The Idea of Origins and the Origin of Ideas
IDH 1001
Fall Term 2004

The Idea of Origins and the Origin of Ideas—This course is designed to encourage students to become self-conscious learners, exploring not only the what, but also the how and why of knowing. The course focuses on the nature of truth and reality and our role in the world each of us has constructed. The primary text for the course, Ten Theories of Human Nature, discusses important movements in the development of culture. We will spend the year discussing these theories and what they teach us about “origins,” and we will try through discussion, fieldwork, and group and individual research to trace their impact on ourselves and on the world in which we live.

Faculty
Regina Bailey (regina@thewolf.fiu.edu) Wolfsonian 535-2649 GC273A
William Beesting (beestb@fiu.edu) PC 245 348-2800 GC273B
Caryl Grof (grofc@fiu.edu) DM 233 348-4100 GC275A
Charmaine DeFrancesco (defrance@fiu.edu) ZEB 248A 348-3163 GC275B
Stephen Fjellman (fjellman@fiu.edu) ACI-216 919-5864 GC276

All instructors are available by appointment.

Required Texts and Material:
Leslie Stevenson, Ten Theories of Human Nature
Dalai Lama, A Policy of Kindness
Viktor Frankl, Man’s Search for Meaning
Plato, The Symposium
Ann Patchett, Bel Canto

Required Handouts: Carl Sagan, Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors, Ch. 1 and 2

Structure: This course is conceived as a full-year course, but is divided into semesters for scheduling and grading purposes. Through a combination of small group and large group meetings, we will meet for discussions, lectures, presentations, and field trips.

Expectations: We are excited about the intellectual adventure we are embarking on together in The Honors College. We, the faculty, have spent a great deal of time reading and thinking about our course. We also have enjoyed discussing ideas—dismissing some and embracing others. These discussions have enabled us not only to stretch ourselves intellectually, but also have allowed us to get to know one another in new ways, and not surprisingly, to get to know ourselves better. We hope we create an atmosphere in our classrooms that will encourage you to join us in this same spirit. Although we are acutely aware of the importance to students of receiving good grades, and while we are eager for all of you to do so, we hope that you participate in our Honors class primarily to discover the joy of exploring new ideas and the value in learning to become discerning thinkers. Not simple tasks! We have set the same high standards for your performance as we have set for ourselves. We think we have developed a rigorous, creative course that will challenge you and, we hope, delight you. We are confident that what you learn and how you learn during the coming year will produce benefits that will last you a lifetime.
**Grades:** Your grade will be determined by attendance (10%), reaction papers and/or journals (20%), projects and papers (50%), and participation (20%). Many students don’t realize that poor attendance results in a lack of participation, accounting for 30% of the final grade.

Writing requirements will be discussed by the individual instructors, but in general are less formal than papers and should be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

**Please note:** You may have three excused absences for the term; every additional absence will affect your final grade.

Students found guilty of academic misconduct, which includes plagiarism (see [http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/immuno/citewell/ethicite.html](http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/immuno/citewell/ethicite.html)), will receive a grade of F in the course and will be subject to further disciplinary action.

**Class Schedule:** All 1400 – 1515 large group sessions will be held in DM 100 unless otherwise noted on this syllabus. We have scheduled a few class meetings during the 1230 – 1345 Honors Activities Hour. Please pay close attention to the syllabus so that you arrive at class at the correct hour.

- **Mon., August 30**  
  Small group: Introduction to the Freshman Honors Seminar. Discuss why the notion of origins is interesting to us as a species and important. Discuss the different approaches to accounting for nature and its behavior that have evolved over history.

- **Wed., Sept. 1**  
  **Large group:** View *God, Darwin, and Dinosaurs*

- **Mon., Sept. 6**  
  Labor Day–No classes

- **Wed., Sept. 8**  
  **Large group:** The Origins of the Universe, Dr. James Webb, Physics

- **Mon., Sept. 13**  
  Small group: Discuss Sagan excerpts (handout), *God, Darwin, and Dinosaurs*, and Chapter One, Rival Theories, and lecture

- **Wed., Sept. 15**  
  **Large group:** Lecture on eastern religion, *A Policy of Kindness* due

- **Mon., Sept. 20**  
  Discuss lecture, *Kindness*. Submit student questions for Dalai Lama

- **Wed., Sept. 22**  
  **9:30** Dalai Lama talk, GP Arena. Small group: Discuss Dalai Lama

- **Mon., Oct. 4**  
  Small group: Discuss *The Symposium*

- **Wed., Oct. 6**  
  Small group: Discuss Aristotle
Mon., Oct. 11  Small group: Discuss ethics, *The Bible*, and humanity
Wed., Oct. 13  **Large group**: Discuss Historical Interlude
Mon., Oct. 18  Small group: Discuss Marx
Wed., Oct. 20  **12:30 Large group**: View film *Grapes of Wrath*
Sat., Oct. 23  Last day to drop or withdraw
Mon., Oct. 25  Small group: Discuss *Grapes of Wrath* and Marx
Wed., Oct. 27  Small group: Discuss *Man’s Search for Meaning* and Sartre
Mon., Nov. 1  Small group: Discuss existentialism
Wed., Nov. 3  Small Group: Discuss *Bel Canto*
Mon., Nov. 8  Small group: Discuss Freud
Wed., Nov. 10 **12:30 Large group**: View *Mystic River*
Mon., Nov. 15  Small group: Discuss Darwin
Wed., Nov. 17  **Large group**: Discussion
Mon., Nov. 22  Small group: Course summary, evaluations
Wed., Nov. 24  Small group: Prepare for presentations
Mon., Nov. 29  Small group: Prepare for presentations
Wed., Dec. 1  Small group: Prepare for presentations
Mon., Dec. 6  Small group: **CLASS BEGINS AT 1230** Class Presentations
Wed., Dec. 8  **Large group**: **CLASS BEGINS AT 1230** Class Presentations

There is no Final Exam for IDH 1001