

# Philosophy for Living

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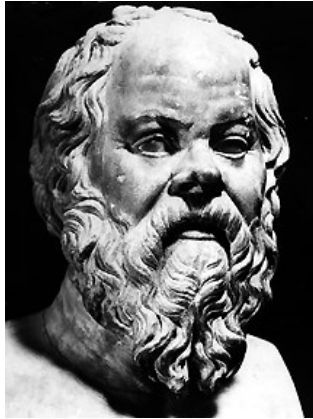
## Course Description

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. 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.

You also probably already have a variety of “pretheoretical” or unexamined ideas about what the good life is. These are things



you already believe, but

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

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.

In this course, we will discuss some of the philosophical views that have, in many

ways, created our modern-day world. But in addition to learning *about* philosophy, we will also focus on learning to *do* philosophy ourselves. For to study philosophy is to study both a subject matter and to learn the skills of reasoning well.

As with any other skill, it will require careful attention and practice. The skills you will develop include the ultimate transferrable skills of critical thinking, argument analysis, and good communication. You will also be encouraged to cultivate an appreciation for your own intellectual history. But most importantly, the study of philosophy aids the development of independence of mind, the mark of a truly educated person.

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 10021:  
9 - 9:50am  
Irby 311

Section 16893:  
11-11:50am  
Irby 311

## Instructor:

Dr. Sharon Mason

## Contact Info:

- **Office:** Irby 118d
- **Office Hours:** MWF 10-11am, and by appointment at **smason-uca.youcanbook.me**
- **Office Phone:** 501-450-5590
- **Email:** smason@uca.edu

## UCA Core—Lower Division (I)

This section of Philosophy for Living is part of the UCA Lower Division Core program and fulfills:

- \* Lower-division Humanities (LD, HUM)
- \* Lower-division Critical Inquiry (I), *the ability to analyze new problems and situations to formulate informed opinions and conclusions.*



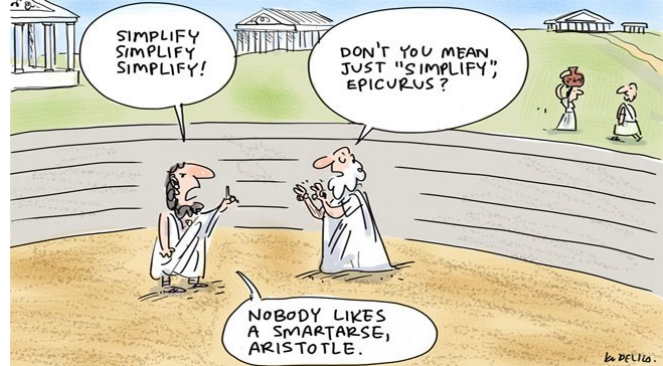


### Course Texts

- All course readings will be posted on Blackboard under “Course Resources”. There are no textbooks to purchase for this course.
- It is, however, highly recommended that you print out the relevant readings and bring them with you to class. Some free printing is available in the Student Center.

### Grading Scheme

Reading Questions	100 points
Assignments	50 points
Exams	300 points
Way of Life Project	150 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>600 points</b>



### Classroom Conduct Statement

In this course, you will be encouraged 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.**

### Phone and Laptop Policy

The course policies are designed to help you get the most you can out of this class. Being on your cell phone during class interferes with your education. **Therefore, you are not allowed to use cell phones during class. If you are on your phone during class, I will ask you to leave class immediately. You will be counted as absent for that day, even you attended most of the class. If you are caught on your phone a second time, you will be asked to withdraw from the course, as you will have shown a lack of interest in the subject matter and a disregard for the course policies.**

Laptops are allowed *for notetaking* as long as you sit in one of the first two rows and sign an integrity statement.

### Attendance/Participation (Required)

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. As you plan your schedule, keep that in mind that you can lose points for not attending class!



Attendance: Each student may take up to 3 absences for any reason. **Absences in excess of 3 will result in a deduction of 1% from your overall grade per absence, with no upper bound.** In cases of an emergency, sickness, death in the family, etc., 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. Distracting behavior such as eating, chronic tardiness, or sleeping in class may result in your dismissal from the class for the day, without credit for attendance.

## Reading Questions (100 points)

THIS IS A READING-FOCUSED CLASS

Reading Questions: One important skill of critical inquiry is careful and thorough reading.

For each reading, I will post 2-3 reading questions on Blackboard. You will need to answer these questions in 1-3 paragraphs of writing *before* we discuss the reading in class; each reading question will be due at the beginning of class on the day we discuss that content. If you miss a reading question, you may not make it up. However, since all reading questions are on Blackboard, you can turn them in even if you are absent from class that day. You may also turn them in before they are due if you like to work ahead.

