CULTURAL ANIMALS – PHI 2630
QUEST 1 THEME: NATURE & CULTURE
GENERAL EDUCATION: HUMANITIES

Professor: Jon Rick
Philosophy Department
jrick@ufl.edu
Office: Griffin-Floyd Hall (FLO), Room 310

Professor's Office Hours: T: 1:45-2:45 / R: 1:45-3:45 in FLO 310, or by Appointment

Class Meetings: T: Periods 5-6 (11:45-1:40) in MAT 0005
R: Period 6 (12:50-1:40) in MAT 0005

Course Website: https://elearning.ufl.edu (Canvas)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Humans are cultural animals. On the one hand, we are biologically evolved animals - members of nature’s kingdom, bound by its universal laws and norms. On the other hand, we are creatures of culture, variably shaped by the influences and innovations of our particular societies and communities. Given our dual citizenship within these domains, questions and challenges emerge regarding the boundaries and allegiances between human nature and human culture. These limits are especially urgent with respect to understanding the contours and content of human morality. In Cultural Animals, we will examine the interplay between the ‘natural’ and the ‘cultural’ aspects of our lives, with particular emphasis on exploring how these often-coordinating, yet potentially-competing, forces serve to shape our moral practices. The course will be divided into four discrete, yet intersecting, units:

Unit 1 - ‘Moral Evolutions’ sets the moral stage. Our initial readings will open discussions on the extent to which morality is a universal product of natural evolution and/or a relative product of cultural evolution. The guiding question for Unit 1 is the following: Is morality a human achievement, or is it a capacity that is shared with nonhuman animals?

Unit 2 - ‘Moral Revolutions’ populates the moral stage. The readings for this unit deal with the enduring and urgent questions concerning who (or what) counts as having moral standing. The guiding question for Unit 2 is the following: Does the limit of the moral community coincide with the limit of the human species or do nonhuman animals have moral standing?

Unit 3 - ‘Clashes and Confrontations’ pivots to moral issues concerning the endurance of our cultural practices and the survival of our natural environment. The guiding question for Unit 3 is the following: How does anthropogenic climate change bear on the morality of individual and institutional cultural decisions?
Unit 4 – ‘Innovations and Horizons’ offers reflections on the preceding three units through the lens of cultural - specifically technological - innovation. Guiding questions include the following: Can geoengineering morally reconcile our cultural interventions in and impositions on nature? Is it ethically permissible to create and consume lab-grown meat? Should our moral community extend to include artificially intelligent beings? Are we ready to extend the idea of evolution to include a future of genetically enhanced human beings?

**QUEST 1 AND GEN ED DESCRIPTIONS, ASSESSMENT EXPLANATIONS, AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**QUEST 1 DESCRIPTION:** Quest 1 courses are multidisciplinary explorations of truly challenging questions about the human condition that are not easy to answer, but also not easy to ignore: What makes life worth living? What makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world? To grapple with the kinds of open-ended and complex intellectual challenges they will face as critical, creative, and self-reflective adults navigating a complex and interconnected world, Quest 1 students use the humanities approaches present in the course to mine texts for evidence, create arguments, and articulate ideas.

**QUEST 1 SLOs:**
- Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Content).
- Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Critical Thinking).
- Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Critical Thinking).
- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Communication).

**HUMANITIES DESCRIPTION:** Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

**HUMANITIES SLOs:**
- Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used in the course (Content).
- Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives (Critical Thinking).
- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively (Communication).
**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS**

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
Reflecting the curricular structures of Quest 1 and these Gen Ed designations, after taking Cultural Animals students will be able to:

1. Identify, describe, and explain how the resources available in the humanities can help with becoming a more informed and engaged citizen. *(Content SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1)*
2. Identify and analyze the histories of and relations among different theoretical frameworks in humanistic traditions of thought *(Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1)*
3. Identify, analyze and evaluate moral themes in public discourse *(Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed Humanities)*
4. Analyze and evaluate the particular, public ethical issues that we discuss in the course (including free speech, economic inequality, sexual violence) *(Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed Humanities)*
5. Analyze, evaluate, and critically reflect on connections between course content and their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond *(Critical Thinking SLO for Q1)*
6. Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions about important public ethical issues in oral and written forms appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course *(Communication SLO for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1).*

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**TEXTS, MATERIALS, & ACTIVITIES**

**Required Readings**

No purchase of books is necessary for this course. All assigned readings will be available through the class Canvas page. Students are required to bring hard copy of the day's assigned reading to class every day; failure to do so may result in loss of participation points. A full list of the required readings for this course can be found in the Course Schedule, below.

