

IDS 2935: What is the Good Life?

Spring 2011

LECTURE: MW 7th

DISCUSSION: To Be Determined

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Professor

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INTRODUCTION

Through a close examination of relevant works of art, music, literature, history, religion, and philosophy, students will consider the basic question, “What is the Good Life?” The course will serve as an invitation to the Humanities and to a lifetime of reflection on the human condition through the unique opportunities available to the students at the University of Florida.

The Humanities, a cluster of disciplines that inquire into the very nature and experience of being human, provide many approaches to the question ‘What is a good life,’ as well as a multiform treasury of responses that comprises the cultural and intellectual legacy of world humanity.

The question is especially relevant for a detailed examination as you become more and more involved in making the decisions that will shape your future and the future of others. In order to make reasonable, ethical, well-informed life choices, it is useful to reflect upon how one might aspire to live both as an individual, and a member of local and global communities.

The course is interdisciplinary and draws on the considerable humanities resources at UF. It is also cross-cultural and draws on the full range of human experience across the world and through time in trying to answer the question: “What is the good life?” It contains elements such as the gateway readings, museum exhibits, and performances that are common to the several sections being taught this semester. The lectures, discussion sections, and other readings are specific to your section of this course.

COMMON ACTIVITIES

This course includes special exhibits at the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art and presentations from the University of Florida Performing Arts. We will discuss how these events fit into the larger

themes of the course throughout the semester. More information on them can be found at the *What is the Good Life* Course Website: <http://www.aa.ufl.edu/humanities/goodlife/index.html>

TEXTS

All common (“gateway”) readings and other materials for this course are available on ARES Online Reserve, while those assigned specifically for this section (“pillar” readings, images, and videos) are available on the course Sakai website, except where otherwise indicated.

ENHANCEMENT MATERIALS

In addition to readings, you will be assigned enhancement materials for most weeks. These will mostly be videos online.

GRADE INFORMATION AND SCHEDULE

- **2 Brief Essays**, 500 words (due Jan. 26th and Mar. 16th): 10% each = **20%**
- **One Hour Mid Term** (Feb. 23rd): **20%**
- **Interpretative Essay** 1000 words (due Apr. 13th): **20%**
- **Attendance & Participation**: **10%**
- **Quizzes** (all semester): **10%**
- **One Hour Final Exam** (during exam period): **20%**

Grade Scale
100-93=A
92-90=A-
89-86=B+
85-82=B
81-79=B-
78-75=C+
75-72=C
71-69=C-
68-66=D+
65-62=D
61-60=D-
59-0=E

DISCUSSION SECTION ASSIGNMENTS

Over the course of the semester, students will have in their discussions sections a variety of short assignments, which together with their participation will constitute that portion of their grade in the class. These assignments may include periodic quizzes, in-class response papers, and other tasks.

DETAILED ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

1. One 500-word essay, due January 26th, on how Siddhartha exemplifies the themes of the Good Life learned thus far. Detailed assignment instructions will be supplied prior to the due date. 10% of final grade.
2. One 500-word essay, due March 16th, on a topic relating to one or more of the three events experienced outside of class (the concert, Harn Exhibit, or common Humanities lecture). Students will choose one or more of the events and evaluate the experience as it relates to the Good Life theme. Detailed instructions will be supplied prior to the due date. 10% of final grade.
3. One 1000-word essay on the question: What is the Cost of the Good Life? In consultation with the teaching assistants and instructors, students will select a subject for an analytical essay. Topics will be chosen by March 24th. The first draft of the paper is due on April 1st. Please submit two copies, one for the instructors and one to be distributed to the student reviewer for a peer review. Instructions for peer review will be provided in advance. Completed peer reviews are due on April 8th. Student reviewers must submit two copies of the reviewed paper, one for the instructor and one for the student author. The final draft will be due on April 13th. Please note: If you do not complete your peer review in a punctual and satisfactory manner, you will not receive a grade for your own paper. 20% of final grade (total for draft, final, and peer reviewing).

