

The Human Person & Identity: Media Reflections & Refractions

CORE 120.04 – 3 credit hours – MWF 10:00-10:50 – BSB 114

Professors

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Required Readings and Materials

Text

Stevenson, Leslie and David L. Haberman. *Ten Theories of Human Nature*. 5th ed. NY: Oxford UP, 2008.

Readings and materials on the course blog: http://blogs.acu.edu/1120_CORE12004/

Mission Statements

ACU's Mission – to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

General Education Core Mission — to introduce students to and engage them in the process of thinking critically, globally, and missionally, preparing them for the rigor of academic excellence and university life at ACU.

Course Mission—to equip students with frameworks through which to address issues of identity and the self.

Course Prerequisite and Description

Prerequisite: CORE 110: Cornerstone. This course is intended for first or second-year college students who are continuing their Core Curriculum requirements.

The purpose of this course is to engage these students in thinking critically, missionally, and globally about the ideas which shape our current and future views of ourselves. Students will be exposed to various historical ideas about the self, consider the differences between human persons and the rest of creation, examine exterior forces that constrain the self, and create a statement of personal identity. This will be done through in-class presentations, mentored class discussion, and personal and collaborative writing to reflect on how individually and as a culture we have come to understand ourselves and how we might change our understanding now and in the future.

Required Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical awareness of social location.
2. Articulate a critical assessment of various views of the self (including at least ancient, modern, post-modern views, and physical).
3. Explore the ethical and moral implications of living an integrated, Christ-centered life of faith through informed judgments, reasoning, and evaluations.
4. Describe various manifestations of empathy.
5. Utilize a multidisciplinary approach to analyzing the self in a variety of locations such as historical context, philosophical milieu, aesthetic situation, and theological framework.

Course Assignments and Grade Weights

- **Preparation and Participation 30%**
 - Quizzes: Results on reading quizzes will indicate a working knowledge of term and main concepts from the assigned readings.
 - Discussion: Be prepared and willing to participate in class discussions over the reading and course materials.
 - Course blogs: Create and respond to topical entries as assigned
- **Social Location Essay 10%**
 - a short reaction paper (3-5 pages) offering a personal perspective of one's social location
- **Analytic Paper or Project 30%**
 - proposal for final project (5%)
 - a medium-length analytical essay (5-7 pages) or creation of a complex artifact that critically responds to specific course issues (25%)
- **Unit Exams 10%**
 - Objective and qualitative exams over material presented in class and in readings.
- **Final Exam 15%**
 - Written response to a case scenario identifying specific empathetic features, and drawing conclusions for alternative or additional empathetic gestures.
- **Social Media Fast – Response and Critique 5%**
 - Analogue (hand-written) response to a week-long social media fast

Course Competencies and Measurements

	Competency	Measurement Instrument	Measurement Standard
1	Demonstrate a critical awareness of social location	Class Discussion Social Location Essay	1a Participation will be reviewed by professors and measured in terms of how well students support their ideas with specific evidence and how well they respond to and incorporate alternate perspectives from peers and instructors. 1b. Students will write a short reaction paper after engaging a prompt chosen by the professor. Professors will assess papers based on the thoughtful engagement of the topic, including the thoroughness of personal context provided and the effective use of insights from class discussions.
2	Articulate a critical assessment of various views of the self (including at least ancient, biological, modern and post-modern views).	Analytic Paper or Project	2a. Students will write a medium-length paper or create a multi-media project about a historic or philosophic view of the self chosen by the professor. Professors will assess papers and projects based on the comprehensive engagement of the topic, including proper citation of materials, scope and depth of analysis, and concision and persuasiveness of the argument.
3	Explore the ethical and moral implications of living an integrated, Christ-centered life of faith through informed judgments, reasoning, and evaluations.	Class Discussion Blog Entries Social Location Essay	See 1a. 3b. Participation by students in discussion blogs will be reviewed by peers and/or professors for personal application of class material in thoughtful analyses of the self. Creative use of and responses to elements such as literature, images or video clips that relate to the self will also be assessed. See 1b.

	Competency	Measurement Instrument	Measurement Standard
4	Describe various manifestations of empathy.	Blog Entries Final Exam	See 3b. Using the designated final exam time-slot, students will respond to a case scenario in a written, aural, or video format. The prompt will be similar to and will build on the prompts used in blog entries. Results will be assessed in terms of students' application of materials covered in class, reflection of a holistic view of empathy with appropriate specificity for the prompt, and inclusion of appropriate detail. See 1b.
5	Utilize a multidisciplinary approach to analyzing the self in a variety of locations such as historical context, philosophical milieu, aesthetic situation, and theological framework.	Class Discussion Blog Entries Analytic Paper or Project	3a. Participation will be reviewed by professors and measured in terms of how well students support their ideas with specific evidence and how well they are open to criticism by peers and instructors. See 3b. See 2a.

