**World Views**

Dr. Brendan Myers Winter 2015

**Student Presentations**

20 possible points; 20% of the final grade.

In this assignment, you are asked to present a well-researched discussion about **a theory about human nature; i.e. a philosophical conception of what it is to be human**. You may choose any topic that falls in this broad description, as long as it is not a topic already discussed in class. (It may, however, discuss a problem already covered in class if it looks at that problem from new angle, and thus uncovers a new complication or a new dimension.)

Remember, this is a *philosophy* assignment, not a “book report”. So you need to show in your discussion that a real philosophical dilemma is present. Thus your presentation must address these questions:

* In the topic you’ve chosen to study, what is its theory of human nature? To put it another way, what is its most prominent belief(s) about what people are generally like?
* What is its “diagnosis” of what’s wrong with humanity (i.e. why we do wrong, why we suffer, why there is injustice, etc.)?
* What is its “perscription” for what to do about the diagnosis?
* In your rational judgment, does this world view pass or fail, in whole or in part, Schweitzer’s three criteria for an acceptable world view?

In broad themes, then, your topic could be about any world view, religious community, body of mythology, or scientific theory. You need not choose a topic that covers *all* the ‘big’ questions: it doesn’t have to be a theory of everything. It need not be a theory that you find rationally acceptable: for instance you might present an argument for why the theory fails Schweitzer’s criteria. But you must choose a topic that makes a substantial and serious claim about human nature, what we human beings are, and what ‘the human condition’ ultimately is. Consider the following topics “pre-approved”:

* Ecofeminism, “Deep Ecology”, and the environmental movement
* The world view and culture of a First Nation.
* Existentialism, especially of a particular writer: Sartre, Camus, Heidegger, etc.
* Freudian and/or Jungian psychology and psychoanalysis
* Gestalt psychology
* A religion not already studied in class (ex. Shinto, Jainism, Santaria, etc.)
* Cults and pseudo-science movements
* The world-view of any of Canada’s mainstream federal political parties (Conservative, Liberal, NDP, BQ, and Green).
* The education you are receiving here at Heritage College

You may also write on a different topic than this, so long as I approve it in advance (and I reserve the right to veto inappropriate topics).

**Requirements**:

Here you are also offered some options. You can do one of the following two things:

* Perform an in-class presentation of approximately 15-20 minutes. Include a PowerPoint or Prezi display.
* Prepare a You-Tube video, of approximately 10 minutes, to be shown in class and followed by a 5-10 minute question-and-answer session.
* If you prefer to do a written assignment and not a presentation, you may prepare a report of about 1000 words (that’s 250 words for each of the four questions noted above).

*If you do a presentation in class,* then you may work in small groups (no more than three members), and it must be clear which person contributed which material to the research*. If you do a written report,* you must prepare this report individually.

**Deadlines**:

I need see a statement of your topic, your group members, and a clear statement of who in your group will be responsible for each part of your presentation, no later than **Monday 21st November.** (I will then draw up a schedule.) On the day of your presentation, or earlier if possible, you will also submit a one-page summary of your presentation and a complete bibliography.

**Evaluation**

Presentations will be graded on the following basis:

7 points for factual clarity and completeness, and good use of relevant research resources

7 points for the strength and insightfulness of the argument concerning Schweitzer’s criteria

3 points for organizational clarity

3 points for correct spelling and grammar in all accompanying written material (PowerPoint presentations, etc.)

Students are advised to consult the “Clear And Present Thinking” textbook for advise on building strong arguments, and on avoiding logical errors, observer bias, and the like.