4. A one-hour Midterm Exam, worth 20% of the course grade in class on February 23rd.
5. A one-hour Final Exam, worth 20% of final grade (April).
6. Oral and written quizzes (given at the discretion of instructor and teaching assistants). 10% of final grade.
7. Participation in discussion sections and attendance at lecture and discussions: 10% of final grade.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance and completion of required reading is expected in this course. Students are responsible for all the material covered in the class. Lectures will complement the reading and will not repeat them. Attendance will be taken during each class period. You are allowed on absence; after that each unexcused absence will cost a half grade reduction in your final grade.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

This course meets three (3) hours of the University of Florida's General Education Requirement in the Humanities (H) area by providing instruction in the key themes, principles and terminology of several humanities disciplines. By focusing on the history, theory and methodologies used within these disciplines, you will be able to identify and to analyze some of the key elements, biases and influences that shape human thought. By introducing students to the rich legacy of the humanities, this course will emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach to issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

This course has several Student Learning Outcomes. By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Know the history, underlying theory and methodologies used across several humanities disciplines.
- Identify and analyze key elements, biases, and influences that shape thought within those disciplines.
- Approach issues and problems from multiple disciplinary perspectives.
- Communicate knowledge, thoughts, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the disciplines, individually and/or in groups.

GORDON RULE REQUIREMENT

This course is categorized as an E2 Gordon Rule Course, which means that students will have a minimum of 2,000 written words evaluated on the effectiveness, organization, clarity and coherence of the writing, as well as the grammar, punctuation and usage of standard written English.

The assignments due on January 26, March 16, and April 6 will satisfy this Gordon Rule requirement, which means that students will be provided feedback on that written work before the last class meeting of the semester. These assignments will be assessed using a standard rubric that shall evaluate content, organization and coherence, argument and supporting evidence, and the style of writing.

Please keep in mind that in order to secure E2 Gordon Rule credit for this course, students will need to earn a C grade or better **and** satisfy the writing requirements of this course. It is possible not to meet the writing requirement and still pass the class. Students should review their degree audits after receiving their grades to verify receipt of credit for the writing component.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students must conform to UF's honesty policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, and the use of copyrighted materials, which you can find at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>. Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted to the full extent of the university honesty policy.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One and Two: Wed. Jan 5th and Mon. Jan 10th

Thinking about the Good Life

Gateway Readings:

Wendell Berry, "The Way of Ignorance," from *The Way of Ignorance* (Berkeley, CA: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2005), 53-67. ARES Online Reserve.

Vivien Sung *Five-fold Happiness: Chinese concepts of luck, prosperity, longevity, happiness, and wealth*. (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002); 11-12, 18-19; 34, 49, 70-71; 94-95 and 97; 152, 156-157; 204-205; 207; 210-211, 214. ARES Online Reserve.

The Roots of Ayurveda, ed. & trans. Dominik Wujastyk (NY: Penguin, 2003), 61-70. ARES Online Reserve.

Pillar Readings:

Marquis de Condorcet, excerpts from *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*. Online at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/condorcet-progress.html>

Selections from *The Essential Chuang Tzu*. [Online reserve]

Weeks Two and Three: Wed Jan. 12th and Wed. Jan 19th

[No Class Mon. Jan 17th, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day]

Seeking a Good Life

Gateway Reading:

Herman Hesse, *Siddhartha* (1922), free e-Gutenberg text at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2500/2500-8.txt>

Pillar Readings:

The Book of Exodus, selections.

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2019:1-20:20&version=NIV> and

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2032:7-34:32&version=NIV>

Dante's *Purgatorio*: Cantos 27-33, Earthly Paradise.

<http://dante.ilt.columbia.edu/new/comedy/index.html>

Videos:

The National Geographic: "Inside Mecca Parts 1 to 5--the Hajj"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6r1sZfce8jU>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUHfFMG5WZM&feature=related>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7AefSveLOTk&feature=related>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jf0Jc1XayXM&feature=related>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fz2i9_M2eug&feature=related

Enhancement Materials:

Kerry Oliver Smith, Contemporary Latin American Art, “Notions of Paradise and the Ideal World”
[link to be added]

Week Four: Mon. Jan 24th & Wed. Jan 26th

Celebrating a Good Life

FIRST BRIEF WRITING ASSIGNMENT (500-650 words) DUE JANUARY 26th

Pillar Readings:

Petronius, “Trimalchio’s Feast” from the *Satyricon*.

