

## Course Syllabus and Class Schedule: HONR 492 – 04, Construction of Self in Philosophy, Literature, and Medicine

<b>Instructor Information:</b>	<p>Instructor: Gerald Callahan, Ph.D.</p> <p>Office Location: Pathology Room 310          Phone: (970) 491-7086          E-mail: <a href="mailto:gerald.callahan@colostate.edu">gerald.callahan@colostate.edu</a>          Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00 to 4:00 and by appointment</p>
<b>Required Texts:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Frankenstein (Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism) [Paperback]  <a href="#">Mary Shelley</a> (Author), <a href="#">Johanna M. Smith</a> (Editor)            Bedford/St. Martin's; 2nd edition (April 14, 2000)  <b>ISBN-10:</b> 031219126X  <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-0312191269</li>   <li>2. <b>Lord of the Flies Mass Market Paperback</b>            by <a href="#">William Golding</a> (Author) , <a href="#">E. L. Epstein</a> (Afterword)  <b>ISBN-10:</b> 0399501487  <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-0399501487            Perigee Books; Reissue edition (July 27, 1959)</li>   <li>3. <b>Lying: A Metaphorical Memoir Paperback</b>            by <a href="#">Lauren Slater</a> (Author)            Penguin (October 1, 2001) <b>ISBN-10:</b> 014200006X  <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-0142000069</li>   <li>4. <b>Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (Movie Tie-In): A Novel Paperback – November 1, 2011</b>            by <a href="#">Jonathan Safran Foer</a>  <b>Publisher:</b> Mariner Books; Reprint edition (November 1, 2011)  <b>ISBN-10:</b> 0547735022  <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-0547735023</li>   <li>5. <b>The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven Paperback</b>            by <a href="#">Sherman Alexie</a> (Author)  <b>Publisher:</b> Grove Press; 20th Anniversary Edition edition (October 8, 2013)  <b>Language:</b> English  <b>ISBN-10:</b> 0802121993  <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-0802121998</li>   <li>6. <b>By the Lake of Sleeping Children: The Secret Life of the Mexican Border</b> [Paperback], by <a href="#">Luis Urrea</a>  <b>Publisher:</b> Anchor; 1st Anchor Books ed edition (January 2, 1993)  <b>ISBN-10:</b> 0385425309  <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-0385425308</li>   <li>7. <b>Between XX and XY: Intersexuality and the Myth of Two Sexes Hardcover</b>            by <a href="#">Gerald N. Callahan PhD</a> (Author)  <b>Publisher:</b> Chicago Review Press (July 1, 2009)  <b>ISBN-10:</b> 1556527853  <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-1556527852</li> </ol>

