To register, students must have been accepted into the Foundation in the Humanities programme. Students will be enrolled concurrently in History 1901E and English 1901E. The last date for dropping this course without academic penalty is Nov. 30.

Contacting the instructor (John Heng):

Please free to contact me in one of these ways.

In person: Before or after class, or in my office: King's Faculty Building, room 212
Office hours: Tuesday, 2-3.30 p.m. and Wednesday, 10.30 a.m.-noon, or by appointment

By e-mail: jheng@uwo.ca

By phone: 519-433-3491, extension 2264

Course description

This course introduces the student to a range of philosophical ideas and approaches that are basic to the Western tradition. As part of the Foundations in the Humanities programme, the course focuses on what it means to be human and to live in community with other humans. It emphasizes the mutual influences of philosophy on other areas of inquiry, such as theology and science, on creative activity, such as literature, art and music, and on the historical development of human societies and cultures.

Course objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to (a) develop the habits of thinking, writing, and speaking that enable them to form and express questions and ideas intelligently and coherently; (b) be able to discuss some main ideas and questions in Western philosophy, particularly regarding what it means to be human and to live in community with other humans; (c) synthesize what they are learning in this course and draw their own reasonable conclusions on the questions that are raised and discussed; (d) integrate what they are learning in this course with their learning in HIS1901E and ENG1901E.

Course requirements

Together with HIS1901E and ENG1901E:

- 5% **test**, Thurs. Nov. 21 (2.30-3.30 p.m.)
- 10% **participation in the Foundations in the Humanities seminar** (Thurs., 2.30-3.30 p.m.)
- 5% **Independent Research Paper (IRP) working summary**, due on Jan. 30, and a **presentation** of this summary made during one of the Foundations seminars in February. Instructions and topics will be given out sometime during the first term. Students must submit a proposal of the topic they will work on by Dec. 4.
- 20% **IRP**, due on Mar. 20.

Specific to PHL1901E:

2 x 10% **disputations and reports**

1. Sign up for one disputation per term (held on Thursdays).
2. Do the assigned reading for the Tuesday class before your chosen disputation at least 2 weeks in advance.

3. Meet at least 1 week in advance with the other student(s) assigned to the disputation to agree on the definitions of terms in the resolution and to decide upon which side of the resolution you will each present. [If there are 2 students, each must choose an opposing side. If there are 3, two may select one side.] The degree to which students on opposing sides wish to collaborate on the disputation is left up to them.
4. Each student must present something relevant to the assigned reading in their arguments.
5. The structure of the disputation should be:
 - Student defining the resolution and arguing in favour (5 minutes)
 - Student arguing against (5 minutes)
 - Rebuttal from the student arguing in favour (5 minutes)
 - Rebuttal from the student arguing against (5 minutes)
 - Questions for clarification from the class directed at either side, moderated by the instructor
 - Class discussion, moderated by the instructor
 - Final comment from the student arguing against (1 minute)
 - Final comment from the student arguing in favour (1 minute)
 - Class vote

Please adhere strictly to the time limits. If there are 2 students in a group of 3 arguing on one side, each must still present for the times noted above.

6. A 2-page, double-spaced report summarizing the student's arguments in light of what transpired during the disputation and class discussion should be submitted by each student within a week after the disputation.
7. Students will receive a composite mark according to these criteria:
 - Understanding of the reading and its application to the disputation (25%)
 - Coherence (sticking to the topic) and cogency (intelligent and clear organization) of arguments (25%)
 - Presentation skills – being audible, not too fast, clear, being civil, maintaining poise and some eye contact, using appropriate voice moderation and gestures (25%)
 - Capacity to respond to questions and comments from the class (25%)

10%

journals

1. There will be a reading question assigned for each week's reading.
2. Answer the question, after having completed the reading.
3. The length of your answer should normally be a paragraph of no more than ½ page, single spaced.
4. Journals are collected on Sept. 24 (1%), Nov. 7 (3%), Feb. 13 (3%), and Apr. 1 (3%).

