ECON/ENG/PHIL 357 - Topics in Humanomics – Becoming Human: Understanding Moral Development

**INSTRUCTORS:** Professor Erik Kimbrough ([ekimbrou@chapman.edu](mailto:ekimbrou@chapman.edu)) and Professor Michael Valdez Moses ([mimoses@chapman.edu](mailto:mimoses@chapman.edu))

**COURSE MEETINGS: M (1:00 - 3:50) or W (1:00 - 3:50) – Location TBD**

**OFFICE HOURS:**We will have joint office hours from 10:30-11:30 on TBD at the Smith Institute – 2nd floor of Wilkinson Hall (Free Coffee!) We are also available by appointment (just give us 24 hours notice).

**PREREQUISITES:**None

**RESTRICTIONS**: Sophomore Standing or Faculty Consent Required

**COURSE COMMUNICATIONS**: The vast majority of classroom communications will take place through email (typically via the dedicated course Canvas site). YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE THAT YOU RECEIVE THESE COMMUNICATIONS. We are a team, so if you email one of us, email both of us.

**Description**: What separates humans from the rest of the animals? Language, artistic or symbolic expression, creativity, abstract reasoning, self-consciousness, and any number of other characteristics have been suggested, but arguably the most distinctive human capacity is our morality. Trade, peaceful cooperation with strangers, trust, and reciprocity, to name only a few basic patterns of interaction that permeate our lives, are supported by morality, and disruptions of these patterns are met with moral condemnation and punishment. Fundamentally, all of the institutions, rules, and norms that allow us to live together in a society depend in one way or another on moral behavior, but we do not emerge from the womb with our moral sense fully intact. Both the rules of morality and a clear sense of when and where they apply are learned (more or less painstakingly) over time. By carefully comparing influential works in classical moral philosophy and economics (Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*), in contemporary experimental social science (Michael Tomasello’s *Becoming Human*), as well major works of literature (Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Franz Kafka’s “Report to an Academy”) and contemporary global cinema (*Emma*, *JoJo Rabbit, The Spirit of the Beehive)*, we shall raise fundamental questions about how we become moral beings: How does this process work? How does our moral sense develop? How do we become moral? Why do some individuals fail to develop a moral consciousness? Is there such a thing as human moral progress over time? What happens to the moral development of individuals if an entire society deviates from widely accepted moral norms (e.g. Nazi Germany, Francoist Spain)? Is it possible for someone to develop morally even in an immoral society? And ultimately, how, by becoming moral beings, do we become human?

Humanomics classes (like this one) adopt a distinctively interdisciplinary approach. Throughout the term, we will address these questions through the lenses of economics, philosophy, and art (especially literature and cinema). We will not just ask what these disciplines have to say about our topic independently of one another; we will also ask how these disciplines interact, enrich each other, and have unique ways of capturing different dimensions of reality. The overarching idea is that there are many ways of expressing important ideas and that focusing on any one form of expression (social scientific, philosophical, artistic) in isolation is bound to leave important aspects of those ideas unstated, or incompletely expressed. Moreover, by working with media situated in a variety of historical contexts, we will necessarily ask why a set of ideas have been expressed in different ways in different times and places, and how this form of expression affects what’s being said.

**Required Texts**:

Kafka, Franz. "[Report to an Academy](http://research.uvu.edu/albrecht-crane/HONR%202100/a%20report%20to%20an%20academy.pdf)." 1917.

Shelley, Mary. [*Frankenstein*](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0486282112/ref=ppx_od_dt_b_asin_title_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1). 1831. Dover Thrift.

Smith, Adam. [*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*](https://www.libertyfund.org/books/the-theory-of-moral-sentiments). 1759. Liberty Fund.

Tomasello, Michael. [*Becoming Human: A Theory of Ontogeny*](https://www.amazon.com/Becoming-Human-Ontogeny-Michael-Tomasello/dp/0674980859/ref=sr_1_4?keywords=becoming+human&qid=1582068909&sr=8-4). 2019. Harvard University Press.

**Films:**

Emma (2020)

JoJo Rabbit (2019)

The Spirit of the Beehive (1973)

**Course Schedule (subject to change, assignments updated as we go):**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Date* | *Topic* | *Readings* | Assignments |
| **Week 1:** | 2/1 |  | *Hour 1*: Tomasello Preface, Ch. 1-2, p. 3-44 | Writer's Workshop |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Smith, p. 9-26 |  |
| **Week 2:** | 2/8 |  | *Hour 1*: Smith, p. 27-66 | Writer's Workshop |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Tomasello, Ch. 3, p. 45-90 |  |
| **Week 3:** | 2/15 |  | *Hour 1*: Smith, p. 67-108 | Writer's Workshop |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Tomasello, Ch. 4, p. 91-133 |  |
| **Week 4:** | 2/22 |  | *Hour 1:*Tomasello, Ch. 5, p. 134-160 | Writer's Workshop |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3:*Tomasello, Ch. 6-7, p. 161-218 |  |
| **Week 5:** | 3/1 |  | *Hour 1:*Smith, p. 109-133 | Paper 1 Prompt |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Smith, p. 134-178 |  |
| **Week 6:** | 3/8 |  | *Hour 1*: Tomasello, Ch. 8, p. 219-248 | Writer's Workshop |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Tomasello, Ch. 9-10, p. 249-296 |  |
| **Week 7:** | 3/15 |  | *Hour 1*: Screening of *Emma* (runtime 2hr) | **Paper 1 Due** |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Discussion |  |
| **Week 8:** | 3/22 |  | *SPRING BREAK* |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Week 9:** | 3/29 |  | *Hour 1*: Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Vol. 1 | Paper 2 Prompt |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Smith, p. 175-211 |  |
| **Week 10:** | 4/5 |  | *Hour 1*: Shelley, *Frankenstein,*Vol. 2 | Writer's Workshop |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Smith, p. 212-236 |  |
| **Week 11:** | 4/12 |  | *Hour 1*: Shelley, *Frankenstein,* Vol. 3 | Writer's Workshop |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Smith, p. 237-264 |  |
| **Week 12:** | 4/19 |  | *Hour 1*: Screening of *Spirit of the Beehive* (runtime 98min) |  |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Discussion |  |
| **Week 13:** | 4/26 |  | *Hour 1*: Smith, p. 265-342 | Writer's Workshop |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3*: Tomasello, Ch. 11-12, p. 297-344 |  |
| **Week 14:** | 5/3 |  | *Hour 1:*Screening of *JoJo Rabbit* (runtime 108min) |  |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3:*Discussion |  |
| **Week 15:** | 5/10 |  | *Hour 1*: Kafka, “Report to the Academy” | **Paper 2 Due** |
|  |  |  | *Hour 3:*Wrap-up |  |
|  |  | **Final Exam** |  |  |

**Course Learning Outcomes:**Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

● Challenge and deconstruct the perceived tensions between economics and the humanities.

● Ask cogent, thought-provoking questions based upon critical reading of texts across a range of artistic, philosophical, and historical genres—film, fiction and non-fiction.

● Explain theories of moral development and moral behavior, including their assumptions and their implications.

● Examine how our morals shape our behavior, our understanding of the world and our relation to social structures.

● Explain the relation of moral systems and structures to historical, political and social context: post-revolutionary 19th century Europe, Francoist Spain, and Nazi Germany.

● Explain methods used to measure moral development and moral behavior (e.g. surveys, experiments, ethnographies).

● Explore the relationship between moral systems, economic institutions and economic decision-making.

● Examine and appreciate formal and aesthetic characteristics of film (e.g. lighting, editing, cinematography, music and soundscape, performance) and literature (e.g. characterization, narrative structure, prose style, generic characteristics).

● Show how the formal qualities of artistic works dramatize the moral development or ethical deformation of major characters.

● Show how artistic works represent the moral and ethical successes/failures of people and institutions in their historical context.

● Articulate how texts across the disciplines are co-constitutive of knowledge, ethics, and aesthetics.

● Demonstrate thoughtful rhetorical choices in creative and expository prose.

**Program or General Education Outcomes:**Upon completion of the course, students will have:

● Composed critical and creative works motivated by theories of moral development.