Each question is worth 5 points, and will be graded on the following scale:

5/5 Response demonstrates mastery of the material and has sufficient depth of thoughtful engagement

4/5: Response shows adequate engagement with the material; demonstrates familiarity with the reading, but may have small errors or lack sufficient depth.

3/5: Response shows serious errors, sloppy work, and/or minimal engagement with the material

Your two lowest scores will be dropped.



*Confucius 550-470BC*

## Assignments (50 points)

Assignments: There will also occasionally be short assignments that supplement the course material. Some of these assignments are listed on the course schedule, and some will be in-class assignments.

SEROTONIN & DOPAMINE



Technically, the only two things  
you enjoy

## Exams (300 points)

There will be three in-class exams. Exams will include a variety of questions, including multiple choice, short answer, and short essays. Exams are writing intensive and require mastery of concepts and the ability to write intelligently about course themes.

## Way of Life Project (150 points)



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 3 days.

You will develop an individual portfolio (100 points) and a group presentation (50 points), to be given the last week of class.

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 are available on Blackboard. We will talk about them in detail later in the semester.



# Philosophy for Living: Course Schedule

Each reading should be completed before class on the date assigned. This schedule may be adjusted as needed throughout the semester, and students should be prepared for some flexibility.

			<p><b>Fri 8/23</b> Course introduction <i>What is the good life?</i></p>
<p><b>Week 1</b> 8/26-8/30</p>	<p><b>Mon, 8/26</b> Read: Read Goldstein, “Plato at the Googleplex” p. 61-89 <i>arguments by analogy, expertise at the good life?, the knowledge problem</i>  <b>Assignment Due: Reflection Questions (10 points)</b></p>	<p><b>Wed, 8/28</b> Read Goldstein, “Plato at the Googleplex” p. 90-120 <i>Crowdsourcing not a solution to the knowledge problem; philosophy is inescapable</i></p>	<p><b>Fri 8/30</b> Read Plato, “Allegory of the Cave” (from Republic VII) (Blackboard) <i>Wisdom in knowing that you don’t know, the value of the examined life, philosophy as medicine for the soul</i></p>
<p><b>Week 2</b> 9/2-9/6</p>	<p><b>Mon, 9/2</b> <b>Labor Day Holiday—No Class</b></p>	<p><b>Wed, 9/4</b> Read Schafer-Landau, Ch. 1 “Hedonism and its Powerful Appeal” <i>Hedonism, intrinsic vs. instrumental value</i></p>	<p><b>Fri, 9/6</b> Read: Evans “Epicurus and the Art of Savoring the Moment” <i>Epicureanism, rational hedonism; carefully analyzing pleasures</i></p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> 9/9-9/13</p>	<p><b>Mon, 9/9</b> Read: Epicurus, <i>Letter to Menocius, Leading Doctrines</i>  <i>Epicureanism, three types of desires</i></p>	<p><b>Wed, 9/11</b> <i>Watch:</i> “Philosophy: A Guide to Happiness - Epicurus on Happiness”  <b>Assignment: Listening Guide (10 points)</b> <i>Epicurus, shopping, finding true happiness</i></p>	<p><b>Fri, 9/13</b> Read: “Utilitarianism Reading Guide” AND Mill, “Utilitarianism”, Ch. 2, p. 4-8 <i>Happy pig objection to epicureanism, quantitative vs. qualitative pleasures</i></p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> 9/16-9/20</p>	<p><b>Mon, 9/16</b> Read: Haybron, Ch. 10, “Do We Know How Happy We Are?” <i>Do we know how happy we are?</i></p>	<p><b>Wed, 9/18</b> Read: Nozick, “The Experience Machine” <i>thought experiments; What else matters besides happiness?</i></p>	<p><b>Fri, 9/20</b> Read: Plato’s Gorgias excerpts <i>the pleasant is not the same as the good; punishment as medicine for the soul</i></p>
<p><b>Week 5</b> 9/23-9/27</p>	<p><b>Mon, 9/23</b> <b>First Exam</b></p>	<p><b>Wed, 9/25</b> Read Evans “Epictetus and the Art of Maintaining Control” <i>Intro to Stoicism, hedonic adaptation, examining control</i></p>	<p><b>Fri, 9/27</b> Read Epictetus’ <i>Enchiridion</i> <i>The sayings of Epictetus</i></p>



