

CHRISTIAN LOTZ

Professor of Philosophy • Christian Lotz University

DECEMBER 15, 2018 BY CHRISTIAN LOTZ

Spring 2019: Phl 421 – German Philosophical Anthropology



Lehmbruck, *The Fallen* (1915/16)

General information

Instructor

[Here is more information about Prof. Lotz](#)

Class Meetings

Days: MW

Time: 10:20 AM – 11:40 AM

Place: 114 Ernst Bessey Hall

Office

Phone: 517.355.4490 [dept.]

Place: 518 South Kedzie Hall

Hours: MW, 1pm-2pm, and by appointment

Other Contact

E-mail: lotz@msu.edu

Home Phone: please ask

Webpage: <http://christianlotz.com>

Box

You will find my box in the front office of the philosophy department (SK 503)

Schedule

Introduction

Jan 7, Introduction: What is Philosophical Anthropology?

Jan 9, Introduction: What is Philosophical Anthropology?

The Human as a Spiritual Being (Scheler, pdf)

Jan 14, Impulsions, Instincts, Drives, Association, Practical Intelligence (Plants and Non-Human Animals)
Scheler, The Human Place in the Cosmos, 5-26

Jan 16, Spirit, Ideation, Sublimation, Asceticism (Humans)
Scheler, The Human Place in the Cosmos, 26-40

Jan 21

No class

Jan 23, Critique of Negative and Classical Theories of Spirit,
Metaphysics, Religion
Scheler, The Human Place in the Cosmos, 40-66

Voluntary homework assignment

The Human as an Embodied Being (Gehlen, pdf)

Jan 28, Critique of Scheler's Schema Model, Basics of Gehlen's Approach
Gehlen, Man. His Nature and Place, 3-43

Jan 30,

No class: weather

Feb 4, Critique of Scheler's Schema Model, Basics of Gehlen's Approach
Gehlen, Man. His Nature and Place, 3-43

Feb 6, Language, Action, Compensation
Gehlen, Man. His Nature and Place, 43-78

Feb 11, Example of Gehlen's Analyses II: The Pre-Intellectual Roots of Language

First half of class: open discussion and repetition of Gehlen; please come prepared with questions
Gehlen, Man. His Nature and Place, 181-229 (you only need to read section 19+21, pp. 180-183 and 192-199)

The Human as a Limit Being (Plessner, pdf)

Feb 13, The Relation of Humans to their Bodies
Plessner, Laughing and Crying, 23-48

Feb 18, Laughing and Crying as Expressions
Plessner, Laughing and Crying, 48-70

Feb 20, Crying
Plessner, Laughing and Crying, 116-136

The Human as a Sublimating Being (Freud)

Feb 25, Sublimation
Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, section 1-3

Voluntary spring break assignment

Feb 27, Aggression
Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, section 5-6
Presentation: Kerry

Mar 4,
Spring Break

Mar 6,
Spring Break

Mar 11, Guilt
Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, section 7-8

The Human as a Political Being (Arendt)

Mar 13, Prologue and the Human Condition
Arendt, The Human Condition, 1-21

Watch the famous interview with Arendt on German Public
TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsolmQfVsO4>

Mar 18, Social or Political Animal?
Arendt, The Human Condition, 22-50

Mar 20, Social or Political Animal?
Arendt, The Human Condition, 50-78

Mar 25, The Naturalization of Labor
Arendt, The Human Condition, 79-109+126-135

Mar 27, Action
Arendt, The Human Condition, 175-207
Presentation: Sam

Apr 1, Critique of the Substitution of Making for Acting
Arendt, The Human Condition, 207-248

Presentation: Jason

Apr 3, Critique of the Substitution of Making for Acting
Arendt, The Human Condition, 207-248

Presentation: Jason

The Human as a Cultural Being (Cassirer)

Apr 8, Symbol

Cassirer, An Essay on Man, chapter 2+3

No office hours this week

Apr 10,

No Class

Apr 15, Space and Time

Cassirer, An Essay on Man, chapter 4+5

Presentation: Liam

Apr 17, Language

Cassirer, An Essay on Man, chapter 8

Presentation: Corey

Apr 22, Art

Cassirer, An Essay on Man, chapter 9

Presentation: Emma

Apr 24, Wrap Up

May 2, (day of final exam)

