PHIL 4391: TRANSHUMANISM AND SCIENCE FICTION
FALL 2020

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This research course explores some classic work of literature through the lens of philosophical transhumanism. The project has two parts: the first one delves into the transhumanism framework with special attention to class issues; the second one explores some relevant literature in the context of transhumanism. The course will also provide some fundamental guidance to help with the production of a research paper, which will integrate both aspects.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To gain understanding in transhumanism and its connections with class issues
2. To critically assess and discuss philosophical arguments and theories
3. To develop the ability to responsibly think and write about philosophical problems in a clear and a coherent manner

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (IDEA)

Upon completion of the course, students will:
Question 4: develop specific skills, competencies and points of view required by professional philosophers who teach philosophy
Question 8: Develop skills in expressing yourself orally or in writing
Question 11: Acquire skills in critical analysis by learning how to critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
Question 13: Become familiarized with relevant philosophical concerns and with the way central figures in philosophy have thought about those concerns

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to weekly meetings, in which the student will meet with the research director to discuss the assigned readings, the student will keep an intellectual journal throughout the semester. Each journal entry should record ideas provoked by the weekly discussions and/or the readings. The journal will not only serve as a starting point for the weekly discussions, but also as a venue for critical reflection during the elaboration of the research paper. The last entry should provide a brief exposition of the intellectual journey leading to the final research results, including the selection of topic, the position defended, and the strengths and weaknesses of such position.
STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Weight as a Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Journal</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly discussions</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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REQUIRED USE OF MASKS/FACIAL COVERINGS BY STUDENTS IN CLASS AT ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY

As a member of the Texas Tech University System, Angelo State University has adopted the mandatory Facial Covering Policy to ensure a safe and healthy classroom experience. Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a mask/facial covering that covers the nose and mouth areas. Therefore, in compliance with the university policy students in this class are required to wear a mask/facial covering before, during, and after class. Faculty members may also ask you to display your daily screening badge as a prerequisite to enter the classroom. You are also asked to maintain safe distancing practices to the best of your ability. For the safety of everyone, any student not appropriately wearing a mask/facial covering will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. The student will be responsible to make up any missed class content or work. Continued non-compliance with the Texas Tech University System Policy may result in disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct.

THE ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook.

In other words, when you submit your work, you claim that the work is yours. If someone else wrote it for you or you got it from someone else (internet, other student’s class...), then you are not the author and thus will get a zero for that assignment. Any idea that is not yours should be properly referenced.

Title IX

Title IX at Angelo State University:

The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public
indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at:

**Michelle Boone, J.D.**  
**Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator**  
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210  
325-942-2022  
michelle.boone@angelo.edu  
You may also file a report online 24/7 at [www.angelo.edu/incident-form](http://www.angelo.edu/incident-form).

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the **University Health Clinic and Counseling Center** at 325-942-2173 or the **ASU Crisis Helpline** at 325-486-6345.

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit [www.angelo.edu/title-ix](http://www.angelo.edu/title-ix).

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

**DISABILITIES**

Please let me know if you have any special need due to any learning disability. Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the **Student Life Office**, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transhumanism and Science Fiction</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. TRANSHUMANISM</td>
<td>Week 1 (8/17)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Introduction to the course and expectations</td>
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<td>Week 2 (8/24)</td>
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<td>Bostrom</td>
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<td>Week 3 (8/31)</td>
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<td>Savulesku Kurzweil?</td>
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## FALL 2020

| a. Understanding Transhumanism | Week 4 (9/7)  
| b. Technology and politics | Langdon  
| c. Class issues | Week 5 (9/14)  
|                       | Foucault  
|                       | Week 6 (9/21)  
|                       | Sclove  
|                       | Week 7 (9/28)  
|                       | Selinger  
| II. THE WORLD OF SCIENCE FICTION | Week 8 (10/5)  
| a. Foundations | Foundations  
| b. Dune | Week 9 (10/12)  
| c. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* | Dune  
| d. *Altered Carbon* | Week 10 (10/19)  
|                      | *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*  
|                      | Week 11 (10/26)  
|                      | *Altered Carbon*  
| III. RESEARCH AND METHODS | Week 12 (11/2)  
|                       | Research paper discussion  
| Week 13 (11/9) | Research paper discussion  
| Week 14 (11/16) | Research paper discussion  
| Week 15 (11/23) | Research paper and Journal due  