

WHAT IS THE GOOD LIFE? IDS 2935

Lectures: MW 7 (LIT 0109)

Discussion Sections:

§7344 - W 8 (TUR 2342), §7364 - W 9 (UST 0108), §7373 - R 2 (DAU 0342),
§7343 - R 4 (LIT 0127), §7375 - R 5 (DAU 0342), §7377 - R10 (DAU 0342)

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<http://www.aa.ufl.edu/humanities/goodlife/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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?” This 3 credit hour 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 a special exhibit at the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art and a performance event arranged 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 course website: <http://www.aa.ufl.edu/humanities/goodlife/>

REQUIRED TEXTS

Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*. Trans. J. Neugroschel. Penguin Classics. ISBN: 9780141181233.
Peter Singer, *How Are We to Live?* Prometheus Books. ISBN: 0879759666.
Plato, *Gorgias*. Trans. D. J. Zeyl. Hackett Publishing. ISBN: 0872200167.
Homer, *The Iliad*. Trans. E. V. Rieu. Penguin Classics. ISBN: 9780140275360.
Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*. Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN 9780142437612.

SAKAI E-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "Sakai." To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>, click the **Continue** button under "Sakai System Entry," and on the next page enter your Gatorlink username and password. Logging in will take you to the "My Workspace" page, where you can access the IDS 2935 e-Learning environment by clicking the course name in the banner at the top of the page.

- Check the "Resources" tool for all readings other than those in the required texts.
- Check the "Announcements" and "Calendar" tools in the e-Learning environment for new course content (such as recommended readings), due dates for assignments, and notifications regarding special events relating to this course.
- Use the "Discussions" tool to post follow-ups after your discussion sections meet.
- Check the "Assignments" tools for all paper assignments and submission guidelines.
- Check the "Gradebook" for current information on all your graded assignments.

The official recommended system requirements for e-learning in Sakai are a broadband Internet connection and a fully updated and compatible browser.. For Windows based PCs: Firefox 3.x or Internet Explorer 7.x or 8.x. For Macs: Firefox 3.0 or Safari 4.x.)Other browsers such as Opera, Chrome, etc. are not recommended for use with Sakai.) If you encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content, contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537. Do not contact the course instructor or your teaching assistant regarding computer issues.

EVALUATION

- Two 500-750 word essays, each worth 15% of the course grade. The due dates for these essays are September 13 and November 1.
- One 1000-1500 word analytical essay, worth 25% of the course grade. A first draft of this essay, due November 17, will undergo peer review before submission of a revised, final draft December 1.
- Students are expected to attend all course lectures, to participate actively in the discussion sections, and to follow up with on-line discussion postings in the "Discussions" section of the Sakai e-Learning environment. Attendance, participation in discussion, and postings to the discussion lists will count for 20% of the course grade.
- A cumulative Final Exam, worth 25% of the course grade, in our normal lecture hall (LIT 0109) on Thursday, December 16, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. (Exam Group 16E).

Grade Proportion	Grade Scale	Grade Value
Two Short Essays: 30% (15% each)	100-93=A	A=4.0
Peer-Reviewed Longer Essay: 25%	92-90=A-	A-=3.67
Attendance & Discussion: 20%	89-86=B+	B+=3.33
Final Exam 25%	85-82=B	B=3.00
	81-79=B-	B-=2.67
	78-75=C+	C+=2.33
	75-72=C	C=2.00
	71-69=C-	C-=1.67
	68-66=D+	D+=1.33
	65-62=D	D=1.00
	61-60=D-	D-=0.67
	59-0=E	E=0.00

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 October 22 and November 29 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. 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.

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:

- Have some understanding of 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 their understanding, thoughts, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the disciplines, individually and/or in groups.

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>. Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted to the full extent of the UF honesty policy.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any 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

This course schedule outlines the main themes and the required readings for each week. Check the Sakai e-Learning environment under "Announcements" and "Assignments" for more detail. Two types of readings will be assigned. Most weeks brief **gateway readings** will introduce a theme for the week, and every week longer **pillar readings** will provide the main focus for the lectures and discussions. Various **enhancement materials** and **supplemental readings** will also be recommended from time to time. All readings other than those in the required texts will be available in Sakai: click on the "Resources" tool after logging on to find them. Gateway readings can also be accessed through the UF Library's ARES system at <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/>. Enhancement materials can be accessed at <http://www.aa.ufl.edu/humanities/goodlife/>.

