



University of Central Florida
College of Arts and Humanities
Department of Philosophy

Course Information: Syllabus

HUM 2020: Encountering the Humanities, (FALL 2017), 3CR
Location/Time: WebCourses@UCF (on the Canvas LMS)

Syllabus Change Policy:

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Contact Information

- **Professor:**

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Required Textbooks

- Yuval Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. NY: Harper, 2015. ISBN: 978-0062316097
- John Gray, *The Soul of the Marionette: A Short Inquiry into Human Freedom*. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2015. ISBN: 978-0374261184

Course Description, Goal and Rationale:

- The course surveys the range of ideas, research methods and approaches to scholarship, critical reflection, and creative work in the humanities.
- Students will cultivate an ability to analyze and critique scholarship, critical reflection, and creative work in the humanities.

Learning Objectives:

- Conceptualize a variety of sociocultural and philosophical issues, art and other cultural artifacts within the subject of the humanities, beginning in the prehistoric era, and resolving to the contemporary moment.
- Recognize conflict within the humanities, be it within academic scholarship or creative expression, and consider ways to examine solutions to complex issues and representations.
- Apply personal perspectives and expectations to a variety of humanistic phenomena in a critical theoretical way.
- Evaluate different ways that people express concerns within the context of the humanities.
- Form a theory about what the humanities may be, and how such a diverse cultural enterprise may be used to make sense of complex issues and artifacts which surround all of us in the 21st century.

Student Responsibilities

- **Participation:** Students are expected to submit their discussions and essays for online courses in a timely manner. Learning activities are organized via Canvas discussions and students are expected to be full partners in this process. Students are also expected to be attentive to the Canvas site's announcements and assignments on a continuing basis. Checking with the Canvas site at least three times each week will be necessary. Learning is facilitated by online discussion forums. There may be some online group work and students are expected to be full partners in this process.
- **NOTE ON FINANCIAL AID and PARTICIPATION:** As of Fall 2014, all faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the first discussion forum post during the first week of class. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.
- **Homework:** Assignments will be given requiring the student's own writing and responses to articles, films, and outside stimuli brought into the course for the purpose of student responses.
- **Other daily responsibilities:** Students will be encouraged to enrich their learning environment by bringing into course discussions items from newspapers, radio reports, television coverage, the latest films, and anecdotes from their own life experiences.
- **Tests/Exams:** There will be a midterm and final (non-cumulative) essay exam for the course.

Course Content & Outline

August 21

An Animal of No Significance

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.3-19

The Freedom of the Marionette

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.1-10

August 28

The Tree of Knowledge

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.20-39

The Faith of Puppets

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.10-19

September 4

A Day in the Life of Adam and Eve

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.40-62

Demiurgy and Tailors' Dummies

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.19-25

September 11

The Flood

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.63-76

Leopardi and the Souls of Machines

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.25-37

September 18

History's Biggest Fraud

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.77-97

The Return of Ligeia

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.37-41

September 25

Building Pyramids

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.98-118

The Golem and the Circular Ruins

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.41-45

October 2

Memory Overload

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.119-132

Solaris and Our World

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.45-49

October 9

There is No Justice in History

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.133-162

The Revelation of Philip K. Dick

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.49-62

October 16

Midterm Exam

The Arrow of History

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.164-172

Entering the Zone

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.63-66

October 23

The Scent of Money

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.174-187

Mr. Weston Drops a Match

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.66-72

October 30

Imperial Visions

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.188-208

Roof Gardens, Feathers and Human Sacrifice

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.73-90

November 6

The Law of Religion

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.209-236

Dark Mirrors, Hidden Angels and an Algorithmic Prayer-Wheel

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.90-101

November 13

The Secret of Success; The Discovery of Ignorance

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.237-274

Human Redundancy and the Cyborg Economy

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.101-110

November 20

The Marriage of Science and Empire; The Capitalist Creed

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.275-333

An Iron Mountain and a Shifting Spectacle

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.110-121

November 27

The Wheels of Industry; A Permanent Revolution; And They Lived Happily Ever After; The End of *Homo Sapiens*; Afterword: The Animal that Became a God

Harari, *Sapiens*, p.334-416

**A Universal Panopticon; Puppetry, Conspiracy and Ouija Boards;
When the Machine Stops; What Science Won't Tell You; Ethics for
Puppets; Gravity and the Fall**

Gray, *Soul of the Marionette*, p.121-166

December 4

Final Exam

Grading Method: Evaluation is based mainly on essay writing and therefore a competency in such writing is expected. Students' writing will be judged by its clarity and precision in manuscript execution (all essays must be word-processed and submitted digitally) with evidence of: proofreading before submission; correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar; focus on a point, topic, or subject that is congruent with the scope of the assignment; appropriate synthesis and analysis; logical progression of ideas, arguments, counter arguments, and conclusions; and assertions and statements supported by evidence and discussion.

Grading Scale:

A	100%	to 94%
A-	< 94%	to 90%
B+	< 90%	to 87%
B	< 87%	to 84%
B-	< 84%	to 80%
C+	< 80%	to 77%
C	< 77%	to 74%
C-	< 74%	to 70%
D+	< 70%	to 67%

D < 67% to 64%

D- < 64% to 61%

F < 61% to 0%

Assessments:

- **The Midterm and Final Exam (approx. 1000 words each) count for ~65% (~30% for the Midterm; ~35% for the Final Exam) of the grade.**
- **Discussion boards (approx. 1600 words total) count for ~35% of the grade.**

Policy for late work: Tardiness in posting to Canvas and assignment submission will be penalized as follows. There will be **10% deduction** for work submitted after the due date. **One week** from the due date is the last date for which an assignment will be accepted without documented evidence for an excused absence. The professor reserves the right to amend this policy where the situation warrants it.

UCF Golden Rule: Plagiarism of any kind is a violation of the "Golden Rule" as published in the UCF Catalog. Academic honesty and integrity are expected of everyone. Academic dishonesty results in at least an "F" for the particular assignment concerned and may be subject to further action as appropriate.

ADA Policy: To register for services contact Student Disability Services at ada@mail.ucf.edu or 407-823-2371.