**Field Trips**

This course includes one experiential learning field trip. On Tuesday, October 8th the class will tour the University of Florida’s Meat Processing Center. The tour will take place from 12:30 – 1:15 (in place of our usual class meeting that day). All students are required to attend. There is no cost for this trip, but students will be required to arrange for their own transportation.

**Recommended Readings**

1. A terrific guide to general writing rules is Strunk and White’s *The Elements of Style*. The first edition is available online for free: [http://www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/)
COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EXPECTATIONS & ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Attendance**: Attendance is required for this course, beginning on Tuesday, August 27th. Each student begins the term with an attendance mark of 80 points (out of 100 possible points). Each time you attend a class session, your attendance mark increases by 1 point. Each time you have an unexcused absence, your attendance mark decreases by 2 points. There are 28 class sessions starting from August 27th. A little math will reveal that you can have two unexcused absences and still end up with a 100% grade for attendance. The highest possible attendance grade is 100%. **Attendance is worth 5% of the final grade.**

2. **Participation**: You are expected to be prepared to discuss the texts assigned for each class session, as well as to participate in any group or individual in-class activities. Merely attending class does not count as participation. Asking questions as well as commenting on discussion topics does count as participation. Attending office hours will supplement your participation mark. **Participation is worth 10% of the final grade.**

3. **Discussion Board Postings**: Each Monday by 5:00pm, one third of the class will be required to write an online discussion board post via canvas. Class members will be divided into groups A, B, & C. In Week 2, members of group A will be required to make a discussion post about the readings assigned for 8/27 by 5pm on Monday, August 26th. In Week 3, members of group B will be required to make a discussion post about the readings assigned for 9/3 by 5pm on Monday, September 3rd. In Week 4, members of group C will be required to make a discussion post about the readings assigned for 9/10 by 5pm on Monday, September 9th. The cycle will then repeat until Monday, November 18th. Each group (and thus each student) will make 4 discussion posts over the course of the term. Discussion posts must be a minimum of 200 words, and they should not exceed 400 words. Posts must critically engage with some aspect of the required readings for the Tuesday class session, and they must end with a question posed to the class. A document identifying each student’s group affiliation as well as a schedule will be posted under the Files link on our canvas page. Discussion posts will be graded on the following scale: 0 points for failure to post a discussion of at least 200 words; 85 points for a 200-400 word post that presents cursory engagement with the required text(s); 100 points for a 200-400 word post that shows serious engagement with the required text(s). Late posts will be accepted only until 10pm on the given Monday, and they will receive 50 points. **Discussion Board Postings are worth 7% of the final grade.**

4. **Short Paper Assignments**: You will be required to write three short papers for this course. Detailed instructions and prompts will be distributed two weeks prior to the due date of the short paper assignment.

   (i) **Short Paper #1**: Prompts and Instructions will be posted via canvas on Friday, September 6th. Due Date: 5:00pm on Friday, September 14th. Papers will be submitted via a canvas assignment link. **Short Paper #1 is worth 20% of the final grade.**

   (ii) **Short Paper #2**: Prompts and Instructions will be posted via canvas on Friday, October 18th. Due Date: 5:00pm on Friday, October 18th. Papers will be submitted via a canvas assignment link. **Short Paper #2 is worth 20% of the final grade.**
(iii) **Short Paper #3:** Prompts and Instructions will be posted via canvas on Friday, November 1st. Due Date: 5:00pm on Friday, November 15th. Papers will be submitted via a canvas assignment link. **Short Paper #3 is worth 20% of the final grade.**

