

## Philosophical Anthropology (A005612)

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

**Credits 9.0**

**Study time 270 h**

**Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027**

A (Year)

English

Gent

**Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027**

De Vries, Bouke

LW01

lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027**

[Research Master of Arts in Philosophy](#)

**crdts**

9

**offering**

A

### Teaching languages

English

### Keywords

human nature; anthropology; behavioral genetics; human ethology; evolutionary ethics; evolutionary psychology; free will and autonomy; philosophy of technology; artificial intelligence; non-human animals; multi-level selection

### Position of the course

This course is one of the eighteen research seminars that constitute the core of the master programme. Depending on initial qualifications, students enrol for three or five such research seminars.

### Contents

This course aims to provide students with insight into contemporary debates in philosophical anthropology and to enable them to develop well-reasoned positions on these issues. Significant attention will also be devoted to the development of argumentative and critical-thinking skills.

The topics covered are related to those addressed in other modules, including philosophy of biology, (bio)ethics, and political philosophy. Questions explored may include, but are not necessarily limited to: Is there such a thing as human nature and, if so, what does it consist of? How has human behaviour and psychology been shaped by evolutionary processes such as natural selection, sexual selection, and group selection? What ethical and political implications follow from different conceptions of human nature? Do human beings possess the highest moral status, or could non-human animals or artificial agents have comparable or even greater moral status? Do human beings possess free will? Do evolutionary explanations of morality pose a challenge to moral realism in metaethics? Is it desirable or justified for human beings to alter, enhance, or transcend aspects of their nature and, if so, which forms of intervention are ethically permissible?

### Initial competences

Knowledge of philosophical anthropology at intermediate level  
Competent in philosophical writing and argumentation

### 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**

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

**Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

**Teaching methods**

Seminar, Independent work

**Extra information on the teaching methods**

Lecture recordings are not available for this course.

**Study material**

None

**References****Course content-related study coaching**

Individual help is offered by the lecturers

**Assessment moments**

continuous assessment

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

Skills test, Participation, Assignment

**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 evaluation: Final research paper.

**Calculation of the examination mark**

Permanent evaluation: 40%

End-of-term evaluation: 60%