Grading Procedure and Rubrics

To assign a course grade, the following scale is used: 100-90 = A, 89-80 = B, 79-70 = C, 69-60 = D, 0-59 = F

Course Policies

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class period. Upon missing 20% of the course (9 absences in a MWF class or 6 absences in a TR class), the student will be dropped from the class with the grade of an F. For any absence, you will be expected to be prepared for the next class. Three tardies constitute one absence. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered and any assignments made. Ignorance of an assignment will not excuse late work.

Participation and Preparation

30% of your grade in this course is comprised of "participation and preparation." This is divided equally into thirds. One-third is made up of the scores from your in-class reading quizzes throughout the semester; one-third, from your participation on the course blogs (graded using the rubric found on the blog); and one-third based on your participation in class.

In-class discussion is a major component of this course. Be advised that students who do not participate in discussion, or who fail to contribute substantively to discussion, will also lose participation points (e.g., "I agree with what Jack said," or "it was boring" is not a substantive contribution.) Please be aware that the participation points section of your grade is based on the professors' observations, throughout the semester. We will observe your attendance, contribution to discussion, and overall engagement in the class. Students who come to class in a consistent and timely fashion, and speak up at least occasionally (once a week) receive a base participation grade of 80. Students who miss class or are frequently late, or who fail to participate in discussion, will drop to a 70. Students who demonstrate a negative or disrespectful attitude in discussion will drop to a 60 or below. Students who contribute significant, thoughtful comments on a consistent basis will receive a score in the high 80s or low 90s, and students whose regular, substantive remarks significantly forward class discussion will receive full credit.

Late Work

Work is expected on the date it is due. Work received within a week of the due date will receive an automatic 10% reduction; work received between a week and two weeks after the due date will receive an automatic 20% reduction. Work will not be accepted beyond two weeks of the due date. Should you become ill or having mitigating circumstances arise that impact your performance, please contact your professors immediately so that they can help you.

Academic Honesty

Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU's Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the Policy. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God's nature in our lives. Every member of the faculty, staff and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship, and research.

The full policy is available for review at the Provost's office web site (<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost>) and the following offices: provost, college deans, dean of campus life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residential life education, and academic departments.

Cooperation with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Abilene Christian University is dedicated to removing barriers and opening access for students with disabilities in compliance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Alpha Scholars Program facilitates disability accommodations in cooperation with instructors. In order to receive accommodations, you must be registered with Alpha Scholars Program, and you must complete a specific request for each class in which you need accommodations. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please call the Alpha Scholars office directly at (325) 674-2667.

Classroom Conduct

Courtesy for self and others is expected at all times. Students who sleep in class will be counted absent. Those who participate in disruptive behavior of any kind will have one warning before their behavior is addressed in a personal conference with a professor and an appropriate course of action is determined.

Electronic devices will be used at the discretion of the professors. Students wishing to use them must sign a covenant with the professors and students in their group. Penalties for misuse are outlined in the contract. Food and drink are allowed in the classroom as long as they do not become a distraction or students fail to clean up after themselves. Any damage caused by spills will be the responsibility of the individual student.

Students will be expected to exercise the SELF-DISCIPLINE appropriate to a university student and the FAITHFULNESS appropriate for a Christian. Students should make every effort to: stay up with assignments, turn them in on time, follow the ethics code, communicate effectively with the professors encourage classmates when possible, take good notes, jump into class discussions, stay awake in class, get plenty of sleep outside of class, devote themselves to prayer, and in all decisions look at the long range consequences.

Note Taking

Throughout the semester, material will be presented that is beyond the scope of the textbook or course blog. Occasionally, we will divide into groups and have smaller discussions that generate a specific conclusion or answer to a question. You are responsible for making sure this material (lecture and discussion) is "captured" in your notes as it will appear on the examinations. To do this, you should bring paper and a pencil/pen to class at each of our meetings.

Course Calendar

S&H = Stevenson and Haberman, *Ten Theories of Human Nature*, 5th edition. Oxford UP, 2009.

UNIT I – Theories about Media – Weeks 1 – 3

Week 1 (Jan. 19, 21) – Introduction and Creating Ourselves Online

Readings: the cases FOR and AGAINST Facebook (*Time* and *Gizmodo* articles)

Media: PBS Frontline *Kids Online* - “Revolution in Classrooms and Social Life”

Assignments: What’s the use of Facebook? (interactive, in-class quiz)

Week 2 (Jan. 24, 26, 28) – Theories of Media

Readings: excerpts from Marshall McLuhan, *The Understanding of Media*

Chapter 1 – The Medium is the Message; Chapter 4 – The Gadget Lover: Narcissus as Narcosis;

Chapter 7 – Challenge and Collapse: the Nemesis of Creativity

Media: Second Life Documentary; *Trusted Computing*; *McLuhan’s Wake*

Assignments: Blog Response – McLuhan [due Friday, Jan. 28]

Week 3 (Jan. 31, Feb. 2, 4) – Authentic Lives

Readings: Thoreau – excerpts from *Walden*

Turkle – excerpt from *Alone and Together*

Media: PBS Documentary, *Digital Nation*

Assignments: Media fast: unplugging from Facebook, Twitter, Texting

Blog Response – Thoreau and Turkle [due Friday, Feb. 4]