5. **Capstone Project:** The capstone project asks students to critically engage with an issue concerning how new technologies bear ethically on issues that frame the first three units of the course – evolution, the moral standing of non-human animals, and climate change. The selected issues will be based on the topics in Unit 4: Innovations & Horizons – *How does Technology ethically bear on Human Nature and Human Culture*. The Capstone Project will involve both an in-class oral presentation as well as a written component. **The Capstone Project is worth 18% of your final grade.**

**ADDITIONAL COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

1. **Short Paper Source Materials:** Unless otherwise specified, any source materials appealed to in your short paper assignments that do not come from assigned course texts, *must* be cleared with the professor at least 1 week prior to the due date of the assignment. If you do not clear additional sources with the professor 1 week prior to turning in your paper, you will be penalized (10% for each source not-cleared, *only if* the source is cited). None of the assignments for this class will require resources beyond the required readings.

2. **Text and Note Taking:** In each class meeting, we will be taking an in-depth look at the assigned readings for that session. You are expected to have a copy of the text with you, and you will benefit from being able to mark the passages that are focused on in our discussion.

**SUMMARY OF GRADED REQUIREMENTS**

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**Grading Scale**
ESSAY SUBMISSION AND LATE SUBMISSION POLICY

In general, requirements for section attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies specified at:

More specifically, the following policies will be adhered to:

1. All in-section assignments will need to be completed during the section meeting in which they are assigned. If you have extenuating circumstances (consistent with the University guidelines detailed in the link above and are able to present a written excuse), accommodations may be made (but there are no guarantees here). You will need to contact the TA prior to the section meeting that you will miss in order to determine whether accommodations can be made.

2. All essays assignments will be submitted online via an Assignment/Turnitin.com link on the course’s Canvass page. Essays must be submitted as either .doc or .docx files. Failure to submit in these formats will result in penalties and will require resubmission in the proper format.

3. Late submission of papers will be penalized 3% for each day that the assignment is late. For instance, if a paper is due on Friday at 5:00pm, it will be counted as 1 day late if submitted between 5:01pm Friday and 5:00pm Saturday (submissions between 5:01pm Saturday and 5:00pm Sunday will count as 2 days late, and so on). Late submissions will be made via Canvas/Turnitin.

COURSE WEBSITE

This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "Canvas." To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to https://elearning.ufl.edu/, click the e-Learning in Canvas button, and on the next page enter your Gatorlink username and password. You can then access the course e-Learning environment by selecting PHI 3930 from the Courses pull-down menu at the top of the page. If you encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content, contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.
Please note:
• Please turn off your cellphone (don’t just silence it) when you enter the classroom.
• If you use a laptop/tablet for readings and notes, please disable your wireless connection when you enter the classroom.
• Please leave any material not related to this course in your bag during class.

**Honor Code & Plagiarism Policy**

Most instances of academic dishonesty can be avoided by thoroughly citing the resources you have used to help you understand the topic on which you’re writing. **If you have read something that helped you understand the material, cite it!** Failure to cite sources is the most common (and easily avoidable) academic offence. Detailed citation instructions will be provided with your essay assignments.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states:

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code ([https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/](https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/)) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of “E” for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows:

“A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.”

Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

**Important Campus & Academic Resources**

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be
presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care**
If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)** Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** [http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx), 392-1575

**University Police Department:** 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies

**E-learning Technical Support,** 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to
   Learningsupport@ufl.edu. [https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml](https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml)

**Library Support** [http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask)

**Writing Studio** 2215 Burlington Hall, 846-1138. [http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/)

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**EMAIL POLICY**

(1) If you need some practical information about the course you should **look at most recently updated syllabus or on the website.** E-mails requesting information which is available on the most recently updated syllabus or on the website will not be answered.

