

Winter 2022 – Carleton University
PHIL 2330: Happiness, Well-being, and the Good Life
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:35 am - 9:55 am

Instructor: Kyla Bruff
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Office hours: Online by appointment

Course Delivery: This is an online, synchronous course. Lectures must be attended in real time. Videos of the live lectures will not be posted at a later date.

I. Description:

What does it mean to live well? How can we live a good life and be happy? What makes life meaningful? These are questions that concern all of us.

In this course, we will examine seven different perspectives on living well. By the end of the course, you will describe and defend your own perspective on the good life. This will be done in the form of your own philosophical “apology.”¹

We will begin and end with Plato’s thesis that caring for yourself as an individual involves pursuing the truth collectively with others. Through a study of Socrates’ *Apology*, we will start the course by examining the importance of doing justice to others and education in caring for our souls, or living the good life.

We will then examine Aristotle’s view that the human being’s activity should accord with reason in the pursuit of happiness. We will explore whether moderation, or the idea that virtues must aim at a “mean between extremes,” is conducive to living the good life. Following this, we will examine Aristotle’s view of friendship and determine how it applies to our own friendships and thus to living a virtuous, happy life.

After Plato and Aristotle, we will consider whether God, religion, and scripture should play a role in our attempts to live well and be happy. We will rely on Saint Augustine’s autobiographical text, *Confessions*, to guide us through this inquiry.

In trying to live well, many people find it necessary to discipline themselves to behave in accordance with duties and the principles they legislate, or set up, for themselves. We will explore this approach to the good life by jumping into the eighteenth century, reading sections from Kant’s *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. In carrying out their moral duty, a good person, on Kant’s account, self-legislates rational principles, which in turn guide their action. For Kant, living the good life involves a high level of self-control. Nietzsche, on the other hand,

¹ This final assignment idea was inspired by: <https://godandgoodlife.nd.edu/policies-structure/>

critiques this endorsement of self-constraint, together with the claims that our decisions on how to live well should follow the strict principles of reason or those of religion. For Nietzsche, to live a good life means both to affirm life but also to suffer in solitude on the journey to self-improvement.

Finally, through Martha C. Nussbaum's work, we will evaluate the role of emotions in making judgments about what is important for our well-being. Through emotions, we expose our own vulnerability and neediness with regards to others and the world. The involvement of others in the process of living a good life culminates in our study of Jan Patočka's political reading of Plato's care for the soul. Patočka emphasizes that caring for yourself is also caring for others in a political context. We live our best lives when we are engaged in vulnerable, genuine dialogue and activity with other people. Care of the soul, on Patočka's account, means responding to the call to justice.

At the end of this course, you will have the opportunity to evaluate which conceptions of the good life along with their corresponding demands are most applicable to your own life.

II. Preclusions: None

III. Prerequisite(s): None

IV. Learning Outcomes:

- to understand and be able to reconstruct the arguments in favour of different concepts of happiness, well-being and the good life in the history of philosophy
- to be able to critically analyse, relate and juxtapose different approaches to the good life
- to be able to defend, in consideration of a broad range of philosophical arguments, your own personal approach to how to live a good life

V. Course readings and texts:

All required readings for this course will be made available to you online. You are not required to purchase any course texts.

If you do want to purchase a physical copy of any of the books in which our reading selections are found, the corresponding editions can be easily found and purchased online. ***This is not required.***

Unit I: The good life as seeking the truth with others, while examining and improving oneself

Plato, "The Apology" in *Plato's Apology, Crito and Phaedrus*, trans. Henry Cary, published by Andrews UK Ltd., 2012.

https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/1gorbd6/alma991022804030605153

Unit II: The quest to be happy through the exercise of reason and developing friendships

Aristotle, Books II and VIII of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross, published by Oxford University Press, 2009.

https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/1gorbd6/alma991022744000105153

Unit III: God and the Good Life

Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, published by Oxford University Press

https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/1gorbd6/alma991022789227505153

Unit VI: The good life as requiring self-discipline and self-control

Immanuel Kant – *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Allen W. Wood, published by Yale University Press, 2002.

https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/1gorbd6/alma991022654671305153

Unit V: The affirmation of life, the value of solitude and risk-taking, without an appeal to transcendence

Friedrich Nietzsche – *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Judith Norman, published by Cambridge University Press, 2001.

https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/1gqvnf4/alma992329375405151

Unit VI: Emotions as evaluative judgments, showing us what is important and our own vulnerability, in pursuing the good life

Martha C. Nussbaum – Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance in *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C. Solomon, published by Oxford University Press, 2004, Part VI, Ch. 12.

https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/1vru3a1/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9780190288402

“The Philosopher of Feelings” by Rachel Aviv

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/07/25/martha-nussbaums-moral-philosophies>

Interview with Martha Nussbaum in the Daily Stoic

<https://dailystoic.com/martha-nussbaum/>

Unit VII: The pursuit of justice in politics as part of the good life

Plato's *Republic* (331c-369b; any edition)

<https://ocul->

crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/1gorbd6/alma991022646838105153

Jan Patočka – “The Care of the Soul in the City: *Politeia*,” in *Plato and Europe*, trans. Petr Lom, published by Stanford University Press, 2002.