<p><b>Course Description:</b></p>	<p><i>Construction of Self</i> will explore three views of this most essential of human traits -- the biological, the philosophical, and the literary. Literature and philosophy have for centuries probed at the surfaces and the cavities of self. Biology, our teachers have told us, couldn't care a whole lot less about the nature of the human self. But as we will see in this course, biological and medical sciences, though less overtly, are also steadily changing the way we view our selves. Three pillars of self. However, since there is no single aspect of this universe that is not in some way relevant to the process of self-definition, we might as easily have picked any of several other perspectives, including things like art, religion, sociology, archeology, cosmology, and so on. But we only have one semester. And biology, philosophy, and literature offer a reasonable sampling of how we have struggled with our pictures of our selves since we first noticed we had selves and wondered just what we ought to do with them. Furthermore, the consideration of these seemingly disparate subjects and their intersections will allow us to explore the process of self-construction and the ways in which our images of self are synthesized from the seemingly discontinuous fragments of our experience.</p>
<p><b>Course Objectives or Course Learning Outcomes:</b></p>	<p>There are, of course, no answers -- or at least no broadly useful answers -- to most of the truly important questions about self. But there are great questions. My goal is to guide you into several wings of the unmapped labyrinth of self and there to show you things you might never have imagined, never noticed, or perhaps only forgotten -- to give you questions that you may never answer, but questions that will help shape pieces of your self. When we are finished, all of us will have filled in a few spots on our old maps. All of us will have opened whole new regions where nothing is fixed or mapped. And each of us will have gained a greater understanding of our own and others' struggles to pull together the pieces of self, the broken bits of this universe that make us who we are.</p> <p>The emphasis in the classroom will be on group discussion. As necessary, some nearly (but as rarely as possible) lecture-style presentations will be used to provide background. But we will rely mostly on discussion of related readings and writings to develop relevant concepts and questions. What you take from this class will be directly proportional to your involvement in these discussions. So, be prepared to ask and tell a lot of stuff.</p> <p>Specifically, after completing this course, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe Daniel Dennet's, Rene Descartes', and Thomas Nagel's views of self and self-consciousness</li> <li>• Compare and contrast Mary Shelly's and William Golding's ideas about human nature</li> <li>• Discuss the many alternatives to classical ideas about human and other animal biological sex</li> <li>• Discuss the role and reliability of human memories in creating concepts of self</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the role of the immune system in self-maintenance</li> <li>• Discuss the role of lying in the creation of self and self-images</li> <li>• Describe the role and reliability of the senses in creation of self.</li> <li>• Describe the role of DNA in self-determination</li> <li>• Create a non-verbal representation of yourself</li> <li>• Explain how human selves may be lost and recreated.</li> <li>• Acquire improved writing and speaking skills</li> <li>• Acquire additional knowledge of the arts and humanities</li> <li>• Acquire additional knowledge of social and behavioral sciences</li> <li>• Acquire additional historical perspectives and global and cultural awareness.</li> </ul>
Course Prerequisite	HONR 392
Credit Hours	3
Class Breakdown	Lecture Hours: 3 <u>Lab Hours: 0</u> Total Hours: 3
Teaching Strategies	Teaching strategies for this course will be lecture, class discussions, demonstrations, student presentations, Website (RamCT)
Course Policies and Procedures:	<p><b>Attendance:</b> While regular attendance is strongly encouraged, attendance will not be a factor in determining final grades</p> <p><b>Class Participation:</b> This course relies heavily on class discussions. For you to gain the most, it is essential that you participate in these discussions, ideally during every class period. 20 percent of your final grade depends on your level of participation. If you participate in fewer than 1 in 10 class discussions, you will lose half of this percentage; fewer than 1 in 20 you will lose 3/5 of this percentage, and fewer than 1 in 30, you will lose all possible points for class participation.</p> <p><b>Academic Honesty:</b> Examinations must be completed using one's own knowledge. No materials beyond one's own memory may be used to complete examinations. For student presentations, any resources available may be used.</p> <p><b>Special Needs Students:</b> Students who find that standard accommodations for exams are not appropriate for their needs are encouraged to contact the (the poorly named) Resources for Disabled Student's office to arrange for support services.</p> <p><b>Major Assignments and Grading:</b></p> <p><b>First Essay.</b> Each of you will write two essays considering</p>

connections between three different aspects of self-construction -- biological, philosophical, and literary. The first of these essays should be approximately 1500 to 2000 (6-8 pp.) words in length, typewritten and double-spaced, focusing on how relevant issues in philosophy, world view, gender, and biology affect personal perspectives on self. The content of this essay should reflect your consideration of the reading assignments and classroom discussion. These writings may take the form of critical essays, personal essays, fiction, science fiction, or even poetry. However, if you choose to do something very much out of the ordinary, it is a good idea to get instructor approval just to assure us both that there will be no surprises at grading time. Grading of these written assignments will be based on 1) evidence that you have thought about what we have read and discussed; 2) evidence of genuine effort – thought, time, interest; 3) creativity in your thinking processes – this course is about reconstructing (or deconstructing) our thoughts about our selves, inherently a highly creative process; and 4) writing skill.

**Visual Construction of Self.** In addition, about midway through the semester, each of you will be asked to provide an oral and visual representation of your self. This may take the form of sculpture, painting, collage, film, computer graphics, etc. The overall presentation will include a ten-minute oral presentation about your perception of self and how it is reflected in your graphic presentation. The representation you choose should reflect how the class materials and discussions have affected your perception of your self. Again, grading will be based on 1) evidence of thought about readings and discussion, 2) evidence of effort, 3) creativity, and 4) quality of your oral presentation.

**Final Essay.** The final essay (approximately 2500-3000 words, 10-12 pp.), due by Tuesday of Finals week, should discuss how issues in biology are also treated by creative writers and philosophers and how these considerations have affected your own views of self. A major emphasis should be on how all that we have discussed is fused in literature. Once again, grading will be based on 1) evidence of thought about readings and discussion, 2) evidence of effort, 3) creativity, and 4) evidence of cross-disciplinary thought.

