



## Human person under the spotlight: anthropology

### Introduction

Management is about human beings and consequently significant knowledge of the human being is necessary for managers. Social sciences provide empirical knowledge but any science has its limitations. Philosophical anthropology, which has been widely developed over the ages, can help us gain access to a better understanding of the human being.

### Objectives

- Provide a series of basic ideas, to gain a global understanding of the reality of a human being as well as an individual, through reflections based on experiences of life itself and which serve as a reference for personal understanding and for understanding others.
- Follow the account of human nature found in the writings of Thomas Aquinas who drew upon both the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions in Greek philosophy to forge his own unique synthesis.
- Encourage young managers of the future to reflect upon the human person. It does not intend to be a treatise upon philosophical anthropology in the strict sense but an introduction that seeks to offer the fundamental elements for such study, yet without delving exhaustively into the details of each theme and without dwelling on more specialized questions or on all ongoing debates.

### Competences

#### Basic Competences

- CB8. The students can integrate knowledge and face the complexity of formulating judgments based on information that, being incomplete or limited, includes reflections on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments.
- CB9. Students know how to communicate their conclusions and the knowledge and ultimate reasons that support them to specialized and non-specialized audiences in a clear and unambiguous way.

#### General Competences

- CG2 - Work effectively in multicultural teams, assuming the leadership of a project when required. Integrate the value of diversity in the decision process and teamwork. (Ability to work in multicultural teams)

- CG4 - Acquire the self-knowledge and self-control necessary to work effectively in professional environments under pressure, understanding the motivations of others and the culture of the company. (Emotional intelligence).
- CG5 - Apply proven ethical criteria in making business decisions, respecting the intrinsic dignity of each person and the achievement of the common good. (Integrity).

### Specific Competences

- CE08 - Identify the sources of competitive advantage of a company to make a judgment on its sustainability in the future based on the competitive structure of the industry, the expected response of competitors and the internal resources of the company itself.
- CE14 - Identify the mechanisms of team management that generate an environment of collaboration, communication, trust, and achievement of the common goal.

## Content

The human being has always been an enigma; we wonder how to understand ourselves. “Philosophy has pondered this question from its very beginnings and the discoveries of contemporary science seem only to deepen the conundrum. We have found out much about the brain and its functions, but the relationship of the brain to the mind still seems to elude us. We have mapped the human genome, yet the instantiation of new human life remains mysterious [...] Are we merely material or also spiritual?” (Dodds, 2013).

This subject explores such questions and offers some insights by retrieving the philosophical tradition of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas.

“It is not always easy to enter into this field because one may come up against very different ways of dealing with the question; indeed, we believe it is possible to agree, at least to some extent, with the following affirmation of Heidegger: *No other age has had so many and varied conceptions about man as the present. Never before as today has knowledge about man been presented so insistently and fascinatingly. Yet it is also true that no age has known less than ours about what man is. Never has man assumed such a problematic aspect as in our own time.*” (Lombo-Russo 2014)

The paradox of this subject lies in the fact that we are not studying something external to ourselves. Person himself is the subject of our study, a complex and living reality. Human being in first, second and third person: I, you and she/he. Men in first, second and third person: we, you and they. In the words of Plessner “we will try to understand man as a living reality, or in other words, to learn to see man through his own eyes”.

Management always entails a certain vision of the human being, along with a view of the nature and purpose of the business firm and society. Some of the key anthropological topics relevant for management that we will explore among others will be rationality, emotions, free will, aesthetic experience, relationability and sociability, sense of transcendence, capacity of moral discernment or human flourishing.

## Evaluation

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following criteria:

- 40% Class participation

- 30% Individual Assignment
- 30% Team Assignment

The IESE Business School's Honor Code and Learning Partnership apply to all activities in this course. For individual assignments, unless explicitly stated, you should not interact with anyone else. For deliverables to be done in teams you should interact only with the members of your team.