<p><b>Week 6</b> 9/30-10/4</p>	<p><b>Mon, 9/30</b> Read: Piglucci, <i>How to be a Stoic</i>, Ch. 7 and 10 <i>Developing Stoic virtue, dealing with mental illness</i></p>	<p><b>Wed, 10/2</b> Read: Pigliucci, <i>How to be a Stoic</i>, Ch. 12 and 13 Anxiety, Love, and Friendship</p>	<p><b>Fri, 10/4</b> Watch: Nietzsche on Hardship <b>Assignment Due: “Nietzsche on Hardship” Listening Guide (10 points)</b></p>
<p><b>Week 7</b> 10/7-10/11 Existentialism</p>	<p><b>Mon, 10/7</b> Read: Nietzsche, <i>Genealogy of Morals</i> excerpts <i>Intro to Existentialism</i></p>	<p><b>Wed, 10/9</b> Read: Kierkegaard, “Equilibrium” from <i>Either/Or</i> <i>On Choosing</i></p>	<p><b>Fri, 10/11</b> Read: Sartre “Existentialism is a Humanism” (excerpts) <i>Two principles of existentialism, freedom, choice</i></p>
<p><b>Week 8</b> 10/14-10/18</p>	<p><b>Monday, 10/14</b> Read: Sartre excerpts from <i>Being and Nothingness</i> <i>Bad faith</i></p>	<p><b>Wednesday, 10/16</b> Read: Beauvoir, excerpts from <i>The Ethics of Ambiguity</i> <i>Is there an existentialist ethics?</i></p>	<p><b>Friday, 10/18</b> <b>Fall Break—No Class!</b></p>
<p><b>Week 9</b> 10/21-10/25</p>	<p><b>Monday, 10/21</b> Read: Beauvoir <i>The Second Sex</i>, Introduction <i>What has become of women?</i></p>	<p><b>Wednesday, 10/23</b> <b>Second Exam</b></p>	<p><b>Friday, 10/25</b> Watch in Class: Michael Puett, “Why it’s better to stop searching for your true self”  <i>In-Class Assignment Due (5 points)</i></p>
<p><b>Week 10</b> 10/28-11/1</p>	<p><b>Monday, 10/28</b> Read: Peimin Ni, “Confucius as a Philosopher”, p. 53-63 Confucius, <i>Analects 1-4</i>; <i>Intro to Confucianism, Ren</i></p>	<p><b>Wednesday, 10/30</b> Read: Peimin Ni, “Confucius as a Philosopher”, p. 63-70 Confucius, <i>Analects 8 - 12</i> <i>Li (ritual)</i></p>	<p><b>Friday, 11/1</b> Read: Peimin Ni, “Confucius as a Philosopher”, p. 70-78 <i>Filial Piety (Dutifulness), The rectification of names</i></p>



**Philosophy for Living:  
Course Schedule**

<p><b>Week 11</b> 11/4-11/8</p>	<p><b>Monday, 11/4</b> Read: Michael Puett, <i>The Path</i>, “Mencius” <i>Mencius, more on Confucianism</i></p>	<p><b>Wednesday, 11/6</b> Read: Mencius excerpts <i>moral sprouts, reason cultivating emotion, Ox mountain, the heart-mind</i></p>	<p><b>Friday, 11/8</b> <b>In-Class Assignment (5 points):</b> <i>Pop Culture Artifacts</i></p>
<p><b>Week 12</b> 11/11-11/15</p>	<p><b>Monday, 11/11</b> Read: Velleman, “Well-being and time “</p>	<p><b>Wednesday, 11/13</b> Read: Moral Luck (Vox)</p>	<p><b>Friday, 11/15</b> Read: Russell, “The Value of Philosophy” <i>Uncertainty, Ignorance, and a Liberal Arts Education</i></p>
<p><b>Week 13</b> 11/18-11/22</p>	<p><b>Monday, 11/18</b> Read: Baehr, Ch. 1  Developing Intellectual Character</p>	<p><b>Wednesday, 11/20</b> Read: Baehr, Ch. 2  Developing Intellectual Character <b>In Class Activity: (5 points)</b></p>	<p><b>Friday, 11/22</b> Read: Nussbaum, <i>The Capabilities Approach</i> <i>society and the good life</i></p>
<p><b>Week 14</b> 11/25-11-29</p>	<p><b>Mon, 11/25</b>  <b>Third Exam</b></p>	<p><b>Wed, 11/27</b>  <b>No Class:</b> <b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b></p>	<p><b>Friday, 11/29</b>  <b>No Class:</b> <b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b></p>
<p><b>Week 15</b> 12/2-12/6</p>	<p><b>Mon, 12/2</b> <b>Class Activity:</b> <b>Ask a philosopher! (5 points)</b></p>	<p><b>Wednesday, 12/4</b> <b>Group Presentation Workshop</b>  <b>Way of Life Projects Due On Blackboard!</b></p>	<p><b>Friday, 12/6</b> <b>Study Day– Classes do not meet</b></p>
<p><b>Week 16</b> Final Exam Week</p>	<p><u><a href="#">Group Presentation Schedule</a></u> <b>9-9:50am section: Wed, 12/11 from 2-4pm</b> <b>11-11:50am section: Mon, 12/9 from 2-4pm</b></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.