

Advanced Research Issues in Philosophical Anthropology (A001008)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1)	Dutch	Gent	seminar lecture
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Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

De Vries, Bouke	LW01	lecturer-in-charge
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Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject Philosophy)	5	A
Master of Arts in Philosophy	5	A
Research Master of Arts in Philosophy	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

human nature, human universals, gene-culture coevolution; selection, evolutionary ethics, evolutionary psychology, free will and autonomy

Position of the course

This course aims to provide students with insight into current debates in philosophical anthropology and to enable them to develop a well-reasoned position on these issues. Significant attention will also be given to the development of argumentative skills. The topics covered closely relate to other modules, such as philosophy of biology, (bio)ethics, and political philosophy.

Contents

This seminar is structured in three parts. The first explores competing philosophical perspectives on human nature, including debates concerning its existence, definition, and explanatory value. The second investigates the extent to which evolutionary processes, such as natural selection, sexual selection, and group selection, have shaped this nature. The third examines the possible evolutionary origins of moral norms and considers whether such accounts pose a challenge to realist positions in meta-ethics.

Initial competences

Students fulfill the prerequisite of a basic introduction in philosophical anthropology and/or introduction to philosophy.

Final competences

- 1 Ability to formulate philosophically relevant research questions grounded in a well-informed understanding of the state of the art in the field.
- 2 Ability to develop original solutions to selected philosophical research problems and to present and defend them clearly.
- 3 Ability to independently deepen one's knowledge within the domain.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted
(Approved)

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

The didactics of this course are based on the problem-based learning method, in which the independent formulation, discussion, and answering of research questions take centre stage. This process takes place in a group setting, with collaboration and collective knowledge construction playing a key role.

Study material

Type: Reader

Name: Joyce, Richard, ed. 2016. *The Routledge Handbook of Evolution and Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.

Indicative price: € 47

Optional: no

Language : English

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Downes, Stephen M., and Edouard Machery, eds. 2013. *Arguing About Human Nature: Contemporary Debates*.

New York: Routledge.

Indicative price: € 62

Optional: no

References

Downes, Stephen M., and Edouard Machery, eds. 2013. *Arguing About Human*

Nature: Contemporary Debates. New York: Routledge.

Joyce, Richard, ed. 2016. *The Routledge Handbook of Evolution and Philosophy*.

New York: Routledge.

Course content-related study coaching

by the lecturer

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation, Peer and/or self assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Permanent evaluation: Participation in seminar discussions, completion of paper assignments, and oral presentation of research.

End-of-term assessment: Final research paper.

Calculation of the examination mark

Continuous assessment: 40%

End-of-term assessment: 60%

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance.

2 Possible examination on a different date.

3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during office hours.

Extra information:

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy

