CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

HONORS Program

One University Drive

Orange, CA 92866

(714) 532 - 7706

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course number: HON 398-02, Fall 2021

Course name: HONORS Tutorial, *The Posthuman Condition*

Meeting: Wednesdays, 6:30p-7:30p

Instructor: Morgan Read-Davidson, MFA.

> **DeMille 160B, x7706**
>
> **Office hours: by appointment**
>
> **readdavi@chapman.edu**

Credits: 1

Prerequisites: None.

Catalog Description: *Prerequisite:* none. **Honors Tutorial**: Each Honors Tutorial focuses attention on an important thinker, idea, or concept in-depth so as to supplement and enhance a liberal arts education. Individual course topics are chosen by the Instructor and may or may not repeat, and students may take as many Tutorials as they like. Topics already selected include Populism, Historical Memory, Descartes, Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud."

We find ourselves in a moment of intense reality, where the belief in human exceptionalism is undergoing a necessary, critical scrutiny. What makes us human? What makes us exceptional? What if we are not the world's principal actors, but instead the effects of a complex network of non-human entities? Through an immersion in a variety of "texts" and discourses—critical theory, literature, cinema and television, and even video games—this HONORS Tutorial will interrogate the rhetoric (re)examining and (re)inventing human and nonhuman being, developing students' critical inquiry into the frameworks of our perceived reality, its problematic opacities, and its potential for subversion.

Essential Equipment and Facilities: Seminar-style classroom with computer equipment.

Course Goals, Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

This specialized course enhances students' ability to reason through ethically thorny and politically relevant historical issues and make meaningful iterations between historical knowledge, ethical principle, and practice.

HONORS Learning Outcomes:

Upon completing a course in the University Honors Program students will have:

a. Obtained a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;

b. Sharpened their ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);

c. Understood how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world;

d. Developed effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.

This course is also **Interdisciplinary.**

Current Texts/Required Readings:

Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. Oxford: Polity, 2013.

Harraway, Donna. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Pepperell, Robert. *The Posthuman Condition: Consciousness beyond the Brain*. Bristol: Intellect, 2009.

Supplemental Bibliography:

Badmington, Neil. "Theorizing Posthumanism." *Cultural Critique* 53.1 (2003): 10-27. JSTOR. Web. 4 Sept. 2016.

Baudrillard, Jean. "The Ecstasy of Communication." *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. New York: New Press, 2002: 126-134.

Bogost, Ian. *Persuasive Games: the expressive power of videogames*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007: 15-28

Boyle, Casey. "Rhetorical Ecologies of Posthuman Practice." *Rhetoric as a Posthuman Practice.* Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2018. 27-59

Braidotti, Rosi. "Post-Anthroprocentrism: Life beyond the species." *The Posthuman*. Oxford: Polity, 2013. 55-104

Butler, Judith. "Bodies that Matter." *Bodies that Matter.* New York: Routledge, 1993. 3-27

Chiang, Ted. "Story of Your Life." *Stories of Your Life and Others*. Vintage, reissue edition 2016. 91-146

Davies, Sally. "Encounters with the Posthuman." *Nautilus.* April 29, 2013. http://nautil.us/issue/1/what-makes-you-so-special/encounters-with-the-posthuman

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. "Introduction Rhizome" *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* Trans. by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis, MN: Univesity of Minnesota Press, 1987. 3-25

Derrida, Jacques. "The Ends of Man." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research.* 30:1 (Sept. 1969). 31-57

Derrida, Jacques, and Elisabeth Roudinesco. "Violence Against Animals." *For What Tomorrow...A Dialogue.* Trans. Jeff Fort. Stanford Univ. Press, 2004

Descartes, Rene. *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy.* 4th Edition. Trans. by Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1998. 1-44

Edbauer, Jenny. "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. 35:4 (Fall 2005), 5-24.

Foucault, Michel. "The Birth of the Asylum." *The Foucault Reader.* Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985. 141-167

-----. "What is Enlightenment?" *The Foucault Reader.* Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985. 32-50

Graham, Elaine L. "Gods and monsters." *Representations of the post/human: Monsters, aliens and others in popular culture.* Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002. 221-235

Hallenbeck, Sarah. "Toward a Posthuman Perspective: Feminist Rhetorical Methodologies and Everyday Practices." *Advances in the History of Rhetoric.* 15:1, 2012. 9-27. Downloaded from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15362426.2012.657044

Harraway, Donna. "The Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women.* New York: Routledge, 1991. 149-181

Hayles, N. Katherine. "Prologue" and "Toward Embodied Virtuality." *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1999. xi-24

Heidegger, Martin. "Building Dwelling Thinking." *Basic Writings.* Ed. David Farrell Krell. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1993. 343-364

-----. "The Question Concerning Technology." *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays.* Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1977. 3-35

-----. "The Way to Language." *Basic Writings.* Ed. David Farrell Krell. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1993. 393-426

Hughes, James. "Being Happier." *Citizen Cyborg: why democratic societies must respond to the redesigned human of the future.* Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2004. 43-52

Pepperell, Robert. *The Posthuman Condition: Consciousness beyond the Brain.* Bristol: Intellect, 2009.

Rickert, Thomas. *Ambient Rhetoric: the Attunements of Rhetorical Being.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013.

de Spinoza, Benedict. *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works.* Ed. and Trans. by Edwin Curley. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Tanahashi, Kazuaki, and Peter Levitt, Eds. *The Essential Dogen: Writings of the Great Zen Master.* Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 2013.

