



Ten Theories of Human Nature

David L. Haberman

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Over three previous editions, *Ten Theories of Human Nature* has been a remarkably popular introduction to some of the most influential developments in Western and Eastern thought. This thoroughly revised fourth edition features substantial new chapters on Aristotle and on evolutionary theories of human nature; the latter centers on Edward O. Wilson but also outlines the ideas of Emile Durkheim, B. F. Skinner, Nikolaas Tinbergen, Konrad Lorenz, Noam Chomsky, and recent evolutionary psychology. This edition also includes a rewritten introduction that invites readers (even if inclined toward fundamentalism, or to cultural relativism) to careful, critical thought about human nature; a useful new section that summarizes the history of ideas from the Stoics to the Enlightenment; and a new conclusion that suggests a way to synthesize the various theories.

Lucid and accessible, *Ten Theories of Human Nature*, 4/e, compresses into a small space the essence of such ancient traditions as Confucianism, Hinduism, and the Old and New Testaments as well as the theories of Plato, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Jean-Paul Sartre. The authors juxtapose the ideas of these and other thinkers and traditions in a way that helps readers understand how humanity has struggled to comprehend its nature. To encourage readers to think critically for themselves and to underscore the similarities and differences between the many theories, the book examines each one on four points--the nature of the universe, the nature of humanity, the diagnosis of the ills of humanity, and the proposed cure for these problems. Ideal for introductory courses in human nature, philosophy, religious studies, and intellectual history, *Ten Theories of Human Nature*, 4/e, will engage and motivate students and other readers to consider how we can understand and improve both ourselves and human society.

Ten Theories of Human Nature Details

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Allison O says

Really comprehensive. Supposed to be a first year book for philosophy students, but I struggled with a couple of the chapters myself, and I'm supposed to know what I'm talking about! (to a certain extent)

K.G. White says

"lucid and accessible", this because briefly covers Confucianism, Hinduism, The Old and New Testaments, Plato, Kant, Marx, Freud, Sartre and their discussions of the human condition. The book focuses and man's struggle to reconcile what is natural. I read this for a philosophy class in College, but it doesn't necessarily read like a text book, it is really quite interesting. Beware, it will cause you to think existentially and that can lead to some crazy tangents. You should read this book along with someone else, so that you can discuss it during/afterwards so that everything you think and feel doesn't get swept under the rug or held internally to plague your mind.

David Withun says

This is an excellent introduction to ten fascinating and influential ways of answering the question "what does it mean to be human?" The authors present fair and insightful explanations of the approach offered within each system, giving us a description of the thought of that system, including some very good background information, their diagnosis of the human condition and prescription for it, as well as an analysis and critique of the system. In all of this, the book also serves very well as an introduction in a more general way to each of the philosophies it covers. For that reason, I do wish that the authors would add more chapters to the next edition; specifically, I would like to see Buddhism covered, Islam covered (rather than simply alluded to in the chapter on the Biblical conception of man), and the chapter on the Biblical conception of man divided into two and Judaism and Christianity treated separately (in order to treat each more fully). I would also like to see feminism treated in a chapter of its own rather than inserted throughout (and therefore permeating) the entire book; feminism stands as a philosophy (or, rather, several philosophies) in its own right and I see no need nor justice in allowing its presuppositions to color the treatment that the rest of the philosophies in the book receive. All in all, very much worth the read for anyone interested in being human!

Pat Burke says

A fairly balanced study, covering concepts of human nature as presented in Christianity, Confucianism, Plato, Kant, Freud, Sartre and some modern psychologists (Skinner). It is clear and well written. Kantian in approach, it asserts that certain Christian positions are not open to empirical proof. [In his "Man and Values", Cormac Burke takes the writers up on this point, arguing that if not open to an empirical approach, such positions are open to rational proof

Feriyal says

It was really hard for me to concentrate on a philosophy book before but this simple introduction of 10 theories of human nature was a complete source of understanding the basics.