Final paper due by May 2 at 3pm via D2L Dropbox

Course Description

Philosophical anthropology is as old as philosophy. What it means to be human has concerned all major philosophers from Ancient times through the enlightenment and modernity. Aristotle defines human beings as zoon politicon (political animals). “Who am I?”, Augustine famously asks God in his Confessions. According to Kant, all philosophical inquiry leads back to the question “what are human beings?” In recent years philosophical anthropology and humanism have become under attack by scientific theories, behaviorism, as well as social-political approaches to human nature (i.e., the claim that there is no universal “human nature,” and, instead, we need to dissolve human nature into things such as society, gender, class, race, history, etc.). In contrast to this mainstream, we will ask whether it is still feasible to defend a general and non-reductive “vision” of what or who we are. We will study general theories that emerged in the German tradition of philosophical anthropology, which has been and

still is very important for the development of European philosophy in the 20th Century. Central concepts here are language, imagination, embodiment, desire, labor, and life. The authors whom we will study are to some extent conservative philosophers (especially Gehlen). Unfortunately we won't have sufficient time to look at the left tradition, starting with Marx and ending with the Frankfurt School, such as Fromm and Marcuse.

Introductory Information

Check the information on Scheler, Arendt, and Cassirer in the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) (no entries on Plessner, Freud, Gehlen, and Jonas, which shows the analytic tendency of the encyclopedia); here is more information about Plessner: [Plessner Society](#) (there is also a very brief description of [philosophical anthropology](#)).

Note

This is a 400-level course in philosophy and, as such, contains difficult material and requires mature students. If you are not willing to study dense written material, listen to unusual lectures, and discuss ideas in an organized fashion, then you should not take this class. This class though can be taken by

students without prior knowledge in philosophy. You should not take this class if you are not an avid reader.

Course Goals

This class should students introduce to

- central issues in 20th Century German philosophical anthropology
- how to read major works of philosophy
- how to think beyond a naturalistically and scientifically reduced world view
- how to think critically about general conceptions of what it means to be human
- how to conceptualize central aspects of being human from a philosophical point of view, such as embodiment, culture, and sexuality

Note

Students should be aware of the fact that this course is based on difficult texts. Accordingly, this class requires self-responsible learners and an intense confrontation with the primary text. Accordingly, if you are not excited about the prospect of a daily confrontation with abstract and historical

reflections, then you should not take this class. This class is not based on a set of fixed knowledge and, as such, is not based on a behavioral idea of education; rather, we will try to learn together and critically examine the material. The instructor of this class does not have anything to teach, but much to learn.



Hannah Arendt (1906-1975)

Required Texts

- Scheler, *The Human Place in the Cosmos* (pdf)
- Gehlen, *Man. Its Place and Nature* (pdf)
- Plessner, *Laughing and Crying* (pdf)
- Arendt, *The Human Condition* (purchase)
- Cassirer, *An Essay on Man* (purchase)
- Jonas, *Homo Pictor* (essay, pdf)
- Jonas, *Tool, Image, and Grave* (essay, pdf)
- Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (book)

The pdfs are available on D2L

You can return the following two titles to the book store (if you already purchased them):

- Plessner, *Political Anthropology* (book, just published, already out of print!!)
- Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (book, contains texts by Marx)

You should always bring a hard copy to class!

Course Requirements

- daily reading and studying (around 5-10 pages, up to 50 per week)
- oral presentation
- 1 final assignment
- homework assignments and spontaneous assignments in class; unannounced reading quizzes (depending on your performance, I might let this requirement go and run this class like a graduate seminar)
- participation

Note

The class and my lectures are solely based on the texts selected for class and require a thorough study and preparation of the material. I will primarily lecture on the readings, which will help you to more fully understand the texts. Therefore it is not sufficient for students to come to class without having prepared the texts. And indeed, in the assignments you have to demonstrate whether you have appropriately prepared the readings selected for each lecture.