30%

final exam, date to be confirmed for sometime between Apr. 11-30.

Topics and Readings

All readings are primary sources that are available either online [URL given], from Leslie Stevenson, ed. *The Study of Human Nature: A Reader*, 2nd edition. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 [Stevenson], or from the *Norton Anthology of World Literature* [NAWL]. Some short readings are distributed through the course site on SAKAI/OWL.

Tu. Sept. 10

Mortals and gods in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

Th. Sept. 12

The Hebrew bible

Reading: *Genesis* 1-4; *Psalms* 8 and 139; *Deutoronomy* 5-6; *Psalms* 16;17; 146; *Ezekiel* 36; *Wisdom* 1[bible.oremus.org]

Tu. Sept. 17

Ionian ("Presocratic") thinkers: "cosmos" and the relation of humans to it

Reading: Thales; Heraclitus; Empedocles [selections in *NAWL*], and Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I [<http://classics.mit.edu>]

Th. Sept. 19

no class
Reading: Plato, *Euthyphro* [excerpt distributed]

Tu. Sept. 24

Submit journal entry #1.
Plato's dialogues: What is philosophical reflection, and what's it for?
Reading: Plato, *Apology* [<http://classics.mit.edu>] and excerpts from *Phaedo* and *Republic* [distributed]

Th. Sept. 26

Disputation 1: Be it resolved that (B.I.R.T.) all lawmakers in society should be educated in philosophy.

Tu. Oct. 1

Aristotle's *De Anima*: the animated human body's capacity to know reality
Reading: Aristotle, *On the Soul (De Anima)* II and III [<http://classics.mit.edu>]

Th. Oct. 3

Disputation 2: B.I.R.T. computers may one day think better than humans.

Tu. Oct. 8

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: human happiness, contemplation, friendship
Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I; VIII; X, 7-8 [<http://classics.mit.edu>]

Th. Oct. 10

Disputation 3: B.I.R.T. to be happy, philosophers do not need friends.

Tu. Oct. 15

Augustine's *Confessions*: God and evil
Reading: Augustine, *Confessions* [*NAWL* and a distributed additional excerpt]

Th. Oct. 17

Disputation 4: B.I.R.T. evil is the privation (absence) of good.

Tu. Oct. 22

Biblical faith and philosophical reasoning: some views in the middle ages
Reading: Siger of Brabant, excerpts from *Quaestiones in metaphysicam* [<http://individual.utoronto.ca/dlblack/WebTranslations/Sigermeta.pdf>]; Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, question 1 [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.FP_Q1.html]

Th. Oct. 24

Disputation 5: B.I.R.T. you can convince a non-believer to affirm the existence of the Judaeo-Christian God using only philosophical arguments.

Tu. Oct. 29

Aquinas on virtues and the natural law
Reading: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I IIae, 55-67; 94 [<http://www.ccel.org/a/aquinas/summa/FS.html>]

Th. Oct. 31

no class (Fall Study Break)

Tu. Nov. 5

Dante's *Divine Comedy*: On pagan and Christian love, or what's Aristotle doing in the Inferno?
Reading: Dante, *Inferno*, esp. IV [*NAWL*]; *John* 13-17, and *Romans* 12 [bible.oremus.org]; John of the Cross, "The Dark Night"; "Flame of Living Love" [*NAWL*]

Th. Nov. 7

Submit journal reflections.
Disputation 6: B.I.R.T. using reason, you can infer what is ethically good from what is naturally good for humans. (Relate to the reading for Tu. Oct. 29.)

