BLHS 61: The Human Condition

Dates: 08/28/2019-12/20/2019

Location: This course takes place on-site at the Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies' building located at 640 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20001. Additionally, Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies (SCS) uses Canvas as its Learning Management System. To learn more about Canvas, please go through the Canvas Guide for Students.

Faculty: Mark M. Gray. Ph.D.

Contact Information: mmg34@georgetown.edu, 202-687-0885.

Virtual Office Hours: Fridays, 3 pm to 5 pm and by appointment. In-person meetings available on campus and at my office at Georgetown's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), 2300 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 400A, Washington, DC 20007.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes us human? How much of this is a part of our "nature" (e.g., biological hardware, chemistry, and physiological changes) and how much of it is due to how we are nurtured (our socialization, cultures, and social interactions)? This course explores some of the most central aspects of the human condition and asks, "What makes us tick?" The class explores competing paradigms derived from a combination of studies and research from biology, medicine, psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, archaeology, and historical observation. The structure of the course is inspired by the concept of a "hierarchy of needs"—beginning with essential "lower order" aspects of the human condition moving up toward the problems and issues that are more often the focus of life once the essentials of life have been obtained. The course challenges the notion that 21st century human beings are all that different from those that existed in 100, 1,000, or even 10,000 years ago. It also seeks to understand how human behavior can vary so much across cultures now. Lecture and the course readings are supplemented with suggested journal articles including current research as well as multimedia excerpts on each week's topics.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:
1. Identify and describe major theories of human decision making and behavior
2. Explain how humans have understood the concept of "human nature" over time and across cultures and what impact these understandings had on their lives
3. Demonstrate application of major theories of human decision making and behavior to a particular scenario or problem
4. Differentiate and explain the biological and physiological contributions to human decision making and behavior
5. Differentiate and explain the psychological and sociological contributions to human decision making and behavior
6. Demonstrate the ability to identify and deconstruct human thought(s) and action(s) for a specific historical event
7. Speculate about human behavior using theories of human decision making and behavior for a specific scenario
8. Identify differences and similarities in human decision making and behavior over time and across cultures
9. Assemble argument(s) for the "most important" influences on human decision making and behavior
10. Apply one or more theories of human decision-making and behavior in a final paper.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following are the required reading material for this course (Note: There are additional recommended journal articles accessible through JSTOR):

Through a Glass Brightly: Using Science to See Our Species as We Really Are
David P. Barash
Oxford University Press (August 1, 2018)
ISBN-10: 0190673710
ISBN-13: 978-0190673710

Not So Different: Finding Human Nature in Animals
Nathan H. Lents
Publisher: Columbia University Press (May 17, 2016)
ISBN-10: 0231178328
ISBN-13: 978-0231178327

Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History
David Christian
University of California Press; Second Edition, (October 3, 2011)
ISBN-10: 9780520271449
ISBN-13: 978-0520271449

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Technical Requirements

As part of your learning experience, you can expect to:
1. Communicate via email including sending attachments.
2. Navigate the internet using a Web browser.
3. Use office applications such as Microsoft Office or Google Docs to create documents.
4. Learn how to submit assignments in Canvas.
5. Communicate with peers using discussion boards and other platforms.
6. Upload and download saved files.
7. Have easy access to the Internet.
8. Navigate Canvas, including using the email component within Canvas.
9. Use a microphone to record audio through your computer.
10. Use an internal or external camera to record video through your computer.

In this course we will use VoiceThread, TurnItIn and Zoom.

- VoiceThread is a tool that enables teachers and students to upload and asynchronously present images, video, and/or other media and respond to others presentations with audio, video, and/or text comments. Instructions for VoiceThread are available here.
- TurnItIn is a writing assessment tool that is used to detect plagiarism and allows teachers to provide assignment feedback to students. Instructions for TurnItIn are available here.
- Zoom enables users to conduct synchronous ("real-time") conferences, presentations, lectures, meetings, office hours and group chats via audio, video, text chat and content sharing. Instructions for Zoom are available here.

Computer Requirements

Computer requirements to complete the course are listed by Canvas in the Instructure Guides.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations

This course consists of 15 weeks. You are expected to do the readings, attend the weekly lectures, and to engage with the course material in depth. Your responsibilities include completing the assignments, and turning in your final project report. Participation is essential to your success in this class. In order to get full credit for participation, you will have to attend and participate in all discussions.

Time Expectations

Students should plan on spending approximately 2-5 hours per week outside of class to complete the work for each week.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. We assume you have read the honor code material located at http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code.

The Honor Code pledge follows:

In the 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.

Plagiarism

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out Plagiarism.org.