● Explored and explained processes by which humans develop social and/or historical perspectives.

● Explored and explained values and ethical perspectives in light of theories of moral development.

● Artistic Inquiry Learning Outcome: Students compose critical or creative works that embody or analyze conceptually an artistic form at a baccalaureate / pre-professional level.

● Social Inquiry Learning Outcome: Students identify, frame and analyze social and/or historical structures and institutions in the world today.

● Values/Ethics Inquiry Learning Outcome: Students articulate how values and ethics inform human understanding, structures, institutions, and behavior.

**Grading:**

Because of the interactive nature of the class, attendance is an essential component. Excessive “tardies” constitute absences; three absences may result in failure (Undergraduate Catalog, “Academic Policies and Procedures.”) Please keep this in mind. Missed in-class work cannot be made up.

1. Participation in Class Discussion [10%]  
Class discussion provides an opportunity for students to explore questions about moral development. Through this shared inquiry, students gain experience reading for meaning and communicating complex ideas; thinking reflectively about an interpretive problem; and supporting and testing thoughts through dialogue with peers. Class discussion fosters the flexibility of mind to consider problems from multiple perspectives and the ability to analyze ideas critically. Students must enter the discussion with specific questions generated by the texts as well as a desire to probe and reevaluate ideas. It is essential that students bring texts and questions to each class session.  
  
2. Written Questions [10%] - [Guidelines for Asking Questions](https://www.dropbox.com/s/upum3ilm7eiy0xx/Guidelines%20for%20Questions.E.E.357.S2018.docx?dl=0)  
Shared inquiry is a process for exploring the central ideas of the course. This means students must read for meaning, identifying possible interpretative problems they would like to address in discussion. For each class period with an assignment, students will word process in advance two questions to be handed in before class starts. Asking a good question is harder than providing a good answer. The student’s task is to delve into a claim or idea they find puzzling, exploring what has unsettled them. When writing the second paper, we will periodically use the writer’s workshop to provide waypoints on the path from research questions to the completed paper.  
  
3. Writer’s Workshop and In-Class Experiments [25%]

The writer's workshop is based on the idea that students learn to write when they write often; in this case, focusing their attention on ideas from the readings and discussions immediately preceding the workshop. An important component of these assignments is to understand each week’s media in their social scientific, philosophical, and/or artistic context. Students will encounter a variety of writing assignments for the workshop, including both critical and creative works. Students will be asked to produce a number of papers, of approximately 250 words, and submit a polished piece at the end of the hour. Also includes grades based on participation in in-class experiments.

4. Papers – Expository and Creative [40% = 2 x 20% each] - [Guidelines for Paper Formatting](https://www.dropbox.com/s/pq0rtlbefttln5x/Paper%20Formatting%20Guidelines.docx?dl=0)

In addition to the writer’s workshop papers, students will complete two major papers in the course, one expository/critical and one creative in nature. These papers will provide opportunities for students to explore ideas and use texts to add to the ongoing discourse. The second paper, which requires students to produce their own artistic work, either in the form of a short story or a scene (suitable for stage or screen), will challenge students to analyze and embody conceptually the idea of artistic form. Provide two printed copies.

5. Oral Final Examination [15%]  
Students will consider the course objectives and respond to questions posed by the professors in an oral examination during the exam period. More details will be given towards the end of the class.  
  
**Academic Integrity:**

Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the university Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please see the full description of Chapman University’s policy on Academic Integrity at [www.chapman.edu/academics/academicintegrity/index.aspx](http://www.chapman.edu/academics/academicintegrity/index.aspx).

**Chapman University’s Students with Disabilities Policy:**  
In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the [Office of Disability Services](https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/disability-services/index.aspx). If you will need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized.   
  
Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 if you have questions regarding this procedure, or for information and to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once formal approval of your need for accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.  
  
**Equity and Diversity Statement**:  
Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in [Chapman’s Harassment and Discrimination Policy](https://www.chapman.edu/diversity/_files/strategic-initiatives/harassment-and-discrimination-policy.pdf). Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the [Dean of Students](https://www.chapman.edu/students/dean-of-students/index.aspx) and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.