

If you want a well taught, well produced free online course on basic classical issues in the philosophy of human nature, [here](#) is this Open Yale course by [Tamar Gendler](#):



The course on Philosophy and the Science of Human Nature pairs central texts from Western philosophical tradition (including works by Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, Hobbes, Kant, Mill, Rawls, and Nozick) with recent findings in cognitive science and related fields. The course is structured around three intertwined sets of topics: Happiness and Flourishing; Morality and Justice; and Political Legitimacy and Social Structures.

About Professor Tamar Gendler: Tamar Szabó Gendler is Professor of Philosophy and Cognitive Science at Yale University and Chair of the Department of Philosophy. She received her BA in Humanities and Mathematics & Philosophy from Yale in 1987 and her PhD in Philosophy from Harvard in 1996. After a decade teaching first at Syracuse University and then at Cornell, she returned to Yale as a professor in 2006. Her professional philosophical work lies at the intersection of philosophy and psychology, and she is the author of *Thought Experiments* (2000) and *Intuition, Imagination and Philosophical Methodology* (2010), and editor or co-editor of *Conceivability and Possibility* (2002), *Perceptual Experience* (2006) and *The Elements of Philosophy* (2008). She has been honored with fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, the American Council for Learned Societies, and the Mellon Foundation.

Course Structure: This Yale College course, taught on campus twice per week for 50 minutes, was recorded for Open Yale Courses in Spring 2011.

Sessions

- Lecture 1 Introduction
- Lecture 2 The Ring of Gyges: Morality and Hypocrisy
- Lecture 3 Parts of the Soul I
- Lecture 4 Parts of the Soul II
- Lecture 5 The Well-Ordered Soul: Happiness and Harmony
- Lecture 6 The Disordered Soul: Thémis and PTSD
- Lecture 7 Flourishing and Attachment
- Lecture 8 Flourishing and Detachment

Lecture 9 Virtue and Habit I
Lecture 10 Virtue and Habit II
Lecture 11 Weakness of the Will and Procrastination
Lecture 12 Utilitarianism and its Critiques
Lecture 13 Deontology
Lecture 14 The Trolley Problem
Lecture 15 Empirically-informed Responses
Lecture 16 Philosophical Puzzles
Lecture 17 Punishment I
Lecture 18 Punishment II
Lecture 19 Contract & Commonwealth: Thomas Hobbes
Lecture 20 The Prisoner's Dilemma
Lecture 21 Equality
Lecture 22 Equality II
Lecture 23 Social Structures
Lecture 24 Censorship
Lecture 25 Tying up Loose Ends
Lecture 26 Concluding Lecture

Texts

Required texts

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated Terence Irwin. Hackett Publishing, 2000.

Blackburn, Simon. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, second edition. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Epictetus. *The Handbook (The Encheiridion)*, translated by Nicholas White. Hackett Publishing, 1983.

Haidt, Jonathan. *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*. Basic Books, 2006

Plato, *Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve. Hackett Publishing, 1992.

Shay, Jonathan. *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*. Simon & Schuster, 1995.

Further readings:

Annas, Julia. "The Phenomenology of Virtue," *Phenomenology and Cognitive Sciences* 7, 2008.

Ariely, Dan. *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces that Shape Our Decisions*. Harper Collins, 2008.

Ariely, Dan and Klaus Wertenbroch. "Procrastination, Deadlines, and Performance: Self-Control by Precommitment," *Psychological Science* Vol. 13:3, 2002.

Batson, Daniel C. "Moral Masquerades Experimental Exploration of the Nature of Moral Motivation," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, Vol. 7, 2008, pp. 51-66.

Boethius. *The Consolations of Philosophy*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1962.

Boorse, Christopher and Roy Sorensen. "Ducking Harm," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 85, No. 3, March, 1988. pp.115-134.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. TED talk "Flow."

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow.html (19-minute video)

Darley, John and Thane S. Pittman. "The Psychology of Compensatory and Retributive Justice," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2003, pp. 324-336.

Doris, John. "Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics." *Noûs* 32, 1998.

Evans, Jonathan St. B. T. "In two minds: dual-process accounts of reasoning." *Trends in Cognitive Science*, vol 7, (2003), pp. 454-459

Freud, Sigmund. *The Ego and the Id*. ed. James Strachey. W. W. Norton & Company; The Standard Edition edition (September 17, 1990)

Gendler, Tamar Szabó. "Alief and Belief," *Journal of Philosophy* (2008), pp. 634-663.

Gendler, Tamar, Susanna Siegel and Steven M. Cahn, eds. *The Elements of Philosophy: Readings from Past and Present*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Homer, *The Iliad*. Viking, 1990.

Hume, David. *Treatise on Human Nature*, eds. David Norton and Mary J. Norton. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kahneman, Daniel. "A Perspective on Judgment and Choice: Mapping Bounded Rationality." *American Psychologist*, 58 (2003), pp. 697-720.

Kahneman, Daniel. Nobel Prize Lecture "Maps of Bounded Rationality."

http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economics/laureates/2002/kahneman-lecture.html (38-minute video)

Kant, Immanuel. "The Right to Punish," an excerpt from *The Philosophy of Law (Rechtslehre)*. trans. W. Hastie, 1887, pp. 194-198.

Kazdin, Alan. *Behavior Modification in Applied Settings*. Dorsey Press, 1980.

Kazdin, Alan. *Parenting the Defiant Child*. Houghton Mifflin, 2008.

LeGuin, Ursula. "The Ones who Walk Away from Omelas: Variations on a Theme by William James" *New Directions* 3, 1973.

Lewis, David. "The Punishment that Leaves Something to Chance" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* Vol. 18, No. 1, Winter, 1989, pp. 53-67.

Milgram, Stanley. "Behavioral study of obedience." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 67 (1963), pp. 371-378, reprinted in Elliot Aronson, ed. *The Social Animal*, pp. 26-40.

Nozick, Robert. "Love's Bond," from *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations*. Simon & Schuster, 1989.

Plato, Phaedrus, trans. and ed. R. Hackforth. Cambridge University Press, 1972.

Rawls, John. "Two Concepts of Punishment," an excerpt from "Two Concepts of Rules," *Philosophical Review* 64: 1955, pp. 3-13.

Stockdale, James "Courage Under Fire: Testing Epictetus in the Laboratory." Speech delivered at King's College, 15 November 1993.

Sunstein, Cass. "Moral Heuristics," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28, 2005, pp. 531-542.

Thomson, Judith Jarvis. "The Trolley Problem" *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 94, No. 6, May 1985.