- Tu. Nov. 12 **On free will: Erasmus versus Luther**
Reading: excerpts from Erasmus, *The Freedom of the Will* and Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* [distributed], and Daniel Dennett, “Sometimes a spin doctor is right”, *Praemium Erasmianum Essay 2012*
[\[http://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/papers/spindoctor.pdf\]](http://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/papers/spindoctor.pdf)
- Th. Nov. 14 Disputation 7: B.I.R.T. human free will is an illusion.
- Tu. Nov. 19 **On political leadership: Erasmus**
Reading: Erasmus, *The Education of the Christian Prince, I*
[\http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.05991.0001.001, pp. 139-92]
- Th. Nov. 21 **On political leadership: Machiavelli**
Reading: Machiavelli, *The Prince* [NAWL]
- Tu. Nov. 26 Disputation 8: B.I.R.T. Machiavelli provides better advice on political leadership than Erasmus. (Relate to readings for both Tu. Nov. 19 and Th. Nov. 21)
- Th. Nov. 28 **The “scientific revolution” and the clash of the “classical” and the “mechanistic” world views**
Reading: excerpts of Galileo’s letters to Giuliano de Medicis, to Castelli, to Clavius, and to Sarpi [\[http://eaae-astronomy.org/WG3-SS/WorkShops/pdf/ws2_2009.pdf\]](http://eaae-astronomy.org/WG3-SS/WorkShops/pdf/ws2_2009.pdf) ; excerpt of Galileo’s *The Assayer* [\[http://eaae-astronomy.org/WG3-SS/WorkShops/pdf/ws2_2009.pdf\]](http://eaae-astronomy.org/WG3-SS/WorkShops/pdf/ws2_2009.pdf)]
- Tu. Dec. 3 **Galileo on the interpretation of the Bible and scientific discovery**
Reading: “Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina”
[\[http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/galileo-tuscany.asp\]](http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/galileo-tuscany.asp)]
- Th. Dec. 5
--school break--
Tu. Jan. 7 no class (trip to Toronto)
- Tu. Jan. 7 **Cartesian dualism and its human implications**
Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* [excerpt in Stevenson]
- Th. Jan. 9 Term 2, Disputation 1: B.I.R.T. there is no way we can judge whether what we are sensing is real.
- Tu. Jan. 14 **Hobbes on the science of being human**
Hobbes, excerpt from *Leviathan* [in Stevenson], supplemented by excerpts from chapters 5 and 6 [distributed]
- Th. Jan. 16 Disputation 2: B.I.R.T. the restless desire for power is natural to all human beings.
- Tu. Jan. 21 **Leibniz on evil**
Leibniz, *Theodicy* [\[http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/17147\]](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/17147)]; Cf. Voltaire, *Candide*
- Th. Jan. 23 Disputation 3: B.I.R.T. it is evident that ours is the best of all possible worlds.
- Tu. Jan. 28 **Rousseau on how to educate a child**
Reading: Rousseau, excerpt from *Emile* [in Stevenson]
- Th. Jan. 30 Disputation 4: B.I.R.T. different personalities are innate in men and women.