Week 1 - 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. Excerpts from Vivien Sung *Five fold Happiness: Chinese concepts of luck, prosperity, longevity, happiness, and wealth*. (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002).

AUGUST 23 - COURSE INTRODUCTION

AUGUST 25 - THE BUDDHA AND THE GOOD LIFE

- Pillar Readings: "Discourse on the Noble Quest" (*Ariyapariyesana Sutta*) and "Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth" (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*) from the Buddhist Pali Canon.

AUGUST 25 & 26 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 2 - Thinking about the Good Life

Gateway Reading: Dominik Wujastyk, ed. and trans. *The Roots of Ayurveda* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 61-70.

AUGUST 30 - *SIDDHARTHA* PART I

- PILLAR READING: Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, pp. 37-73.

SEPTEMBER 1 - *SIDDHARTHA* PART II

- PILLAR READING: Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, pp. 74-119.

SEPTEMBER 1 & 2 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 3 - Seeking a Good Life

SEPTEMBER 8 - *SIDDHARTHA* PART II (CONT.)

- Pillar Reading: Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, pp. 120-164.
- **Assignment for Short Essay 1 available on Sakai.**

SEPTEMBER 8 & 9 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 4 - Celebrating a Good Life

SEPTEMBER 13 - A SUCCESSFUL LIFE INTERRUPTED

- Pillar Reading: Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, ch. 1-6 (available on Sakai and at <http://www.classicallibrary.org/tolstoy/ivan/1.htm>)
- **Due date for submission of Short Essay 1.**

SEPTEMBER 15 - A FAILED LIFE REDEEMED

- Pillar Reading: Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, ch. 7-12

SEPTEMBER 15 & 16 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 5 - Constructing the Good Life

Gateway Readings: Kathleen Cox, "The Power of Space," from *The Power of Vastu Living* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 3-26. Allison Arieff, "Opinionator: A Breath of Fresh Air for Health Care," *New York Times*, December 13, 2009:

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/13/a-breath-of-fresh-air-for-health-care/>

SEPTEMBER 20 - THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE GOTHIC CATHEDRAL

- Pillar Reading: E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, ch. 10 (with plates)

SEPTEMBER 22 - THE METAPHYSICAL BEAUTY OF CHARTRES CATHEDRAL

- Pillar Reading: Robert Branner, "Chartres Cathedral" (with plates)

SEPTEMBER 22 & 23 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 6 - Embodying the Good Life

Gateway Readings: Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 14-30. Interview and excerpt from Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (New York: Crown, 2010). Available at the NPR website: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123232331>

SEPTEMBER 27 - THE ULTIMATE CHOICE

- Pillar Reading: Peter Singer, *How Are We To Live?*, Chs. 1 & 2.

SEPTEMBER 29 - THE PURSUIT OF (NARROW) SELF-INTEREST

- Pillar Reading: Peter Singer, *How Are We To Live?*, Ch. 4.

SEPTEMBER 29 & 30 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 7 - Owning the Good Life

Gateway Readings: Michael Kimmelman, "Who Draws the Borders of Culture?" *New York Times*, May 4, 2010: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/09/arts/09abroad.html>

October 4 - SELF-INTEREST AND ETHICS

- Pillar Reading: Peter Singer, *How Are We To Live?*, Ch. 7.

OCTOBER 6 - THE ETHICAL LIFE

- Pillar Reading: Peter Singer, *How Are We To Live?*, Ch. 8.

OCTOBER 6 & 7 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 8 - Sustaining the Good Life

Gateway Readings: Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic," from *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 201-26.

OCTOBER 11 - LIVING TO SOME PURPOSE

- Pillar Reading: Peter Singer, *How Are We To Live?*, Ch. 10.

October 13 - THE ETHICAL LIFE AS THE GOOD LIFE

- Pillar Reading: Peter Singer, *How Are We To Live?*, Ch. 11.

OCTOBER 13 & 14 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 9 - Governing the Good Life

Gateway Reading: "The Melian Dialogue" from Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley (London: Everyman Press, 1993), 288-295.