Note

Every academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, will - without exception - lead to a failing grade in class. Check the Ombudsman's page (see also note below on plagiarism): <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/>

Attendance

To get a good grade in this class, regular attendance is required. I will not call roll. Hence, it is up to you to come to class or not. However, if you do not come to class on a regular basis and participate in the class discussion, it is impossible for you to achieve a good grade in this class; so coming to class is your responsibility and your call. If you choose to attend class, please come on time, turn off cell phones and

other electronic devices that interfere with your (and others') concentration, have the reading prepared and be ready to participate. If you are not prepared, do not bother showing up. It is a sign of disrespect to your peers and the instructor to attend class unprepared. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain class notes from a fellow student and to catch up on reading. Nevertheless, please be aware that you should not make me responsible for a failure that results out of your decision. You should be aware that chances to master this class are minimal, if you do not show up for class or if you do not prepare the readings (=studying).



Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945)

Assignments

Oral Presentation (overview of assigned reading)

Each student has to prepare one oral presentation for class. The presentation should contain [a] a list of main points and claims, [b] concepts that are unclear, [c] intelligent questions about the readings. You should distribute a handout 2 days in advance.

Reading Quizzes

Given recent negative experience with student's unwillingness to read and study primary material, I might assign reading quizzes. Questions might be passed out in advance. Quizzes cannot be made up (except in cases mentioned below).

Homework Assignments

From time to time I will send out via email weekend homework assignments; usually a short writing prompt in relation to either lecture or video material online, or in relation to our readings. Given that these homework assignments are always due on Mondays, I will not accept late turn-ins. There is plenty of time for you to respond to the task, given that I usually send this out on time.

Unannounced Assignments

There might be – from time to time – spontaneously assigned group assignments in class. Students who do not attend class (and have no medical documentation) will lose all points.

Make-Up Assignments

Students who need to miss assignments for excusable reasons, such as a death in their families, MSU related business, emergency weather conditions, or medical reasons, must inform me ahead of time, and will be permitted to make up assignments. I will only accept official doctor notes (no faxes, no emails) or letters from other professors. Unfortunately I am unable to accept any other reasons than those mentioned.

Course Evaluation

Assignments

1 final take-home assignment 55 points

participation 20 points

Homework assignments and 25

unannounced reading assignment and group assignments	points
oral presentation+handout	25 points

	100 points

Grading

4.0 (=A)	100 – 93
3.5	92 – 87
3 (=B)	86 – 82
2.5	81 – 77
2 (=C)	76 – 72
1.5	71 – 65
1.0 (=D)	64 – 60
0.0	< 60

GENERIC SYLLABUS (might not be applicable to each class)

Laptop/Cell Phone/Tablet Policy

You are not permitted to use laptops or cell phones in class, unless needed for medical reasons. Flat devices, such as tablets, are permitted if you have purchased the literature required for class electronically. Please do not text under the table. Cell phones should be removed from tables. Failure to follow this policy will lead to unannounced assignments in class or loss of points (at the discretion of the instructor).

Class Attendance

As mentioned above, I do not employ in my classes a class attendance policy. Having said this, you should be aware that class attendance is very important. When engaging in a philosophical and humanistic dialogue it is necessary to be an active and present participant in the ongoing discussion. If you miss class please do not email me asking if you missed anything important. Every class is important. You should get a study buddy for the class; a student in class who will inform you of what you missed. If you miss a class you can come to

my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the material, providing you have read the material and you simply want to see if your understanding of the material is on target. Time in office hours will not be used to repeat the class lectures.

Grading Criteria + Paper Writing Tips

Check out [this page for grading criteria, example of assignments, etc.](#)

Online Research Sources

Unfortunately, some people think that the internet as such is a reliable source of information. If you decide to use online sources for additional information or your paper then do not just use one of the common internet search engines, such as Google; rather, use reliable academic sources, such as Britannica Online, or the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). The [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) isn't very good, but still acceptable. Check out MSU's [library resources!](#) And, as with other sources, you must cite any online sources to which you refer in your essay.

Writing Center Information

MSU's writing center offers excellent help on all matters regarding writing and learning. Check the website at <http://writing.msu.edu> for an overview and hours. For more information, please call 517.432.3610 or send an e-mail to writing@msu.edu.