NOTE: IDENTITY CHAPEL – Wednesday, February 2 – 11:00 am – Cullen Auditorium

UNIT II – Human Nature in Ancient History – Weeks 4 – 6

Week 4 (Feb. 7, 9, 11) – Hindu Concepts of Self

Readings: from *Sources of Indian Tradition* (Introduction and Excerpts)

S&H “Upanishadic Hinduism: The Quest for Ultimate Knowledge)

Media: Beatles - “Within You, Without You” from *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*

Delibes – “Flower Duet” from *Lakmé* – with pop interpolations

Assignments: social media fast this week [analog response due Monday, Feb. 14]

Week 5 (Feb. 14, 16, 18) – The Ideal “Gentleman” – Confucius

Readings: from *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (Introduction and Excerpts from Confucius)

Gao Yuan, *Born Red* (“The Red, The Black, and the In-Between” and “Smashing the Four Olds”)

Media: excerpt from *The Concrete Revolution* – documentary by Xiaolu Guo on the 2008 Beijing Olympics

Assignments: Blog Response – family connections to identity [due Friday, Feb. 18]

Week 6 (Feb. 21, 23, 25) – Suffering and the Human Experience – Buddhism

Readings: S&H, “Buddhism: In the Footsteps of the Buddha” (24 pages)

Excerpts from *Sources of Indian Tradition*

Media: *The Matrix* (“there is no spoon”); *Little White Wires*

Assignments: Blog Response – Buddhist ideas in Film [due Friday, Feb. 25]

EXAM – UNIT II, Monday Feb. 28

UNIT III – Reason, the Bible & Enlightenment – Weeks 7 – 11

Week 7 (Feb 28, Mar 2, 4) – Reason and Responsibility – Plato and Aristotle	
Readings: S&H, “Plato” and “Aristotle” Plato, <i>Republic</i> : excerpt from Book VII (Allegory of Cave)	
Media: platosallegory.com (short, animated film); <i>The Matrix</i> (is what we experience ‘real’?)	
Assignments:	
Week 8 (March 7, 9, 11) – Reason and Responsibility – Plato and Aristotle	
Readings: excerpt from David Lipscomb, <i>Civil Government</i>	
Media: Political Cartoons and Propaganda Posters; Mass-Media	
Assignments: Proposal for final paper	[due Friday, March 11]
Week of March 14, 16, 18 – Spring Break	
Week 9 (March 21, 23, 25) – Imago Dei – The Bible and Humanity in Relation to God	
Readings: S&H, “The Bible”	
Media: Ancient Scrolls and Codices, the Gutenberg Bible (Beginnings of Mass Communication)	
Assignments: Social Location Essay	[due Friday, March 25]
Week 10 (March 28, 30, Apr 1) – Reason and Unreason – Eighteenth-Century Thoughts	
Readings: Declaration of Independence, Kant: What is Enlightenment?	
Media: Mozart – String Quartet (balance and perfection); <i>Don Giovanni</i> (constructing a self through others)	
Assignments:	
Week 11 (April 4, 6, 9) – People as Products – Karl Marx	
Readings: S&H, “Marx: The Economic Basis of Human Societies” Excerpt from Marx, <i>The German Ideology</i> ; Thoreau, “Economy” from <i>Walden</i>	
Media: Riefenstahl, <i>Triumph of the Will</i> ; <i>Star Wars</i> ; <i>Metropolis</i>	
Assignments: Blog Response – Commodification of People in film	[due Friday, April 9]
EXAM – UNIT III, Monday, April 11	

UNIT IV – (Post)Modern Human Nature – Weeks 12 – 15

Week 12 (April 11, 13, 15) – Connecting with Others - Empathy	
Readings: case studies on Empathy	
Media: an excerpt from <i>Mother Teresa is Dead</i>	
Assignments: In-class and reflective writing on role playing and empathetic gestures	[due April 15]
Week 13 (April 18, 20, 22) – Biological Views of the Self – Darwin	
Readings: S&H, “Darwinian Theories” Charles Darwin, excerpt – conclusion from <i>The Origin of Species</i> Sigmund Freud, excerpts from <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> Chapter 3 – A Dream is a Fulfillment of a Wish;	
Media: NPR story “No Chump Change for Chimp Art”; excerpt from Rameau, <i>Les Indes Galantes</i>	
Assignments:	

Week 14 (April 25, 27, 29) – The Essence of Existence – Nietzsche and Sartre
Readings: excerpt from Nietzsche, <i>Genealogy of Morals</i> Sartre, <i>Essay on Existentialism</i> (5 pages); excerpt from John Cage, <i>New Music</i> (3 pages)
Media: John Cage, 4:33; Alvin Lucier, <i>I am Sitting in a Room</i>
Assignments: blog response to a John Cage musical “experience”
Week 15 (May 2, 4, 6) – The Disassembled Self – Virtual Reality
Readings: Foucault – excerpt from <i>Technologies of the Self</i> readings on the Universal Rights of Man
Media: <i>Avatar</i>
Assignments: blog response on Gender

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 11, 8:00 – 9:45 am

- Unit IV materials
- Cumulative identification of materials (readings, artworks, media) from throughout the semester