

Philosophy for Living

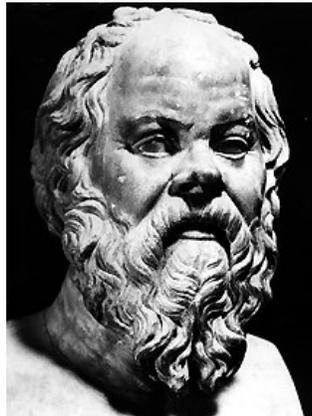
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Course Description

What is the good life?

Are some ways of living better than others, or are all ways of living equally good? If there is a good life (or a range of good lives), what is it like? Is it the happiest life? The one where you get what you desire? Or the one where you learn to control your desires? Is a good life a meaningful life, a virtuous life, or something else?

The question “What is the good life?” was asked by the earliest philosophers, both Greek and Chinese. You might wonder what a bunch of people who lived thousands of years ago have to say about the good life for you—someone who lives here, now, in the 21st Century. That is one of the things we will explore in this class as we study different theories of the good life.



“The unexamined life is not worth living.” - Socrates

You probably already have a variety of what we would call “pretheoretical” or unexamined ideas about what the good life is. These are things you already believe, but haven’t yet articulated or, going a step further, defended. One of the goals this semester will be for you to

think deeply about the good life in a way that informs and enriches your own experience in the world.

While we will be starting with what some of the ancient philosophers said about the good life (Epicureans, Stoics, Confucians) we won’t end there. We will also jump into the 20th century by examining Existentialist philosophy, and we will wrap things up by examining some current work in contemporary philosophy & psychology of human well-being.

Although we will be studying many different ideas about the good life, this course isn’t guaranteed to improve *your* life.

That is up to you.

(Or is it?)

Syllabus

PHIL 1301

M/W/F

Section 10059:

10-10:50a

Section 16184:

12-12:50p

Location: Irby 102

T/Th

Section 21697:

12:15-1:30p

Location: Irby 307

Instructor:

Dr. Sharon Mason

Contact Info:

- *Office: Irby 118c*
- *Office Hours: M/W 11a-12p T/Th 10a-12p And by appointment*
- *Office Phone: 501-450-5590*
- *Email (preferred): smason@uca.edu*

UCA Core—Lower Division (I)

Philosophy for Living is part of the UCA Lower Division Core program.

There will be opportunities to develop your skill in each of the four CORE competencies in this class (Critical Inquiry, Effective Communication, Responsible Living, and Diversity).

However, our primary focus will be on **Critical Inquiry (I)**, the ability to analyze new problems and situations to formulate informed opinions and conclusions.



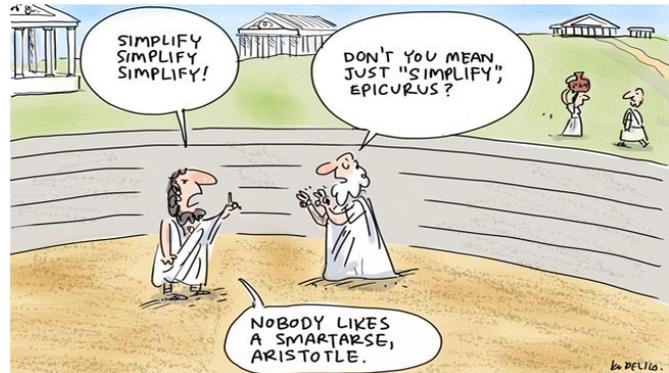


Course Texts

- Goldstein, R. (2014) *Plato at the Googleplex*. Vintage Books.
- Inwood, B. & Gerson, L. P. (1997). *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings* (Second edition): Hackett Publishing Company.
- Kupperman, Joel J. (2006) *Six Myths About the Good Life: Thinking about What Has Value*, Hackett Publishing Company.