- Tu. Feb. 4 **Immanuel Kant awakening from his Humean slumbler, or the capabilities and limits of human reason**
Reading: Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, I
[\[http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdf/kantprol.pdf\]](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdf/kantprol.pdf)
- Th. Feb. 6 Disputation 5: B.I.R.T. there is no objective time; time is a human construct.
- Tu. Feb. 11 **Kantian ethics and religion**
Reading: Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*
- Th. Feb. 13 Submit journal.
Disputation 6: B.I.R.T. it is never morally good to lie.
- reading week--
Tu Feb. 25 **Hegel: historical consciousness**
Reading: Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*,
[\[http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/mickelsen/Phil%20310/ToC/Hegel%20Phen%20ToC.htm\]](http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/mickelsen/Phil%20310/ToC/Hegel%20Phen%20ToC.htm)
- Th. Feb. 27 **Karl Marx: material conditions and human history**
Reading: Marx, excerpts from *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and from *The German Ideology* [in Stevenson], and the *Communist Manifesto*
- Tu. Mar. 4 **Charles Darwin: naturalizing ethics**
Reading: Darwin, excerpt from *The Descent of Man* (in Stevenson)
- Th. Mar. 6 Disputation 7: B.I.R.T. altruism is an evolutionary strategy.
- Tu. Mar. 11 **Friederich Nietzsche: historicizing ethics**
Reading: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, preface and first essay
[\[http://www.inp.uw.edu.pl/mdsie/Political Thought/GenealogyofMorals.pdf\]](http://www.inp.uw.edu.pl/mdsie/Political%20Thought/GenealogyofMorals.pdf), pp. 3-34]
- Th. Mar. 13 **Fyodor Dostoevsky: the burden of freedom**
Reading: Dostoevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor", from *Brothers Karamazov*
[\[https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pol116/great.htm\]](https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pol116/great.htm)
- Tu. Mar. 18 **Søren Kierkegaard: life choices**
Reading: Kierkegaard, excerpt from *Either/Or*, part 2 [distributed]
- Th. Mar. 20 Submit IRP.
Søren Kierkegaard: life choices
Reading: Kierkegaard, excerpts from *Fear and Trembling*
[\[http://www.ccel.org/k/kierkegaard/selections/trembling.htm\]](http://www.ccel.org/k/kierkegaard/selections/trembling.htm) and *Sickness Unto Death* [distributed]
- Tu. Mar. 25 **Martin Heidegger: death and an authentic human life**
Reading: Heidegger, excerpts from *Being and Time* [distributed]
- Th. Mar. 27 **Jean-Paul Sartre: the hell of other people**
Reading: excerpts from *Being and Nothingness* and *No Exit* [distributed]
- Tu. Apr. 1 Submit journal.
Viktor Frankl: meaning and hope
Reading: Viktor Frankl, excerpts from part 1 and 1984 postscript in *Man's Search for Meaning* [distributed]

Th. Apr. 3	Jean Vanier: brokenness and belonging Reading: Vanier, excerpts from <i>Becoming Human</i> [distributed]
Apr. 8	synthesis and review
Sometime Apr. 11-30	exam

Course Policies

1. **Students with a disability**, please both introduce yourself to the instructor and also contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at King's (csd@kings.uwo.ca; website: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/services-for-students-with-disabilities/>).
2. **Students who are experiencing emotional and/or psychological distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western for information about resources: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>.
3. **Intellectual honesty** is expected of all students. Plagiarism and cheating are very serious scholastic offences with penalties at the University. For what constitutes a scholastic offence and penalties, see http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.
4. **Submission of assignments:**
 - a. Assignments for PHL1901E should normally be submitted in person, in class.
 - b. Only late assignments for PHL1901E not submitted in class may be dropped off in the green mailbox, located on the main floor of The (south) Annex. Assignments dropped into the mailbox will be picked-up twice per day: once in the morning (9:30 a.m.) and in the afternoon (4:00 p.m.). All assignments dropped off after 4:00 p.m. on a Friday will be date- stamped the following Monday.
 - c. Late assignments incur a penalty of 2.5/100 per weekday.
 - d. The proposal, working summary, and paper for the IRP should be submitted through SAKAI/OWL at the History 1901E site.
5. **Missing the deadline for an assignment or a test or the exam:**
 - a. If you anticipate missing, or have missed, any of the above, please discuss your situation with the instructor as soon as possible.
 - b. Arrangements to enable the student to complete the requirement (an extension of a deadline for a written assignment or a make up test or exam) will be made only for a serious reason that disadvantages a student relative to the rest of the class.

For medical reasons, please both contact the instructor and the Academic Dean's office at King's University College. The required student medical certificate can be downloaded at: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf>
For non-medical reasons, please discuss with the instructor. Evidence may be required.
6. **Use of computers and phones in class:**
 - a. The use of laptops, notebooks, tablets and phones in class must be for matters related to the course only. Inappropriate use may be subject to sanctions. See: http://www.kings.uwo.ca/files/ile/about/code_of_conduct_2003.pdf.
 - b. To provide a safe classroom, students are advised to operate laptops on battery power rather than with power cords.