Grief Absence Policy

I follow MSU's general grief absence policy, which can be found [here](#).

Integrity of Scholarship and Grades (Plagiarism)

The following statement of University policy addresses principles and procedures to be used in instances of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, and falsification of academic or admission records, herein after referred to as academic misconduct. [See General Student Regulation 1.00, Protection of Scholarship and Grades.]

Academic Honesty

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/>)

Plagiarism, from the Ombudsman’s page

Plagiarism (from the Latin plagiarus, an abductor, and plagiare, to steal) is defined by the White House Office of

Science and Technology Policy on Misconduct in Research (take that!) as “... the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results or words without giving appropriate credit.”

Accidental or Unintentional

One may not even know that they are plagiarizing. It is the student’s responsibility to make certain that they understand the difference between quoting and paraphrasing, as well as the proper way to cite material.

Blatant

Here, students are well aware that they are plagiarizing. Purposefully using someone else’s ideas or work without proper acknowledgment is plagiarism. This includes turning in borrowed or bought research papers as one’s own.

Self

Turning in the same term paper (or substantially the same paper) for two courses without getting permission from one’s instructor is plagiarism.

The Spartan Code of Honor

Student leaders have recognized the challenging task of discouraging plagiarism from the academic community. The Associated Students of Michigan

State University (ASMSU) is proud to be launching the Spartan Code of Honor academic pledge, focused on valuing academic integrity and honest work ethics at Michigan State University. The pledge reads as follows:

“As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.”

The Spartan Code of Honor academic pledge embodies the principles of integrity that every Spartan is required to uphold in their time as a student, and beyond. The academic pledge was crafted with inspiration of existing individual college honor codes, establishing an overarching statement for the entire university. It was formally adopted by ASMSU on March 3, 2016, endorsed by Academic Governance on March 22, 2016, and recognized by the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees on April 15, 2016.

SIRS Evaluations

Michigan State University takes seriously the opinion of students in the evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction and has implemented the Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS) to gather student feedback (<https://sirsonline.msu.edu>). This course utilizes the online SIRS system, and you will receive an e-mail during the last two weeks of class asking you to fill out the SIRS web form at your convenience. In addition, participation in the online SIRS system involves grade sequestration, which means that the final grade for this course will not be accessible on STUINFO during the week following the submission of grades for this course unless the SIRS online form has been completed. Alternatively, you have the option on the SIRS website to decline to participate in the evaluation of the course. We hope, however, that you will be willing to give us your frank and constructive feedback so that we may instruct students even better in the future. If you access the online SIRS website and complete the online SIRS form or decline to participate, you will receive the final grade in this course as usual once final grades are submitted.

Social Media and Sharing of Course Materials

As members of a learning community, students are expected to respect the intellectual property of course instructors. All course materials presented to students are the copyrighted

property of the course instructor and are subject to the following conditions of use:

1. Students may record lectures or any other classroom activities and use the recordings only for their own course-related purposes.
2. Students may share the recordings with other students enrolled in the class. Sharing is limited to using the recordings only for their own course-related purposes.
3. Students may post the recordings or other course materials online or distribute them to anyone not enrolled in the class with the advance written permission of the course instructor and, if applicable, any students whose voice or image is included in the recordings.
4. Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions.

Student Support Program (SSP)

Michigan State University is offering all MSU students access to counseling support 24/7/365 through My SSP: Student Support Program. My SSP is free to all MSU students. My SSP is confidential, and can help with:

- Adapting to new challenges
- Being successful at school

- Relationships with friends and family
- Practical issues with studying
- Stress, sadness, loneliness, and more

The My SSP professional counselors are available to help anytime, anywhere with:

- Immediate support by phone and chat
- Ongoing support by appointment via phone and video
- In addition, culturally relevant support is available in the language of the caller's choice.

There are multiple options for connecting with a My SSP counselor:

- Download the free My SSP app on Google Play or iTunes
- Chat online at <http://us.myissp.com>
- Call 1-866-743-7732
- From outside North America, call 001.416.380.657

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY)

Drops and Adds

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

Note on Attendance

Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.



 [CLASSES](#)