Grading Scheme

Attendance/Participation	10%
Assignments	25%
Exams	35%
Way of Life Project	30%



Classroom Conduct Statement

This course is designed to encourage you to think deeply about controversial issues, and as we go along you will almost certainly encounter viewpoints that challenge your own beliefs. I encourage you to view these challenges as opportunities to learn about perspectives that may differ widely from your own and to practice the skill of interacting respectfully and sympathetically with someone, despite the fact that you may strongly disagree with their point of view. Although debate and critical analysis are encouraged, it should be clear that we will not discriminate against or criticize members of this classroom community based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, or religion. Everyone is welcome here.

Attendance/Participation (10%)

A lot of the work for this course happens *in class*. We will be discussing important ideas in almost every class period, and students who do not attend class regularly will not benefit from the course as much as those who do attend regularly. Attendance and active participation in the class are, therefore, required.



Attendance: Each student may take up to 2 excused absences for any reason. Absences in excess of 2 will result in a deduction of 10% from your attendance/participation grade per absence. In cases of an emergency, sickness, death in the family, or something of that sort, a student may receive additional excused absences provided that the student notifies me right away and provides appropriate documentation.

Participation: Participation refers to your active involvement in the class by being prepared for class and engaging in classroom discussion. Visits to my office hours will also count as active involvement in the class. Distracting behavior (chronic tardiness, surfing the web on a laptop or mobile device, etc.) may result in points off your attendance/participation grade.

Writing Assignments (30%)

These are short (1-3 page) assignments aimed at helping you develop your critical writing and communication skills. They will also help you prepare for the class and identify key concepts as we go along.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the due date and should be submitted on Blackboard (unless instructed otherwise). Two of the assignments will require posting/commenting on the class blog on Blackboard.

Assignments will be graded on a check, check minus, and check plus scale. At the end of the semester, you will receive points for your 5 highest scores according to the following scale:

√+ = 10 points

√ = 9 points

√- = 8 points

Your total points will be taken out of 50 to get your assignment grade.

Late assignments are not accepted unless an extension is arranged in advance. Also, missed assignments cannot be made up. However, your lowest scores will be dropped (only the highest 5 scores will count).

Assignments will sometimes be announced in the class period before they are due. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to check with one of your classmates to see if anything is due for the next class. "I wasn't in class" is not an good excuse.



Confucius 550-470BC

Exams (30%)

There will be two in-class exams, a midterm and a final exam. Exams will include a variety of questions, including multiple choice, short answer, and essay.

SEROTONIN & DOPAMINE



Technically, the only two things
you enjoy

Way of Life Project (30%)



The theories of the good life we study this semester aren't mere abstract theoretical exercises. They are meant to be practiced.

This project invites you to "try on" one of the philosophical theories we study this semester by adopting it as your own life philosophy for at least 3 days.

You will need to create a personal project journal and a group presentation (live or video) for the class. These will be equally weighted to determine your individual grade.

This project gives you the opportunity to develop your communication skills by collaborating with others in your group. It also gives you practice developing material to share with the entire class. It is an important part of the course, and you should expect to spend a good deal of time working on it.

More detailed instructions about the project will be available on Blackboard.



