

The First Foundational Course

LSHV-601-01

Fall 2016

Jay Reuscher

202-388-4438

reuschej@Yahoo.com

Schedule

Topics

Texts

Requirements

The University's Honor code will be strictly enforced.

THE EVOLUTION OF CULTURE

Orientation What this course wants to do and why it is important to the program. A logistical problem and its solution. The legitimacy and necessary use of introspective data and the limitation of the methodological assumption of empirical science in regard to this topic.

PART I: Evolution and the emergence of Homo Sapiens.

A brief introduction to evolutionary theory.

Stages of human development and its innate attitudes toward security and freedom.

Shift to residential lifestyle and civil institutions.

Part ij: Human intelligence and recursiveness.

Recursiveness and intellectual plasticity.

Language(vocal and written)symbols as the fabric of culture.

PART III. Recursiveness and culture: from nature to meaning as a second environment.

Innovation and coherence and the dynamics of change.

PART IV. Tensions in society that frustrate culture's drive for coherence.

Two illustrative cases:

The Antigone example of the tension between freedom and the order need for security.

The example of the effect of the paradigm shift in science away from purpose as a scientific explanation on traditional ways of thinking about morality.

TEXTS

(R) = Required

(A)=Advanced, not required

SUMMER:

(R) The Recursive Mind. M. Carballis, Princeton, 2011 (978-0-691-14547-1)

(R) How Infants Know Minds. V.Reddy, Harvard, 2008, (978-0-674-02666-7)

(R) Theban Plays. "Antigone" , Meineck, Hackett, 2003, (978-0-87220-585-7)

PART I:

Narrative of human evolution up to the transition to civil society.

(R) On the Origin of Societies By Natural selection. J.Turner, Paradigm, 2008,(978-1-59451-516-3)

(R) Institutions. J. Turner, Rowen &Littlefield, 2003, (0-7425-2559-7)

PART II: Human intelligence, recursiveness, and language.)

(R) A Natural History of Human Thinking. M. Tomasello, Harvard,2014, (978-0-874-72477-8)

(R) The Language Myth. Vyvyan Evans, Cambridge, 2014. (978-01-107-61975-3)

(A) Inner Presence. A. Revonsuo, MIT, 2006, (0-262-18249-1)

(A) The Origin of meaning. J. Haverford, Oxford, 2007, (0-262-18249-1)

PART III. Recursiveness as the driving energy for cultural change language as its medium.

(R) Language and Myth. Ernst Cassirer. Dover, 1946, (978-0-486-20051-5)

(R) Why Language Matters for a Theory of Mind. J. Astington, Oxford, 2005, (0-19-515991-8)

PART IV, Two examples of Cultural tension.

(R) A Natural History of Human Morality. M. Tomasello

(R) Against Moral Responsibility. B. Waller, MIT, 2011, (978-0-262-01659-9)

(R) Critique of Practical Reason. Kant, Prentis Hall. 1993, (0-02-307753-0)

(A) Empathy and Morality. H. Maibon, Oxford, 2014, (978-0-19-996947-0)

REQUIREMENT

A 5+ page paper on the point of the material covered in Parts I and II will be required at the end of each section. These are diagnostic exercises meant to show me the level of your analytic and writing skills.

The evaluation for your work in the course as a whole will be based on the quality of a 10-15 page paper written for a project in the area covered by the course and designed by you with my approval.

SCHEDULE

PART I: August 31; Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26.

PART II: Oct. 3, 17?, 24, 31.

PART III Nov. 7, 14, 21.

PART IV. Nov. 28; Dec.5.

HONOR CODE

MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor system: To be honest in any academic endeavor: and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT:

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.