

## HUMS 065: Education and the Life Worth Living

MW 9-10:15am

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### Course Description

What is an education *for*? What does it have to do with real life—not just any life, but a life worth living? We will explore these questions through engagement with the visions of five very different ways of imagining the good life and, therefore, of imagining education: the traditions of Confucianism and Christianity and three diverse modern thinkers. By the end, students will be prepared to ask the question of the good life and to put that question at the heart of their college education.

### Assignments and Evaluation

All written assignments should be submitted via the Canvas assignment tool. Late papers will receive a grade reduction of one step (e.g., from A- to B+) for each day or part of a day that they are late.

1. *One 1000-word (maximum) paper analyzing an ancient tradition's account of the human being and of education.* On this tradition's account: (1) What is a human being? (2) What is a flourishing human being—i.e., What is a life worth living? (3) What is an education for and what ought it to look like—i.e., How does an education contribute to the flourishing of a human being? Finally, in your encounter with this tradition, what have you learned about what *you* believe a human being is, what it takes for a human being to flourish, and what sort of education *you'd* need to flourish? **Due October 2 or October 23 by 11:59pm.** (20 percent of final grade)
2. *One 1000-word (maximum) paper analyzing a modern author's account of the human being and of education.* On this author's account: (1) What is a human being? (2) What is a flourishing human being—i.e., What is a life worth living? (3) What is an education for and what ought it to look like—i.e., How does an education contribute to the flourishing of a human being? Finally, in your encounter with this author, what have you learned about what *you* believe a human being is, what it takes for a human being to flourish, and what sort of education *you'd* need to flourish? **Due October 30, November 6, November 13, November 20 by 11:59pm.** (20 percent of final grade)
3. *Peer review of drafts of classmates' final papers, online and in person* **November 30 and December 2.** (10 percent of final grade)
4. *1250 word (maximum) paper outlining what sort of person you want to become and how your college education will help you become that person.* **First drafts due November 27. Final drafts due December 10 by 5:00pm.** (30 percent of final grade)
5. Students will be expected to actively *participate* in all class sessions—both by speaking *and* by listening generously—and to complete weekly self-assessments. (20 percent of final grade)

Grades are assigned according to the following guidelines for papers: “A” designates an excellent paper that performs the task assigned, has superior content, is carefully composed and elegantly written. Good writing style is essential for an “A.” “B” is a good paper that fulfills the assignment and is basically well-written. “C” papers fulfill the assignment but are not well-written. “D” means that the paper just barely fulfills the assignment. “F” means the paper does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

**Academic Integrity:** Part of learning to participate in scholarly dialogue is learning to cite one's sources properly. For all written assignments, sources must be cited properly (any format is acceptable so long as it is consistent and cites specific page numbers within a given work). For help preparing written assignments—including help preparing proper citations—students should consult the Yale Writing Center (<http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/advice-students>).

**Course Policies:** Attendance at all seminar meetings (via Zoom) is expected except in case of emergencies. Unexcused absences from the seminar will result in a reduction of the final course grade.

### **Required Texts (prices through bn.com)**

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2000. ISBN: 978-0826412768 \$23.49  
*The Analects of Confucius*. Trans. Simon Leys. New York: Norton, 1997. ISBN: 978-0393316995 \$8.65  
Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and A Vindication of the Rights of Man*.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN: 978-0199555468 \$7.93

### **Schedule of Meetings**

#### **The Contemporary Crisis in College Education**

August 31: Course Introduction

September 2: “College”: An American Idea

Andrew Delbanco, *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*, 9–66.

September 7: Education, Democracy, and the Market

Scott Gerber, “How Liberal Arts Colleges Are Failing America,” *The Atlantic*,  
September 24, 2012.

Randall Collins, “Credential Inflation and the Future of Universities,” *Italian Journal of  
Sociology of Education*, 228-236.

Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, 13–46.

September 9: Education, Race, and “The Dream”

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 25-64, 135-152

#### **Confucianism**

September 14 Analects I

Confucius, *Analects*, Chapters 1–10.

September 16 Analects II

Confucius, *Analects*, Chapters 11–20.

September 21 Self and Society

Philip Ivanhoe, “Conceptions of Self, Society, and World,” *Confucian Reflections*, 17–30.

Philip J. Ivanhoe, “Being in and Learning from Tradition,” *Confucian Reflections: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times*, 1–16.

September 23 Education I: Self-Cultivation

Phillip Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self-Cultivation*, 1–14.

Philip Ivanhoe, “The Music in and of Our Lives,” *Confucian Reflections*, 45–58.

September 28 Education II: Mencius

Mencius, 2A6, 6A1, 2, 6-9, 11, 14-18

Philip Ivanhoe, “Mengzi,” *Confucian Moral Self-Cultivation*, 15-28.

Chun-Chieh Huang, “Mencius’ Educational Philosophy and Its Contemporary Relevance.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 46, no. 13: 1462–73.

September 30 Education III: Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi)

Chu Hsi, *Learning to Be a Sage*, selections

### ***Confucianism Papers Due October 2***

#### **Christianity**

October 5 The Life of Jesus

“Introduction to the Life of Jesus,” Selections from the New Testament

October 7 New Testament Visions of Flourishing Life

“Three Aspects of Flourishing,” Selections from the New Testament

October 12 God, Meaning, Pleasure, & the World

Genesis 1-3

Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, “The World as Sacrament,” 217-227

Miroslav Volf, “Epilogue,” *Flourishing*, 195-206.

Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, selections.

October 14 Augustine of Hippo's Theological Anthropology

Augustine, *Confessions*, selections.  
———, *Sermon 179A*, §4.

October 19 Education I: Cultural Liturgies

James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 19–27, 112–18, 182–90, 197–203, 215–230.  
Simone Weil, “Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God”

October 21 Education II: Belonging

Willie James Jennings, *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging*, selections

### ***Christianity Paper Due October 23***

#### **Modern Options**

October 26 Rousseau I: The Inner Voice and the Self

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, Book I (selection).  
———. *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Eighth Walk (selection).  
———. *Emile*, Book IV (selections).

October 28 Rousseau II: Pedagogy

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, Book I.

November 2 Wollstonecraft I: Anthropology and Private Education

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, chapters 2, 6, 10–11.

November 4 Wollstonecraft II: National Education

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, chapter 12.

November 9 Freire I: Education and Liberation

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapter 1

November 11 Freire II: The Banking Concept of Education

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapter 2

November 16 bell hooks I

bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, selections

November 18 bell hooks II

bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, selections

### **What Is Your Education For?**

November 30 Final Paper Presentations and Discussion 1

December 2 Final Paper Presentations and Discussion 2

***Final Papers Due December 10***