**Philosophy for Living:
Course Schedule**

Introduction (Aug 18-19)	Course introduction, syllabus review
Week 1 (Aug 22-26) Is there a good life?	Read: - Goldstein, “Plato at the Googleplex” p. 61-120 - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, entry on the meaning of life: subjectivism, objectivism (Blackboard)
Week 2 (Aug 29-Sept2) Plato	Read: - Plato, <i>Apology</i> (Blackboard); - Read Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> : excerpts 463e-481b, 491c-509c
Week 3 (Sept 5-9) Epicureanism	Read: - Hellenistic Philosophy: Intro, p. xv-xx; Epicureanism, The ancient biography of Epicurus (p. 3-5); Epicurus: Letter to Menoeceus (p. 28-31); The Principal Doctrines (p. 32-36); Diogenes Laertius (p. 42-45) September 5: No Class Monday section ONLY—Labor Day
Week 4 (Sept 12-16)	Read: - Kupperman, Ch. 1 “Myth One—Pursuing Comfort and Pleasure Will Lead to the Best Possible Life” - Heathwood “Desire-Fulfillment Theory” (Blackboard); - Kupperman Ch. 2: Myth Two—The Desirable Life Equals the One that is Most Happy
Week 5 (Sept 19-23) Stoicism	Read: - Hellenistic Philosophy; “Lives of the Stoics”, p. 103-110; - Epictetus Handbook, #1-29: available online at http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html - Irvine, <i>The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy</i> , Ch. 4 & 5 (Blackboard)
Week 6 (Sept 26-30) Stoicism, Existentialism	Read: - Irvine, <i>The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy</i> , Ch. 7 (Blackboard) - Sartre “Existentialism is a Humanism” (Blackboard)
Week 7 (Oct 3-7) Existentialism	Read: - DeBeauvoir “Ambiguity and Freedom” from <i>The Ethics of Ambiguity</i> (Blackboard) Midterm Exam: Thursday/Friday



**Philosophy for Living:
Course Schedule**

<p>Week 8 (Oct 10-14) Existentialism</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Leigh Anderson's <i>On Kierkegaard</i>, excerpts (Blackboard) <p>Oct 13-14: NO CLASS, Fall Break!</p>
<p>Week 9 (Oct 17-21) Confucianism</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Confucian Moral Self-cultivation</i>, Introduction & Ch. 1 [focus on de (virtue) and moral self-cultivation] - <i>The Path</i>, Preface & Ch. 1, Ch. 3 (Blackboard) [Dao, ren, li (ritual)] - Confucius: Analects: selections from 1-4, 8.2, & 12 (Blackboard)
<p>Week 10 (Oct 24-28)</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The Path</i>, Ch. 4 (Blackboard) - Mencius, excerpts (Blackboard)
<p>Week 11 (Oct 31-Nov 4)</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kupperman, Ch. 4 "Myth Four—Reason Rather Than Emotions Would Be the Best Indicator of What Would Be a Good Life" - Kupperman, Ch. 4 "Myth Five—There is No Real Connection, at Least in This Life, Between True Virtue and a Desirable Kind of Life"
<p>Week 12 (Nov 7-11)</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kupperman, Ch. 6 "True Virtue is Impeccable" - Kupperman, Ch. 7 "How Can We Know What Has Value?"
<p>Week 13 (Nov 14-18)</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Velleman: "Well-being and Time" (Available online at http://www.openbookpublishers.com/reader/349#page/180/mode/2up); - Haybron, <i>The Pursuit of Unhappiness</i>, Ch. 10 (Blackboard)
<p>Week 14 (Nov 21-25)</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Haybron, <i>The Pursuit of Unhappiness</i>, Ch. 11 (Blackboard) <p>Nov 23-25 (Wed-Fri): NO CLASS, Thanksgiving Holiday</p>
<p>Week 15 (Nov 28-Dec 2)</p>	<p>Group Presentations!</p>
<p>Week 16 (Dec 5-9) Final Exam Week</p>	<p><u>Final Exam Schedule</u> M/W/F, 10-10:50am: Dec 5 8-10am T/Th, 12:15-1:30pm: Dec 6 11am-1pm M/W/F, 12-12:50pm: Dec 7 11am-1pm</p>



Important Notices required by UCA Administration

◇ **Academic Integrity Statement:**

The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

◇ **Americans with Disabilities Act:**

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Disability Resource Center, 450-3613.

◇ **Building Emergency Plan:**

An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

◇ **Title IX Disclosure:**

If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to "student-on-student" or "employee-on-student"), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs, and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on the specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>. *Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.

◇ **Student Handbook:**

Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with all policies in the [Student Handbook](#), especially the Academic Policies and the Sexual Harassment Policy.