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/petronius-satyricon-feast.html>

James Joyce, “The Dead.” http://www.online-literature.com/james_joyce/958

Zora Neale Hurston, “Drenched in Light.” [Online reserve]

Music/Video:

Beethoven, 9th Symphony, Final Movement, “Ode to Joy”

Enhancement Materials:

Kole Odutola, Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, “Life is Like a Dance”
[link to be added]

Week Five: Mon. Jan 31th & Wed. Feb 2nd

Constructing the Good Life

Gateway Readings:

Kathleen Cox, “The Power of Space” in *The Power of Vastu Living* (New York: Simon and Schuster/Fireside, 2002) 3-26. ARES Online Reserve.

Allison Arieff, “Opinionator: A Breath of Fresh Air for Health Care,” from the *New York Times*, 13 December 2009. Online at <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/13/a-breath-of-fresh-air-for-health-care>

Pillar Readings:

Reprised: Condorcet, excerpts from *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*.

Online at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/condorcet-progress.html>

Fëdor Dostoevsky, part one of *Notes from Underground*, free e-Gutenberg text at

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/600/600.txt>

Yevgeny Zamyatin, excerpts from *We*. [Online reserve]

Images:

The Crystal Palace, from the London Exhibition, 1851. Online at

<http://soa.syr.edu/faculty/bcoleman/ARC523/lectures/523.Crystal.Palace.images.html>

Constructivist Architecture. Online at course website.

Enhancement Materials:

Meg Portillo, “Gift of the Senses: Living the Good Life in Living Color, A Design Perspective”
[link to be added]

Vandana Baweja, Architecture, "Mughal Gardens"

[<http://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=ef7439c001ce48cb9e9ccb87d0aca41d>]

Week Six: Mon. Feb 7th & Wed. Feb 9th

Embodying a Good Life

Gateway Readings:

Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 14-30. ARES Online Reserve.

Interview and excerpt from Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (New York: Crown, 2010). Available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123232331>

Pillar Reading:

Franz Kafka, "Metamorphosis," free e-Gutenberg text at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5200/5200.txt>

Week Seven: Mon. Feb 14th & Wed. Feb 16th

Owning the Good Life

Gateway Reading:

Michael Kimmelman, "Who Draws the Borders of Culture? Greece's claim for the Elgin marbles is as much about nationalism as about art," from the *New York Times*, 4 May 2010. Online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/09/arts/09abroad.html>

Pillar Readings:

Epicurus, "Letter to Menoecus," online at <http://www.epicurus.net/en/menoecus.html>

Leo Tolstoy, "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/How_Much_Land_Does_a_Man_Need%3F

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, online at <http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/classics/manifesto.html>, or as pdf file at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>.

Viewing Assignment: American Petroleum Institute, *Destination Earth* (1954). Available for viewing and download at: <http://www.archive.org/details/Destinat1956>.

Week Eight: Mon. Feb 21st & Wed. Feb 23rd

Sustaining the Good Life

Gateway Reading:

Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic," from *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 201-226. ARES Online Reserve.

Pillar Readings:

Selections from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *First and Second Discourses*. [Online reserve]

William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey." Online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Lines_composed_a_few_miles_above_Tintern_Abbey

Most recent comprehensive report(s) on BP/Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill – to be determined.

Enhancement Materials:

Peggy Carr, "Green Infrastructure to Support Humanity"

[<http://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=cd0912f2eae0484ca11e5b261973489a>]

Week Nine: Mon. Feb 28th & Wed. Mar 2nd

Governing the Good Life

Gateway Reading:

Thucydides, "The Melian Dialogues," from Richard Crawley, trans., *The History of the Peloponnesian War* (London: Everyman Press, 1993) (written 411 B.C.E.), 288-295. ARES Online Reserve.