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Written work is due by the assigned due dates. Follow-ups and class participation are contingent on the timely submission of your initial responses.

Late Submission Policy:

As stated in the Student Handbook, you must notify me and obtain my approval if you are unable to complete any assignment by the published submission deadline. I will gladly consider granting extensions for assignments as long as the request is made at least 24 hours before the due date/time. The request must include the date and time when you intend to submit the assignment..

Discussions and Assignments

Assignments across the semester will account for 20% of your grade. A written exam, worth 30% of your grade, will gauge your grasp of the course material and ability to synthesize at mid-term. The final 50% of your grade is for a course paper (40%) that should consist of approximately 2,800 words and a 5-minute in-class or online presentation of your research (10%). This paper will focus on one of the human nature paradigms explored in the course and will include an application of that

paradigm to specific examples or events of human decision-making and behavior of interest to the student. See the week-by-week schedule below for more information on assignments.

Citation Style

This course uses APA style for all writing and research assignments. Resources for this citation style are available through

Georgetown Library Citation Guide

APA Style Guidebook

GRADING

Grading in this course will be determine by the following grading scale:

- •   A: 93% to 100%
- •   A-:   90% to 92%
- •   B+: 87% to 89%
- •   B: 83% to 86%
- •   B-:   80% to 82%
- •   C+: 77% to 79%
- •   C: 73% to 76%
- •   C-:   70% to 72%
- •   D+: 67% to 69%
- •   D: 63% to 66%
- •   F: 62% and below

ACCOMMODATIONS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equity and access to programs and facilities. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the Academic Resource Center, the office that oversees disability support services, (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu;) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website. Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services

SCS offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed online, at the School of Continuing Studies downtown location, and on the main Georgetown campus:

- Academic Resource Center
- 202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services
- 202-687-6985
- Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA)
- (202) 687-4798

Georgetown Library

Students enrolled in online School of Continuing Studies SCS coursework have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). Students can access these resources through the Library's Homepage by using their University username (NetID) and password (this is the same login information used to access email, BlackBoard, etc.). The Library does not mail physical items to students.

SCS students may make an appointment with a librarian to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. Appointments are conducted using Google Hangout (video-conferencing function) through the Georgetown Gmail System or by telephone. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the Services & Resources Guide for Online Students for additional information.

Research Guide

The Bachelor of Liberal Arts program has an extensive online Library Research Guide designed for the subject and research specifications of our program. This Guide will give you direct access to the library resources central to your course research work.

Learning Resources

SCS offers a host of learning resources to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the Writing Center and Refworks.

- The Writing Center offers professional writing support through its online peer tutoring service.
- Refworks is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

Technical Support

Click on the Help link (on the bottom-left corner in Canvas) to reach Canvas Support, including the Canvas Student Guide and 24 hour Canvas Support Hotline at 855-338-2770.

In this course we will use VoiceThread and Zoom.

- VoiceThread is a tool that enables teachers and students to upload and asynchronously present images, video, and/or other media and respond to others presentations with audio, video, and/or text comments. Technical support for VoiceThread is available.
- Zoom enables users to conduct synchronous ("real-time") conferences, presentations, lectures, meetings, office hours and group chats via audio, video, text chat and content sharing. Technical support for Zoom is available.

COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

Netiquette Guidelines

To promote the highest degree of education possible, we ask each student to respect the opinions and thoughts of other students and be courteous in the way that you choose to express yourself. The topics in this course can be controversial and promote debate. Students should be respectful and considerate of all opinions.

In order for us to have meaningful discussions, we must learn to genuinely try to understand what others are saying and be open-minded about others' opinions. If you want to persuade someone to see things differently, it is much more effective to do so in a polite, non-threatening way rather than to do so antagonistically. Everyone has insights to offer based on his/her experiences, and we can all learn from each other. Civility is essential.

Statement of Student Conduct, Civility, and Engagement

The School of Continuing Studies offers students the opportunity to engage with faculty, staff, and peers in ways that foster intellectual growth and development in their chosen field of study. It is important to recognize that each member of our community brings his or her own values, thoughts, perspectives, and experiences into each interaction. We expect students to behave in a manner that is civil and respectful of others, and appreciate the learning opportunities that come from engaging pluralistic perspectives in a dynamic educational environment.

Engagement within the SCS Georgetown community takes places in on-campus meeting spaces and classrooms, and extends to online learning platforms and forums. Students should be particularly mindful that participation in class discussions, group assignments, emails, blogs, and social media reflect upon them personally, academically, and professionally. All viewpoints, editorials, and opinions expressed by students represent those students exclusively – and not the students' instructors, classmates, academic program, School, or University – even in cases when students are using Georgetown-affiliated systems like email, blogs, and online portfolios. The expectations for respect and civility are consistent for on-campus classes and spaces, as well as

cyber, virtual, and online environments. Thus, civility and cybercivility are expected of all students, in all campus spaces.