<https://ocul->

crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/1gqvnf4/alma991003331679705153

VI. Calendar description: A philosophical exploration of what makes a good human life. Topics may include the role of happiness, well-being, and flourishing in a good life, the relations between these aspects, and the extent to which they depend on luck and social considerations.

VII. Course calendar and overview:

Date	Themes, Deadlines & Feedback	Required Reading
Jan. 11	Course Introduction	None
Jan. 13	Socrates' defence	Plato, <i>The Apology</i> , sections 1-16, pp. 10-26
Jan. 18	Socrates' view of the good life	Plato, <i>The Apology</i> , sections 16-22, pp. 27-35
Jan. 20	Death as a blessing	Plato, <i>The Apology</i> , sections 23-33, pp. 35-45
Jan. 25	Happiness “My Apology” worksheet due (returned Jan. 31st)	Aristotle, Book I of the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , pp. 3-22
Jan 27	The golden mean	Aristotle, Book II of the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , pp. 23-37
Feb. 1	Test 1	
Feb. 3	Friendship as essential to the good life	Aristotle, Book VIII of the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , pp. 142-153
Feb. 8	Friendship as essential to the good life	Aristotle, Book VIII of the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , pp. 153-162

Feb. 10	Test 1 returned Sin	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , book 2, pp. 24-34
Feb. 15	Conversion and the will to serve God	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , book 8, pp. 140-154
Feb. 17	God and the good life	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , book 10 (sections 10.31-10.34), pp. 196-200
Feb. 22-24	NO CLASSES – MIDTERM BREAK	
Mar. 1	Introduction to Kant and moral duty	Kant, Preface and First Section of the <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , pp. 3-21
Mar. 3	The first formulation of the categorical imperative as the principle of duty	Kant, The Second Section of the <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , pp. 22-38
Mar. 8	The second and third formulations of the categorical imperative as the principle of duty	Kant, The Second Section of the <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , pp. 44-58
Mar. 10	Questioning the nature of truth and a priori morality	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 1: On the prejudices of philosophers, sections 1-11, pages 5-14
Mar. 15	The free spirit	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 2: The free spirit, sections 24-33, pages 25-34
Mar. 17	Will to power; mastery; affirming life and the value of solitude	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 2: The free spirit, sections 257-261 & 271-274, 151-158 & 167-168
Mar. 22	Test 2	
Mar. 24	The importance of emotions	Nussbaum, “Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance,” 307-313. Two links: “The Philosopher of Feelings” and “Interview with Martha Nussbaum”
Mar. 29	Nussbaum’s neo-Stoicism Quiz 1	Nussbaum, “Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance,” 313-329.
Mar. 31	Justice Test 2 returned	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , 331c-369b
Apr. 5	Patočka’s interpretation of Plato on the soul and justice in the community	Patočka – “The Care of the Soul in the City: <i>Politeia</i> ,” 109-130
Apr. 7	Quiz 2 Course Conclusion Final Assignment Q&A Final assignment is due on April 28, 2022	

VIII. Evaluation

The evaluation for this course is composed of two tests and one take-home essay.

- **“My Apology” worksheet, 5%** (due Jan. 25)
- **Test 1** on Plato and Aristotle (Books I and II) (Feb. 1) **25%**
- **Test 2** on Kant and Nietzsche (Mar. 22) **25%**
- **Quiz 1** on Nussbaum, all multiple choice (Mar. 29) **5%**
- **Quiz 2** on Plato’s *Republic* & Patočka, all multiple choice (Apr. 7) **5%**
- **Final ‘Take-Home’ Assignment: “My Apology,” 35%**

The two tests and two quizzes will be delivered on Brightspace. The tests are intended to assess your grasp of the main ideas explored the course, their context, and their possible, real-world application. The multiple choice quizzes are intended to test your knowledge of the core theses—presented during class and summarized on my slides—from the Nussbaum and Patočka texts. All tests and quizzes will be completed during class time.

For your final assignment, please make sure all sources are cited in line with Carleton’s Academic Integrity guidelines, listed here:

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

The “My Apology” worksheet and “My Apology” assignment will be submitted electronically on Brightspace.

The final assignment is due on the last day of the exam period, according to the University calendar. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**

IX. Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2021-22):

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EDC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and

impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for Student Activities:* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates for the Winter Semester:

Jan. 10:	Classes begin.
Jan. 24:	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31:	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 21:	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 22-25:	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 29:	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 12:	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. <i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 13:	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 14-28:	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 15:	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 28:	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735