**Discussion Questions.** Beginning with the second week of class, you will be asked to provide discussion questions for each of the major reading assignments. Each question should frame (in a short paragraph) an issue that you think merits further discussion. And each question should be framed to facilitate the most interesting possible discussion of that issue -- e.g. "What is the morality of creating a being and then abandoning it?" is not as useful as "What failed Victor in his search for self-recreation?"

**Etiquette (Classroom and/or Online):** A majority of class time is spent sharing opinions and sharing information. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to communicate with courtesy and professionalism. Professional Courtesy includes respecting others'

opinions, being courteous and respectful, and working together in the spirit of cooperation. Sexist, heterosexist, and racist language should not be used when communicating in the course. Discussions and assignments will be graded on quality and professionalism. The things people share in class should not be discussed outside of the classroom with the explicit consent of the persons who shared those thoughts.

**Gradebook:** Grades will be posted within one week after the scheduled due date.

**E-mail Procedure:** All e-mail sent to the instructor for this course should be sent to [gerald.callahan@colostate.edu](mailto:gerald.callahan@colostate.edu) and should contain the following in the subject line: Course Name and Number, Your Name, Short Description of your question. Also note that the same rules for etiquette in the classroom (as mentioned above) apply to content in an e-mail. Sending e-mail that violates the rules mentioned above can result in disciplinary action taken by the school.

## Academic Policies

**Final Evaluation.** Grades will be determined by a holistic evaluation of your overall portfolio and performance. Individual components will be weighted as follows:

First Essay:	20%
Visual Construction of Self, Formal Speech:	20%
Final Essay:	20%
Discussion Questions:	20%
Participation	20%

This course **will not use a +/-** grading system

### Grading Scale

Grade	Course Credit	Numerical Equivalent	Indicates
A	4.0	90-100	Excellent
B	3.0	80 - 89	Above Average
C	2.0	70 - 79	Average
D	1.0	60 - 69	Below Average
F	0.0	0 – 59	Failure

**Academic Honesty:** Learning requires commitment and honesty. To achieve the best possible learning experience, students must complete

	<p>all of the assignments in the course on their own. If students fail to complete their own work, they are cheating themselves out of their education and are committing plagiarism. Plagiarism or failing to meet the academic honesty policy will result in the following actions.</p> <p><b>First Recorded Offense:</b> The student receives zero credit for the entire paper, exam, quiz, homework, lab, etc, in which the incident of academic dishonesty occurred. No partial credit may be given. Where the incident involves a graded assignment normally subject to a drop option, the student may not exercise that option.</p> <p><b>Second Recorded Offense:</b> The student receives a failing grade for the class, lab etc, in which the second offense occurs. The second offense need not be in the same class, program, or term as the first offense to invoke this action.</p> <p><b>Third Recorded Offense:</b> The student is permanently expelled. The third offense need not be in the same class, program, or term as either the first or second offense to invoke this sanction.</p> <p><b>Classroom Technology Policies:</b> This class will use a variety of supporting technologies within the classroom (virtual and face to face). Etiquette and professional courtesy (as defined above) should be displayed when using these technologies as they are an extension of the classroom.</p>
Student Help:	<p><b>For Technical Questions:</b> Contact Professor Callahan</p> <p><b>For guidance on personal or educational issues:</b> Contact Professor Callahan</p>

## Course Schedule

### Week 1: Self as Narrative

Reading: "Self as the Center of Narrative Gravity"; "The Origins of Selves" -- essays by Daniel Dennet (on The RamCT site for HP492: "Assigned Reading" > "Philosophy")

Tues. Aug 26 Discussion: Introduction and course overview, issues of self

Thurs. Aug 28 Discussion: Two essays by Daniel Dennet – The self as narrative and the critical role of language in self-construction

### Week 2: The Birth of the Modern Self

Discussion Questions Due: Descartes Meditations

Reading: *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Rene Descartes; First three meditations. (on The RamCT site for HP492: "Assigned Reading" > "Philosophy")

Tues. Sep 2 Discussion: The Philosophy of Self: How Rene Descartes has shaped Western perceptions of self

Thurs. Sep 4 Discussion: The Consequences of History: How Cartesian are we?

### Week 3: Self and Self-Perception

Discussion Questions Due: Nagel

Reading: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" By Thomas Nagel. (on The RamCT site for HP492: "Assigned Reading" > "Philosophy")

Tues. Sep 9 Discussion: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" Is the nature of self beyond the limits of modern science?