SCS students are expected to adhere to the SCS guidelines for student conduct and the University Code of Student Conduct. In the event that a student's behavior is perceived to fall outside the stated SCS guidelines or may be a violation of the Code of Student Conduct, the matter may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for further review and possible sanctioning. Such instances can include but are not limited to: disruption of official university functions (including teaching, research, administration), failure to comply with a directive issued by a University official, harassment and bullying, and incivility. For questions regarding the SCS student conduct expectations please review the policy in-full found in the [Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Undergraduate Bulletin](#). For questions about the Code of Student Conduct, please review the information provided by the Office of Student Conduct.

Communication with Peers

Notifications

In this course we will use Canvas to send email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the Canvas system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages at least once per day. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name and module.
- Do not send messages asking general information about the class, please post those in the General Questions Discussion Board Forum.

Turnaround and Feedback

If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response within one business day. Please allow two business days for assessment submission feedback.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Canvas will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

Copyright

The materials used in Georgetown University courses ("Course Materials") generally represent the intellectual property of course instructors which may not be disseminated or reproduced in any form for public distribution (e.g., sale, exchange, etc.) without the written permission of the course instructor. Course Materials include all written or electronic documents and materials, including syllabi, current and past examination questions/answers, and presentations such as lectures, videos, PowerPoints, etc., provided by a course instructor. Course Materials may only be used by students enrolled in the course for academic (course-related) purposes.

Published course readings (book chapters, articles, reports, etc.) available in Canvas are copyrighted material. These works are made available to students through licensed databases or fair use. They are protected by copyright law, and may not be further disseminated or reproduced in any form for distribution (e.g., uploading to websites, sale, exchange, etc.) without permission of the copyright owner.

More information about intellectual property and copyright can be found here: https://www.library.georgetown.edu/copyright

More information about computer acceptable use policy and intellectual property can be found here: https://security.georgetown.edu/it-policies-procedures/computer-systems-aup

Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances

The following is university policy:

Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

Title IX at Georgetown

https://titleix.georgetown.edu/

Sexual Misconduct

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") prohibits discrimination based on sex in any educational programs, which includes sexual harassment or any acts of sexual misconduct. Title IX requires the University, upon becoming aware of any incident of sexual harassment and misconduct to respond appropriately to protect and maintain the safety of the University community, including students, faculty, and staff.

Georgetown University prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking.

Discrimination based on sex, including sexual misconduct and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status, subverts the University's mission and threatens permanent damage to the educational experience, careers, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Please know that as a faculty member I am committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault. However, University policy also requires me to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct.

Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

Jen Schweer, MA, LPC
Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention
(202) 687-0323
jls242@georgetown.edu

Erica Shirley
Trauma Specialist
Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)
(202) 687-6985
els54@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at:

https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/get-help

Pregnancy Adjustments and Accommodations

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical need and academic requirements.

Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out at: https://titleix.georgetown.edu/student-pregnancy.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Required Reading	Assignments

1	Introduction, "Big History" lens; Pre-human history: Why are we here? The key scientific concepts making human life possible. The impact and centrality of climate. What, in the big picture, remains unknown?	*Maps of Time*, Chs. 1-5	None
2	Dawn of human life, civilization, and the evolution of human nature. "The state of nature." Comparative understandings of creation and origin, Religious salvation and punishment	*Maps of Time*, Chs. 6-10 Multimedia The Great Human Odyssey https://www.pbs.org/video/nova-great-human-odyssey/	Your Place in History Essay
3	Communications, mediated realities Language and the arts: Emergence and evolution of language, visual communications from cave wall to cyberspace, transformative changes brought by mass media	*Not So Different*, Chs. 1-3 Journal Articles Chomsky Noam (1959). A Review of B. F. Skinner's Verbal Behavior Language, 35: 26-58 Postman, Neil (1967). Linguistics and the Pursuit of Relevance. The English Journal, 56:1160-1165 Postman, Neil (1979). Multimedia Excerpts from Digital Nation: Life on the Virtual Frontier (2010). Frontline/PBS: https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/	None
4	Love, sex, marriage, family, and socio-biology What is love?: The makings and development of human attraction, bonding, and	*Not So Different*, Chs. 4-7 Journal Articles Bullough, Vern L. (1998). Alfred Kinsey and the Kinsey Report: Historical Overview and Lasting Contributions. The Journal of Sex Research, 35:27-131	General Social Survey Crosstab and write-up

