

A Note from the Author: Thelma Altshuler
on Revel *The Art of Being Human*, 11th Edition

Dear Colleague,

A student noting that HUM is a shortened version of a course called “Humanities” may wonder, “Why do I need that? I’m already human.” The question encourages doubt about a course that doesn’t sound as if it promises rapid career advances. In the old days, of course, “old” meaning a time when few people (mainly men) attended college, the course would not have been justified in terms of money-making. Those fortunate students would have had assured incomes from family members. College courses related to the humanities would have concentrated on the Classics in their original languages of Latin and Greek. Careers for most of the scholars would have been confined to the military, the clergy, and overseeing the estate they would one day inherit.

Visiting a college campus today, one would find a diverse student body and curricula more varied and challenging than any available in the past. But what constitutes “humanities” in a modern society? The Art of Being Human attempts to answer that question with an open invitation to all students to read, think, and enjoy while visiting different times and cultures. Organized thematically, The Art of Being Human allows instructors and students the freedom to follow their interests, in a specific art or philosophical question coming under the broad heading of “Humanities.” There is no need to “cover” everything in the book, as there might have been in a book arranged in the march from one century to the next. The book also aims at encouraging learning about the great achievements of history’s creative giants but does not allow those achievements to remain as mere names and dates useful as answers on a gameshow.

Bringing those names of the past to life and making them relevant is considerably easier with the assistance of Revel. In Revel, when a painting is mentioned the student has the option of immediately seeing it reproduced on the page in whatever size is desired. Music can be heard without the need to leave the room or purchase a ticket. Assignments to describe a viewing or hearing experience are thus easily available, without explanations and excuses for why the student was unable to turn in a report.

Studying becomes more accessible too, through flexible highlighting and multiple choice quizzes that offer instant feedback. They can carry out their studies almost anywhere, at any time, and in the formats they have come to expect – their laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

Giving student readers the opportunity to control so many digital elements continues the underlying philosophy of *The Art of Being Human*; that everyone can participate in the ideas described in the text. Revel does just that and I hope you consider it.

Sincerely yours,

Thelma Altshuler