OCTOBER 18 - SELF-GOVERNANCE AND THE HUMAN NATURE

- Pillar Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 1, chs. 1, 4-5, 7, 13
 - + *SPECIAL PERFORMANCE EVENT* BY LATIF BOLAT AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM
- Further information on Latif Bolat, his music, and his mission as a Turkish cultural ambassador can be found on his website: <http://www.latifbolat.com>

OCTOBER 20 - HUMAN NATURE AND DIVINE NATURE

- Pillar Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 10, chs. 7-8
- **Assignment for Short Essay 2 available on Sakai.**

OCTOBER 20 & 21 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 10 - Fighting for a Good Life

Gateway Readings: Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," (1963). Available online at: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

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

OCTOBER 25 - THE HERO'S HONOR

- PILLAR READING: Homer, *Iliad* Books 1 & 3.

OCTOBER 27 - WHAT'S WORTH FIGHTING FOR

- PILLAR READING: Homer, *Iliad* Books 6 & 9.

OCTOBER 27 & 28: DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 11 - Sharing a Good Life

Gateway Readings: Caroline Knapp, "The Color of Joy," from *Pack of Two* (New York: Random House, 1999), 3-16. Martin Buber, "The Way of Man," trans. Maurice Friedman, in C. Guignon, ed. *The Good Life* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1999), 288-93. Love poems from 5th c. Indian literature.

NOVEMBER 1 - HEROISM AND FRIENDSHIP

- Pillar Reading: Homer, *Iliad* Books 11.704-end, 15, and 16.
- **Due date for submission of Short Essay 2.**

NOVEMBER 3 - THE HERO'S RETURN

- Pillar Reading: Homer, *Iliad* Books 18, 19, and 20.
- **Assignment and Topics for Analytical Essay available on Sakai.**

NOVEMBER 3 & 4 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 12 - Questioning the Good Life (I)

Gateway Readings: Excerpts from Henry Thoreau, *Walden*, excerpts from Ch. 2, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived for" (¶¶15-23 at <http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden02.html>), Ch. 16, "The Pond in Winter" (¶¶17-21 at <http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden16.html>), and Ch. 18, "Conclusion" (<http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden18.html>). Selection of Sanskrit verses in *Love Lyrics, Amaru Bhartrihari Bilhana*, trans Bailey and Gombrich, p. 149.

NOVEMBER 8 - COERCION AND THE GOOD LIFE

- Pillar Reading: Plato, *Gorgias* 447a-461a.

NOVEMBER 10 - POWER AND THE GOOD LIFE

- Pillar Reading: Plato, *Gorgias* 461b-480d.
- NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK (VETERAN'S DAY)

Week 13 - Questioning the Good Life (II)

NOVEMBER 15 - REALPOLITIK AND THE GOOD LIFE

- Pillar Reading: Plato, *Gorgias* 480e-506b.

NOVEMBER 17 - SELF-GOVERNANCE AND THE GOOD LIFE

- Pillar Reading: Plato, *Gorgias* 506c-end.
- **Due date for submission of first draft of Analytical Essay.**

NOVEMBER 17 & 18 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 14 - Ending the Good Life

Gateway Reading: Thomas Nagel, "Death," from John Martin Fischer, *The Metaphysics of Death* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 61-70. Barbara Stoler Miller, trans., *The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War* (New York: Bantam, 1986), 31-41.

NOVEMBER 22 - A HERO'S DEATH

- Pillar Reading: Homer, *Iliad* Books 21 and 22

NOVEMBER 24 - A HERO'S HUMANITY

- Pillar Reading: Homer, *Iliad* Books 23 and 24
- **Due date for submission of Analytical Essay Peer Reviews.**

NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK (THANKSGIVING)

Week 15 - An Ordinary Life

NOVEMBER 29 - A LIFE IN CRISIS

- Pillar Reading: Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*, §§I-II (pp. 1-41).

DECEMBER 1 - REACHING OUT

- Pillar Reading: Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*, §§III-IV (pp. 42-77).
- **Due date for submission of Final Draft of Analytical Essay.**

DECEMBER 1 & 2 - DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Week 16 - An Ordinary Life

DECEMBER 6 - CRISIS AND EPIPHANY

- Pillar Reading: Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*, §§V-VII (pp. 77-118).

DECEMBER 8 - COURSE RETROSPECTIVE

NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK.

Final Exam

Thursday, December 16, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. (Exam Group 16E) in LIT 0109: A cumulative examination testing student's understanding of the major works and themes of the course. There will be no make-up exam except by specific arrangement with the course instructor a minimum of one week prior to the scheduled exam date.