Pillar Readings [to be revised]:

"Declaration of Independence of the United States of America" (1776) online at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/DeclarInd.html>

"Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" (France, 1789) online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Declaration_of_the_Rights_of_Man_and_of_the_Citizen

V. I. Lenin, excerpts from *State and Revolution* (1918). [Online reserve]

Enhancement Materials:

Andrew Wolpert, Classics, "Democratizing the Good Life"
[link to be added]

Spring Break - No Classes: Mon. Mar 7th & Wed. Mar 9th

Week Ten: Mon. Mar 14th & Wed. Mar 16th

Fighting for a Good Life

SECOND BRIEF WRITING ASSIGNMENT (500-650 words) DUE MARCH 16th

Gateway Readings:

Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," (1963). Available online at the University of Pennsylvania's African Studies Center: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

Pablo Neruda's 1971 Nobel Lecture, "Towards the Splendid City." Available online at: http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1971/neruda-lecture-e.html

Pillar Readings [to be revised]:

Veraigner, excerpts from *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*. [Online reserve]

Vaclav Havel, excerpts from "Power of the Powerless." [Online reserve]

Enhancement Materials:

Zoharah Simmons, Religion, "The Use of Non-Violent Passive Resistance as a tool of the oppressed: Dr. King's Vision of the Beloved Community."
[link to be added]

Week Eleven: Mon. Mar 21st & Wed. Mar 23rd

Sharing a Good Life

Gateway Readings:

Caroline Knapp, "The Color of Joy," from *Pack of Two: the Intricate Bond Between People and Dogs* (New York: Random House, 1999), 3-16. ARES Online Reserve.

Martin Buber, "The Way of Man According to the Teachings of Hasidism," from Maurice Friedman, trans., *Hasidism and the Modern Man* (New York: Horizon, 1958). Reprinted in Charles Guignon, ed. *The Good Life* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publications, 1999), 288-293. ARES Online Reserve.

Love poems from Indian literature, c. 5th century CE (1 page; includes poems from Merwin, W. S., and J. Moussaieff Masson, *Sanskrit Love Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 95 and 171; and Greg Bailey and Richard Gombrich, *Love Lyrics by Amaru, Bhartrhari and Bilhana* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 97, 131. ARES Online Reserve.

Pillar Readings:

William Shakespeare, selected Sonnets, available online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Sonnets.

Sigmund Freud, selections from *Civilization and its Discontents*. [Online reserve]

Week Twelve: Mon. Mar 28th & Wed. Mar 30th

Questioning the Good Life

Gateway Reading:

Henry Thoreau, “Where I Lived, and What I Lived for,” “The Pond in Winter,” and “Conclusion,” from *Walden*. Available online at the following addresses:

<http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden02.html>

<http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden16.html>

<http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden18.html>

Pillar Readings [to be revised]:

Reprinted: Fëdor Dostoevsky, part one of *Notes from Underground*. Free e-Gutenberg text at

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/600/600.txt>

Herman Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener,” free e-Gutenberg text at

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/11231/11231.txt>

Week Thirteen: Mon. Apr 4th & Wed. Apr 6th

Cut off from the Good Life?

INTERPRATIVE ESSAY (1000-1250 words) DUE APRIL 6th

Pillar Readings [to be revised]:

Nikolai Gogol, “The Overcoat,” available online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Cloak

T. S. Eliot, “The Waste Land,” available online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Waste_Land or

<http://www.bartelby.com/201/1.html>

James Baldwin, excerpts from *The Fire Next Time*. [Online reserve]

Anna Akhmatova, *Requiem*. [Online reserve]

Week Fourteen: Mon. Apr 11th & Wed. Apr 13th

(Re)Claiming the Good Life

Pillar Readings:

Albert Camus, “The Myth of Sisyphus.” [Online reserve]

Reprinted: Selections from *The Essential Chuang Tzu*. [Online reserve]

Week Fifteen: Mon. Apr 18th & Wed. Apr 20th

Ending the Good Life

Gateway Readings:

Thomas Nagel, "Death," from John Martin Fischer, *The Metaphysics of Death* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 61-70. ARES Online Reserve.

Chapter Two of Barbara Stoler Miller, trans. *The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War* (New York: Bantam Classics, 1986), 31-41. ARES Online Reserve.

Pillar Readings:

Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, free download at <http://members.lycos.co.uk/shortstories/tolstoydeath.html>

Enhancement Materials:

Victoria Rovine, "Death in the Asante Tradition"

Part 1 <http://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=83d96316ada44a91a85f1ac477a822ae>

Part 2 <http://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=2b97b1746e634533bd0a78c5d630adab>

Part 3 <http://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=4a6a46ae2d974ae190e01e75d0646157>

Part 4 <http://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=c8cba1d20eea46ba9b3026e64ec89bdc>