Thurs. Sep 11 Discussion: What of yourself belongs to you and what belongs to the Government – Dr. Ray Hogler, esq. and guest

### Week 4: The Constructed Self

Discussion Questions Due: Frankenstein

Reading: *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelly, *A Question of Gender*

Tues. Sep 16 Discussion: Literature, Science, and Philosophy in *Frankenstein*

Thurs. Sep 18 Discussion: The Modern Prometheus: The promise and perils of science

### Week 5: Sex, Gender, and Self-Perception

Discussion Questions Due: *Between XX and XY: Intersexuality and the Myth of Two Sexes*,

Reading: *The Opposite of Sex and A Question of Gender* (on The RamCT site for HP492: "Assigned Reading" > "Gender Essays")

Tues. Sep 23 Discussion: The biological basis of sex, the purpose and the promise of sex

Thurs. Sep 25 Discussion: Alternative sexes

**Week 6: Cultural Self**

Discussion Questions Due: *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie and *Across the Wire* by Louis Alberto Urrea

Tues. Sep 30                      Discussion: Nation and Self

Thurs Oct 2                      Discussion: Culture and Self

**Week 7: Immune and Microbiological Self****Tuesday Oct 7 -- First Essay Due: Personal Reflections on Issues of Self**

Discussion Questions Due: Immunology Essays

Reading:                      *Self and Anti-Self, Chimera*, and readings from *Infection: the Uninvited Universe*, by Gerald N. Callahan. (RamCT, "Assigned Reading" > "Immunology")

Tues. Oct 7    Discussion:    The Immune Self, Self Defense

Thurs. Oct 9   Discussion:    Microbiological Self

**Week 7: Neurological Self**

Discussion Questions Due: *The Astonishing Hypothesis*

Reading:                      *The Astonishing Hypothesis*, Francis Crick, through page 33 on Google Books (Link is under "neurological self" On RamCT)

Tues. Oct 14   Discussion:    The Nervous System and Self Perception

Thurs. Oct 16   Discussion:    Astonishing Hypotheses: Nervous Self

**Week 9: Self and Society**

Discussion Questions Due: *Lord of the Flies* and essays

Reading: *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, *Is it in Anyone to Abuse a Captive?*, *The Milgram Buzzer Experiment*, *Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*, and *Rwandan Genocide* (RamCT: "Assigned Reading" > Stanford Prison Experiment).

Tues. Oct 21   Discussion:    The Inborn Nature of Human Beings

Thurs. Oct 23   Discussion:    The Dark Side of Self

**Week 10: Self as DNA**

Discussion Questions Due: Behavioral Genetics

Reading:                      On line readings on genetics of behavior. Which of our genes make us human?

Tues. Oct 28                      Discussion: The Human Phenotype

Thurs. Oct 30                      Discussion:    The Genetics of Behavior

**Week 11: FORMAL SPEECH: The Audible and Visible Human Project**

Tues. Nov 4 Formal Speeches on Visual Construction-of-Self projects

Thurs. Nov 6 Formal Speeches on Visual Construction-of-Self projects

**Week 12: FORMAL SPEECH: The Audible and Visible Human Project**

Tues. Nov 11 Formal Speeches on Visual Construction-of-Self projects

Thurs. Nov 13 Formal Speeches on Visual Construction-of-Self projects

**Week 13: Disease and Self-Perception: The American Way**

Discussion Questions Due: *Lying*

Reading: *Lying* by Lauren Slater

Tues. Nov 18 Discussion: The Unnatural Way of Death in America

Thurs. Nov 20 Discussion: Disease and the Roots of Human Selves, Gina Mohr-Callahan

**Week 14: Past Selves: Lost Selves**

Discussion: Questions Due: *Extremely Close and Incredibly Loud*

Reading: *Extremely Close and Incredibly Loud*, Jonathan Foer

Tues. Dec 2 Discussion: The tenuousness of self

Thurs. Dec 4 Discussion: Losing our Selves

**Week 15: Final Constructions of Self: Final Essays ay 16**

Reading: *The Metamorphosis*, by Franz Kafka (on RamCT)

Tues. Dec 9 Discussion: Self Transformation: The power and the pain of being different

Thurs. Dec 11 Discussion: Brief Consideration of Final Essays