| **Georgetown University, BLS** **BLHV-1002 The Human Condition****Spring 2024** |
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**Credits:** 3

**Dates:** January 10- May 11, 2024

**Location**: Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies (SCS) utilizes the Coursera platform for this course. As an online course, all course content will be provided and exchanged on the Coursera platform.

**Instructor:** Professor Mark Gray

**Teaching Assistant(s):** Add names

**Contact Information:** [bls-support@georgetown.edu](mailto:bls-support@georgetown.edu)

*Note: This mailbox is monitored on a frequent and ongoing basis. Please use this email address for all technology and course-related questions, and your inquiry will be directed to the appropriate person.*

**Office Hours:** By appointment.

| **Course Description** |
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What makes us human? How much of this is a part of our “nature” (e.g., biological hardware, chemistry, and physiological changes) and how much of it is due to how we are nurtured (our socialization, cultures, and social interactions)? This course explores some of the most central aspects of the human condition and asks, “What makes us tick?” The class explores competing paradigms derived from a combination of studies and research from biology, medicine, psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, archaeology, and historical observation. The structure of the course is inspired by the concept of a “hierarchy of needs”—beginning with essential “lower order” aspects of the human condition moving up toward the problems and issues that are more often the focus of life once the essentials of life have been obtained. The course challenges the notion that 21st century human beings are all that different from those that existed in 100, 1,000, or even 10,000 years ago. It also seeks to understand how human behavior can vary so much across cultures now. Course readings are supplemented with suggested journal articles including current research as well as multimedia excerpts on each week’s topics.

Please note: The materials provided or made available to students enrolled in this course, including documents, images, audio, and video materials made available to you, are protected by copyright law. You may use those copyrighted materials only in connection with your work in the course. Any other use of those materials, including any further copying, distribution, or dissemination of the materials, is prohibited by law.

| **Course Learning Objectives** |
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By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Understand and articulate key concepts in human evolution and civilization
2. Analyze and evaluate social, biological, and economic structures that Influence human behavior and relationships
3. Critically assess the progress and challenges in human rights, equality, and societal movements
4. Interpret the impact and evolution of technology, science, and innovation on human progress
5. Reflect and speculate on the influence of individual actions versus broader social dynamics in shaping human history
6. Demonstrate comprehensive mastery and integration of course material through applied research and critical analysis

| **Required Materials for Purchase** |
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**Textbooks**

1. David P. Barash. (2018). [Through a Glass Brightly : Using Science to See Our Species As We Really Are](https://www.amazon.com/Through-Glass-Brightly-Science-Species/dp/0190673710). Oxford University Press (Available for purchase on Amazon).
2. Lents, N. H. (2016). [Not so different : finding human nature in animals](https://doi.org/10.7312/lent17832). Columbia University Press.
3. Christian, D., & McNeill, W. H. (2011). [Maps of time : an introduction to big history](https://wrlc-gu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01WRLC_GUNIV/15eloc1/alma9913658128304101) (Second edition.). University of California Press.

| **Overview of Course Structure** |
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This course consists of 13 modules plus the orientation module which are taken over a 15-week term. Each module length is either one week or multiple weeks as designated in this syllabus.

| **Assignments** |
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Your course grade will be based on your completion of the following activities and assignments. You will read full details about each of them in the Coursera course. Each assignment category will be weighted according to the percentages below.

| **Final Paper Project**  You will identify and do research on a topic which you wish to dive more deeply into. You will then produce a paper of a minimum of 2500 words. More details are available in Canvas. Deliverables include: Final Paper Topic submission - Module 7 (Ungraded), Final Paper Graphic submission - Module 12, Final Paper - Module 13. | **40%** |
| --- | --- |
| **Reflection Discussion Board (3)**  These assignments facilitate research and reflection on some key topics. Writing reflectively allows you to think more deeply and consciously about your actions or behaviors surrounding a particular experience or key event. | **20%** |
| **Short Exercises (3)**  These assignments provide you with an authentic context to explore and reflect on the fundamental concepts you are learning in this course. | **15%** |
| **Final Exam**  The course will include one final exam to assess your mastery and understanding of course concepts. | **25%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** |

#### **Submission Policy**

Submit all assignments to the Coursera course site. **Assignments submitted through email are not acceptable** and will be considered missing/and or late. Please also retain a personal copy of all assignments submitted until the end of this course is complete and you’ve received your final grade.

