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. Two 750-word (maximum) papers analyzing each 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? These papers will be due during our units on Confucianism and Christianity. Due September 27 and October 25 by 11:59pm. (20 percent of final grade each)
2. Peer review of drafts of classmates’ final papers, online and in person November 20, December 2, and December 4. (10 percent of final grade)
3. 1000 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 18, November 30, or December 2. Final drafts due December 12 by 5:00pm. (30 percent of final grade)
4. Students will be expected to actively participate in all class sessions—both by speaking and by listening generously. (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: Use of laptops, tablets, and phones will not be permitted at any time during the seminar sessions, except with prior permission from the instructor. Attendance at all seminar
meetings 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)**


Because laptops are not allowed in seminar, printing readings from Canvas before class is required (cost of printing readings double-sided totals to approximately $25 over the course of the semester).

**Schedule of Meetings**

**The Contemporary Crisis in College Education**

**August 28:** Course Introduction

**August 30:** “College”: An American Idea


**September 4:** Education, Democracy, and the Market


**Confucianism**

**September 9**  Confucius’s Teaching


**September 11**  Confucianism as a Tradition


September 16  Self and Society


September 18  Education I: Self-Cultivation


“Confucianism and Education,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*

September 23  Education II: Mencius

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


September 25  Education III: Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi)

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

*Confucianism Papers Due September 27*

Christianity

September 30  The Life of Jesus

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

October 2  New Testament Visions of Flourishing Life


October 7  God, Meaning, Pleasure, & the World

Genesis 1-3


October 9  Augustine of Hippo’s Christian Anthropology

Augustine, *Confessions*, selections.

———, *Sermon 179A*, §4.

October 14  Education I: Cultural Liturgies

*** NO CLASS October 16 (Fall Break) ***

**October 21**  
Education II: The Abolition of Man  
C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, selections

**October 23**  
TBD  
TBD

*Christianity Paper Due October 25*

**Modern Options**

**October 28**  
Rousseau I: The Inner Voice and the Self  
———. *Emile*, Book IV (selections).

**October 30**  
Rousseau II: Pedagogy  

**November 4**  
Wollstonecraft I: Anthropology and Private Education  
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, chapters 2, 6, 10–11.

**November 6**  
Wollstonecraft II: National Education  

**November 11**  
Freire I: Education and Liberation  
Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapter 1

**November 13**  
Freire II: The Banking Concept of Education  
Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapter 2

**November 18**  
bell hooks  
bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, selections
What Is Your Education For?

November 20  Final Paper Presentations and Discussion 1

December 2   Final Paper Presentations and Discussion 2

December 4   Final Paper Presentations and Discussion 3

*Final Papers Due December 12*