		modern conceptions of "romance"	Reece, Michael, Debbie Herbenick, et. al. (2010). Findings from the NSSHB. The Journal of Sexual Medicine, 7: 243-373	
5		Security and order. Who is in charge? How we choose our leaders from tribal leaders, to feudal monarchy, to democracy to the next "thing" (or the "End of History")? What is a citizen and how the "outsider" and notions of "less than" have dominated in-group/out-group conflict	*Through a Glass Brightly*, Chs. 1-8 Journal Articles Cheibub, Jose Antonio, Adam Przeworski, Fernando Papaterra Limongi Neto, and, Michael M. Alvarez. (1996). What Makes Democracies Endure? Journal of Democracy, 7:39-55 Fukuyama, Francis. (1989). The End of History? The National Interest, Summer. Multimedia Excerpt from The Psychology of Evil (shown as part of class)	None
6		Economics and the (ir)rational human Money, property and exchange: From agrarian feudalism, to free markets, to state-planned economies. The "rules of the economic game" and how these effect human decision making.	*Through a Glass Brightly*, Chs. 9-16, Conclusion Journal Articles David, Paul A. (1985). Clio and the Economics of QWERTY. The American Economic Review, Vol. 75:332-337 Tsebelis, George. (1988). Nested Games: The Cohesion of French Electoral Coalitions. British Journal of Political Science, 18:145-170 Multimedia Excerpts from The Corporation (shown as part of class)	Scatterplot and Trend Analysis and write-up
7		Midterm Exam	None	None
8		Movements toward Equality. Expansion of rights, liberties, and status: The voice of the peasant and laborer, critical theory perspectives, social movements, civil	*Maps of Time*, Chs. 11-15 Journal Articles Stewart, Abigail J., Isis H. Settles, Nicholas J. G. Winter. (1998). Women and the Social Movements of the 1960s: Activists, Engaged Observers, and Nonparticipants. Political Psychology, 19:63-94 Carty, Victoria. (2006). Labor Struggles, New Social Movements, and America's Favorite Pastime: New York Workers Take on New Era Cap Company. Sociological Perspectives, 49:239-259	Final Paper Topic(s) Submission

		rights, labor rights, women's movements.		
9	Advancement and Invention. Technology and science: enlightenment, the industrial age, and the digital age, what drives entrepreneurism and invention? Technological leaps in response to human problems, the emergence of modern medicine, logic, and science.	*Not So Different*, Chs. 8-10 Journal Articles Glismann, Hans H,. Ernst-Jürgen Horn (1988). Comparative Invention Performance of Major Industrial Countries: Patterns and Explanations. Management Science, 34:1169-1187 Demerath III, N. J. (2002). A Sinner among the Saints: Confessions of a Sociologist of Culture and Religion. Sociological Forum, 17:1-19 Multimedia Excerpts from The Industrial Revolution (shown as part of class)	None
10	Good and Evil. Religion and relativism: Sinners and saints through the ages. What is morality? Post-modern problems. Social science and identifying the "good person" who does "bad things."	*Not So Different*, Epilogue Journal Articles Alford, C. Fred (1990). The Organization of Evil. Political Psychology, 11:5-27 Dallmayr, Fred. (2006). An End to Evil? Philosophical and Political Reflections. International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, 60:169-186 Carter, Alan. (2005). Evolution and the Problem of Altruism. Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition, 123:213-230 Multimedia Excerpts from 13th (shown as part of class)	You're the President Essay
11	Leisure Entertainment, childhood, amusing ourselves to death: The "late coming of leisure," childhood, and mass amusements. Is pop culture an even better	Reading/research for final paper Journal Article Villarica, Hans. (2011). Maslow 2.0: A New and Improved Recipe for Happiness. The Atlantic: Aug 17 2011	Final Paper Outline

		"opiate of the masses?"		
12	The Big History Question: Do people matter? Marxism and history: Do revolutions need leaders? Social forces and human events, big questions about free will and social determinism.	Reading/research for final paper Journal Article Skocpol, Theda. (1976). France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions Comparative Studies in Society and History, 18:175-210	What If? Essay
13	The Future What will happen next? Current views of the future and what "futurists" today think about the "shape of things to come."	Reading/research for final paper Excerpts and multimedia related to Physics of the Future (2011) by Michio Kaku (provided by the instructor)	Final Paper Graphic
14	Writing workshop	None	Final paper drafts
15	Presentations, Final Paper is due on Dec. 23	None	Presentations and Final paper