#### **Late Work Policy**

Students are expected to submit their assignments by the time on the date indicated on Coursera and the syllabus. Please contact the instructor at least 3 business days in advance if you know that you are going to be late or miss an assignment due date. The instructor will review late submission requests and circumstances on a case-by-case basis and will make a determination if an extension is warranted. Prior notice will provide time for discussing and identifying an alternative due date (if the extension is warranted). If the extension is granted, the instructor can deduct up to 10% of the grade of the assignments submitted late and limit the extension to a maximum of 7 days. If an assignment that has been given an extension is not handed in by the time the allotted extension time has elapsed, it will receive a zero.

**Statement on AI Use**

You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material. Failure to do so constitutes a violation of academic integrity. Instances of suspected plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will be dealt with under the Georgetown Honor Code.

Additionally, students should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise unreliable. Students should be aware that the misuse of AI may also stifle independent thinking and creativity, as well as limit their capacity to learn independently in this course. Please engage with these resources responsibly, and with integrity.

#### **Instructor Feedback/Turnaround**

If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response to your email within 3 business days. Please allow 4-7 business days for assessment submission feedback.

| **Grading** |
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Each type of assignment has a detailed grading rubric that you will reference as you complete your assignments. I will grade all of your work using these rubrics.

A: 92.5% to 100%

A-: 89.5% to 92.4%

B+: 86.5% to 89.4%

B: 82.5% to 86.4%

B-: 79.5% to 82.4%

C+: 76.5% to 79.4%

C: 72.5% to 76.4%

C-: 69.5% to 72.4%

D+: 66.5% to 69.4%

D: 62.5% to 66.4%

F: 62.4% and below

| **Time Commitment** |
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Online courses meet the same academic standards as on-campus courses. Each week is equal to the same level of participation, commitment, and academic rigor as a face-to-face class. For a 15-week, 3-credit course, you should allocate *6-10 hours per week*. For a 13-week, 3-credit course, you should allocate *8-12 hours per week*.

| Weekly Schedule |
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The initial posts for Reflection Discussion Board assignments are due on Friday and the responses to peers are due on Sundays. Short Exercises and Final Paper Graphic are due on a Sunday, 11:59 PM ET. Final Exam and Final Paper are due on Friday, 11:59 PM ET.

| Date | Assignments Due | |
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| **Module 1**  10/01-21/01 | **Reflect Discussion Board 1**  Initial Post: Friday, Jan 12,11:59 PM ET.  Response to a peer: Sunday, Jan 14, 11:59 PM ET. | |
| **Module 2**  22/01-28/01 |  | |
| **Module 3**  29/01-04/02 | **Short Exercise 1 - Sunday, Feb 4, 11:59 PM ET.** | |
| **Module 4**  05/02-11/02 | **Short Exercise 2 - Sunday, Feb 11, 11:59 PM ET.** | |
| **Module 5**  12/02-18/02 | **Short Exercise 3 - Sunday, Feb 18, 11:59 PM ET.** | |
| **Module 6**  20/02-25/02 | **Reflect Discussion Board 2**  Initial Post: Friday, Feb 23,11:59 PM ET.  Response to a peer: Sunday, Feb 25, 11:59 PM ET. | |
| **Module 7**  26/02-01/03 | **Final Paper Topic Submission - Sunday, March 1, 11:59 PM ET.** | |
| **Spring Break March 2 - 10** | | |
| **Module 8**  11/03-17/03 | **Reflect Discussion Board 3 - Sunday, March 17, 11:59 PM ET.**  Initial Post: Friday, March 15,11:59 PM ET.  Response to a peer: Sunday, March 17, 11:59 PM ET. | |
| **Module 9**  18/03-28/03 |  | |
| **Easter Break March 28 - April 1** | | |
| **Module 10**  02/04-07/04 |  | |
| **Module 11**  08/04-14/04 | **Practice Exam - Sunday April 14** | |
| **Module 12**  15/04-21/04 | **Final Paper Research Graphic - Sunday, April 21, 11:59 PM ET.** | |
| **Module 13**  22/04-11/05 | **Final Paper - May 10, 2023**  **Exam - May 3- May 10, 2023** | |

| **Course Policies** |
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The course will follow SCS Course Policies in the following areas:

Attendance Policy

Citation Policy

Communication Policies

The Honor Pledge

Netiquette And Classroom Guidelines

Incomplete and Withdrawal Policies

Accommodation Policy

Technical Requirements

Student Support and Help

You can review these policies and other student resources in the Orientation Course.