(2) If you want to discuss a substantive philosophical question you should bring it up in class or come to office hours. I will not be able to respond to in-depth, substantive questions about the readings or assignments over email. However, I am more than happy to discuss substantive questions of these sorts in office hours. So, please come and see me! I will be happy to address short, logistical, non-substantive questions over email. Please do so at the ‘ufl’ address listed at the top of this syllabus. Please use your ‘ufl’ address.

**Emails received after 5pm may not be responded to until after 9am the following day.**

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**COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [https://ufl.blucra.com/ufl/](https://ufl.blucra.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/).
**HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE!**

1. **Be sure to read the assigned material before class meetings.** This will help to ensure that our class time is quality time.

2. **After a class meeting, re-read the material for the session:** pay special attention to the questions that you had before. Hopefully the material will make much more sense to you now!

3. **Bring specific questions with you to class meetings.** If there are aspects of the readings you didn’t fully grasp, you’re probably not alone. Come to class ready to ask!

4. **See me in office hours:** Many of our course topics are complex. It’s natural to have lurking (and new) questions even after class. That’s what office hours are for! Come and see me. Don’t be shy!

5. **Manage your time well.** Many students make the mistake of waiting until a few days before papers are due to start writing. This is not a helpful way to manage your time and efforts. Getting started early on your papers by formulating outlines and drafts will really help to improve your final product. The **same number of hours** devoted to the material BEFORE class can lead to a much more efficient use of your time, better understanding, and higher grades.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE**  
**NOTE: COURSE CONTENT IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

**UNIT 1: ETHICAL EVOLUTIONS**  
**DOES MORALITY REALIZE OR REPRESS OUR INNER APE?**

**Tuesday, Aug. 20 – Course Overview**

- No Assigned Readings

**Thursday, Aug. 22 – States of Human Nature: Solitary or Sympathetic?**

1. **Thomas Hobbes** – *Leviathan* (Chapters 13 & 17)
2. **Adam Smith** – “Of Sympathy,” from *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Part I, Section i, Chapter 1)

**Tuesday, Aug. 27 – Darwin’s Dangerous Idea**

1. **Charles Darwin** – “Natural Selection,” from *The Origin of Species* (Chapter IV)
2. **Daniel Dennett** – “Natural Selection as an Algorithmic Process,” from *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea*
Thursday, Aug. 29 – Naturally Evolved Morality: Should Morality be Biologized?

2. Steven Jay Gould – “Biological Potentiality vs. Biological Determinism”

Tuesday, Sept. 3 – Morality as Cultural Achievement: Taming Nature’s Wicked Garden

1. Thomas Huxley – *Evolution and Ethics* (Excerpts)
2. Sigmund Freud – *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Chapter 7)

Thursday, Sept. 5 – Where Did Darwin Explicitly Stand on the Natural Evolution of Morality?

1. Charles Darwin – *The Descent of Man* (Excerpts from Chapters 4-5)

Tuesday, Sept. 10 – A Case for Continuity: The Natural Evolution of Morality

2. Frans De Waal – “Morally Evolved,” from *Primates and Philosophers* (Part I)

First Short Paper Prompts distributed on Friday, September 6

Thursday, Sept. 12 – Challenging and Defending the Case for Continuity

1. Christine Korsgaard – “Reply to De Waal’s ‘Morally Evolved’,” from *Primates and Philosophers*
2. Frans De Waal – “Response to Korsgaard,” from *Primates and Philosophers*

UNIT 2: ETHICAL REVOLUTIONS

*SHOULD THE BOUNDARIES OF THE MORAL COMMUNITY EXTEND BEYOND HUMANITY?*

Tuesday, Sept. 17 – Species & Speciesism

1. René Descartes – *Letters to William Cavendish and Henry More*
2. Immanuel Kant – ‘Our Duties to Animals’
3. Peter Singer – “All Animals Are Equal”