Wolfe, Cary. "Animal Studies, Disability Studies, and Who Comes after the Subject." *What is posthumanism?* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minn. Press, 2010. 127-142

Any additional required readings will be made available on the course's Canvas site, or provided by the Instructor.

Instructional Strategies: The Instructor will guide students through course materials, including those they are asked to present, principally through Socratic dialogue. **It is imperative that students commit to reading and reflecting on course materials, and come prepared to each class.**

Our goal should be to immerse ourselves into the "texts"—critical, philosophical, literary, cultural, media (and on and on)—and effectively join a critical discourse. You will be challenged to apply your current knowledge of theory and criticism (social, political, cultural, rhetorical, literary, scientific), and to also subvert that existing knowledge in order to formulate persuasive discourses of culture, of texts, and of rhetorical practice, adding to the "ongoing conversation." For this to occur, there needs to be wide ranging, meaningful dialogue in the classroom.

The critical and philosophical texts are dense and carry long histories of discourse and traditions. While I've attempted to make the reading load manageable, you will likely need to give the texts multiple passes and do additional contextual research to understand the scope of the discourse they are a part of. To ensure an enjoyable and successful classroom dialogue, everyone needs to complete (and annotate) all of the assigned reading prior to each meeting. The course format will be based on Socratic discussion: student led, instructor guided.

Methods of Evaluation: Students will participate in class discussion (30%) and write two thoughtful 5-7 page essays (25% each) on a topic their choice that reflect an original argument

and engagement with course materials. Students will also be asked to lead a discussion in one session (20%). The essays will be evaluated based on the following: cogency of the argument; comprehension of and contribution to the discursive flow; quality of the writing.

Classroom Environment: I am committed to creating a classroom environment that fosters learning by challenging you to expand your knowledge, your skills, and your perspective, but also by encouraging you to take risks and not be afraid to fail now and again.

Respecting each other is important for all aspects of campus life, especially when it comes to classroom decorum. I respect your unique life experiences that have brought you to this moment in this classroom, and I require that you offer that same respect to your peers and to me. This means that we consider and accept the limitations in our perspectives (we all have them!) and how that influences our perception of topics, events, circumstances, and other points of view. We show respect by being polite and well-informed when we challenge perspectives or assertions, and we accept challenges of our own perspective with open ears and informed rebuttals. In this way, discussions are not about being "right" or "winning," but about increasing understanding and progressing discourse.

Vulgar, rude, obnoxious or immature behavior does not show respect, and so is not acceptable. This includes verbal and physical harassment, interruptions while others are speaking, and any other kinds of rude behavior. We show that we respect others by listening to them and avoiding interrupting or dominating the discussion.

Sometimes we make small mistakes out of passion or ignorance, and this is understandable as long as we recognize the mistake and correct it. I or a peer may call attention to such a mistake, and it is important to listen and consider. Blatant and willful acts of disrespect, including being disruptive, abusive, or offensive, will not be tolerated, and will result in the immediate expulsion of the student from the classroom, an absence for that class, and depending on the severity of the incident may result in referral to the department and the Dean of Students.

Any student who feels threatened or uncomfortable in this class should immediately contact me.

Attendance: I respect that you are an adult and have responsibilities that might lead to making tough decisions, such as whether to stay out of class due to being ill or an emergency, or whether to take a call or return a text message that comes during class time. If you must respond to a call or message, please do so by quietly leaving the classroom. I encourage you to be healthy and safe, staying out of class if you are contagious. When such circumstances arise for me, I will always respect your time by informing you through email and Blackboard; I expect that you will do the same, letting me and your team know if you will be late or absent for a class, a meeting, or an online activity.

Technology: We also show respect by refraining from using our devices unless directly necessary for the discussion or classroom activity. Listening to headphones, texting, surfing social media all indicate to your peers and me that what we are doing is not important to you; it's like having a conversation with someone, and as you are talking they start pecking away at their phone. I ask that phones be completely silent and out of your hands, and laptops and tablets be

used only for taking notes or accessing course appropriate documents and research. Any use of your personal electronic devices outside of scope of class activity will result in an automatic absence for that class session. The Office of Legal Affairs was very adamant that I cannot cut off your hand as a penalty, so this is the next best deterrent.

Individuals with disabilities are welcomed and supported fully in our class. Working with the Disability Services Office is the most effective way to get the accommodations you deserve and need, and I encourage you to utilize that resource (see below). But I also understand that we learn in a wide variety of ways, and so if there is a specific method or accommodation that you have found helps you succeed in the writing classroom, please meet with me so that we can make your experience in this class the best it can be.

University Policies and Procedures

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy: "Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the university Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please see the full description of Chapman University's policy on Academic Integrity at www.chapman.edu/academics/academicintegrity/index.aspx."

Chapman University's Students with Disabilities Policy: "In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office. If you will need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516–4520 or visit www.chapman.edu/students/student-health-services/disability-services if you have questions regarding this procedure or for information or to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once formal approval of your need for an accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course."

Chapman University's Equity and Diversity Policy: "Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman's Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Please see the full description of this policy at http://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/eoo.aspx. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the dean of students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy."

Prepared by: Morgan Read-Davidson, Sept. 17, 2019.

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<u>Class sessions</u>: *TBD*