


Catholic Theology: Anthropology

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Abstract

This session is suitable for different fields of study as a first session introducing the topic of anthropology. First, definitions for empirical philosophical and theological anthropology will be distinguished. Then, students will be motivated to perceive and discuss perspectives on concepts of humanity in a differentiated way.

Timescale

One lecture (about 90 min)

Key Terms

Philosophical Anthropology, Theological Anthropology, Images of Human Beings, Categories of Images of Human Beings.

Key competences / Learning outcomes

The students:

- know the etymological derivation of the term anthropology
- know the definition of empirical, philosophical, and theological anthropology,
- can name categories of images of human beings,
- know different collective and individual images of human beings,
- can respectfully exchange and discuss them with each other,
- practice a change of perspective.

References

Zichy, M. (2021). *Die Macht der Menschenbilder. Wie wir andere wahrnehmen.* (The Power of Images of Human Beings. How we perceive others). Stuttgart.



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Teaching Steps

Teaching Steps			
Phase/Time	Approach	Method	Social Form/ Tasks for students
Introduction	The lecturer briefly explains the terms "anthropos" and "logos" (gr.) as 'doctrine or science of hummans' and invites to a brainstorming on the term 'anthropology'.	Brainstorming Notes on the blackboard	Plenary
Elaboration I	The students receive worksheet no. 1 and underline the most important statements.	Individual elaboration	Individual work
Systematize	The terms mentioned during the brainstorming are systematized on the board according to empirical, philosophical, and theological anthropology according to worksheet no. 1.	Notes on the blackboard	Plenary
Elaboration II	Students work on worksheet no. 2 and fill in the table.	Individual elaboration	Individual work



<p>Discussion and Sharing I</p>	<p>The students share the results with which they have filled both of the columns and rows of the list in pairs and discuss them afterwards</p>	<p>Sharing and discussing</p>	<p>Partner work</p>
<p>Discussion and Sharing II</p>	<p>Two partners each sit down with two other partners to form a group of 4 people. They share the results of their discussion with each other. Then they create another column. For this, they agree on another type of anthropology (empirical, philosophical, or theological) and try to develop it by filling in the lines (completely named by all by then).</p>	<p>Elaboration and discussion</p>	<p>Group work</p>
<p>Presentation in the plenum</p>	<p>The groups are asked to present their differences and distinctions in their respective perspectives of the subject view, their own view, and the description of the foreign world view they had shared during the partner and group work. Finally, the lecturer asks a question to encourage reflection in a meta-perspective about one's own learning: e.g.: What insights and new perspectives did you gain from today's session?</p>	<p>Group presentation and sharing</p>	<p>Plenary</p>



Material and Texts

Worksheet 1

Definitions of Anthropology

Anthropology (gr: *anthropos* - human being and *logos* - teaching), is the study or science of the human being. Various disciplines and subject areas are concerned with the study and research of the human being. The following concepts of anthropology can be distinguished:

- ❖ **Empirical anthropology** is based on observable facts (empiricism). With the help of measurable, valid data and their systematisation, it arrives at empirical-scientific conclusions that relate to specific aspects. A distinction is made here between, for example, biological, psychological, medical and sociological anthropology, taking into account other anthropologically oriented sciences, such as medicine, ethnology, history and geography.

- ❖ **Philosophical anthropology** asks the question: "What is human?". This question, which according to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is one of the four central questions of philosophy, aims to look at the human being in its wholeness, its essence, its meaning. Humans reflect on themselves and seek answers about what human beings have always been, what they are and what they should be, what they will be and what they should be.
Examples of philosophical anthropology: the very essence of humans are their spiritual soul (Plato); humans exist as an end in themselves (Immanuel Kant); humans are wolves to humans (Thomas Hobbes); humans are the ensemble of social relations (Karl Marx).

- ❖ **Theological anthropology** reflects on humans by presupposing that there is a relationship of humans to God. Depending on how this relationship to God is interpreted theologically, it has consequences for the relationship to fellow human beings, to creation and to oneself. Jewish anthropology is guided by the Tanakh and the Halakhah, Christian anthropology by the Old and New Testaments, Islamic theology by the Koran. Theological anthropology makes statements, for example, about the extent to which human beings are free or predestined creatures, the extent to which they are the image of God or how they live on in his personhood after death.

(Text based on: Werner Trutwin: Neues Forum Religion: Mensch. Anthropology workbook, Ostfildern: Patmos 2009, p. 18.)



Worksheet 2

"What is my view of human beings?"

The following worksheet based on: Zichy, Michael (2021): *Die Macht der Menschenbilder*. (In german also available as an e-book). Ditzingen: Reclam no. 14150, pp. 21-25.

1. Please add other possible assumptions in the column "assumptions about humans".
2. Which ideas about these assumptions are represented by a common western conception of human beings?
3. Which ideas about these assumptions are represented by the conception of human beings of your (study) subject?
4. What ideas about these assumptions do you hold personally?

	Assumptions about human beings...	Western conception of human beings	Conception of human beings from the perspective of my study subject	My personal conception of human beings...
01.	...about who has personal dignity at all:			
02.	...about whether the human being consists of spirit, soul, body and in which relation these are to each other:			
03.	...about which position the human being has in the world in relation to other living beings:			
04.	...about the relationship between man and woman:			
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