Thursday, Sept. 19 – Species & Speciesism


First Short Paper due by 5:00pm on Friday, September 20 via Canvas Submission

Tuesday, Sept. 24 – Marginal Cases & Moral Conflations

Thursday, Sept. 26 – Predation & Vegetarianism

1. **Jeff McMahan** – “The Meat Eaters”
2. **Elizabeth Telfer** – “Animals Do It Too!: The Franklin Defense of Meat-Eating” (pp. 51-53, 57-67)

Tuesday, Oct. 1 – Elizabeth Costello & the Lives of Animals

1. **J. M. Coetzee** – “The Philosophers and the Animals” from *Elizabeth Costello* (Lesson 3)
2. **J. M. Coetzee** – “The Poets and the Animals,” from *Elizabeth Costello* (Lesson 4)
   (both readings can also be found in Coetzee’s *The Lives of Animals*)

Thursday, Oct. 3 – Reflections on Coetzee’s Costello

1. **Peter Singer** – “Reflection,” from *The Lives of Animals*
2. **Barbara Smuts** – “Reflection,” from *The Lives of Animals*

Second Short Paper Prompts distributed on Friday, October 4

Tuesday, Oct. 8 – The Last Stop

- Experiential Learning Field Trip: Tour of the UF Meat Processing Center (12:30 – 1:15pm)

**Unit 3: Climate Confrontations**

*How Should We Talk About Climate Change?*

Thursday, Oct. 10 – Introducing Climate Change

1. **Philip Kitcher & Evelyn Fox Keller** – “Prologue” & “Preface” from *The Seasons Alter*

Tuesday, Oct. 15 – Is it Real & So What?

2. **Philip Kitcher & Evelyn Fox Keller** – “Is it Real?” & “So What?” from *The Seasons Alter*

Thursday, Oct. 17 – Why Care?

1. **Philip Kitcher & Evelyn Fox Keller** – “Why Care?” from *The Seasons Alter*

Second Short Paper due by 5:00pm on Friday, October 18 via Canvas Submission

Tuesday, Oct. 22 – What Can Be Done & Who Pays?

1. **Philip Kitcher & Evelyn Fox Keller** – “What Can be Done?” & “Who Pays?” from *The Seasons Alter*
Thursday, Oct. 24 – A New Politics?

1. Philip Kitcher & Evelyn Fox Keller – “A New Politics?” & “Epilogue” from The Seasons After

UNIT 4: INNOVATIONS & HORIZONS:
HOW DOES TECHNOLOGY BEAR ON HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN CULTURE?

Tuesday, Oct. 29 – Geoengineering & Climate Change

1. Stephen M. Gardiner – “Is ‘Arming the Future’ with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil?: Some Doubts about the Ethics of Intentionally Manipulating the Climate System”

Thursday, Oct. 31 – Geoengineering & Climate Change

1. David Morrow – “Ethical Aspects of the Mitigation Obstruction Argument Against Climate Engineering Research”

Third Short Paper Prompts distributed on Friday, November 1

Tuesday, Nov. 5 – The Ethics of Lab-Grown Meat

1. G. Owen Schaefer & Julian Savulescu – “The Ethics of Producing In Vitro Meat”
2. David Chauvet – “Should Cultured Meat Be Refused in the Name of Animal Dignity”

Thursday, Nov. 7 – The Ethics of Lab-Grown Meat


Tuesday, Nov. 12 – The Moral Standing of Artificial Intelligences

1. David Levy – “The Ethical Treatment of Artificially Conscious Robots”

Thursday, Nov. 14 – The Moral Standing of Artificial Intelligences

1. David Levy – “Falling in Love with Virtual People (Humanoid Robots)

Third Short Paper due by 5:00pm on Friday, November 15 via Canvas Submission

Tuesday, Nov. 19 – The Ethics of Human Enhancement

2. Julian Savulescu – “Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancement of Human Beings”
Thursday, Nov. 21 – The Ethics of Human Enhancement

1. Alberto Giubilini & Sagar Sanyal – “The Ethics of Human Enhancement”

Tuesday, Nov. 26 – Capstone Presentations

- No Assigned Reading

Tuesday, Dec. 3 – Capstone Presentations

- No Assigned Reading