

# PHIL 115: PHILOSOPHICAL METHODS SEMINAR



## TOPIC: *HAPPINESS*

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<b>When</b>	MW 12-1:20
<b>Where</b>	HSS 7077
<b>Office hrs</b>	Wed 2-3 and by appt.

The primary purpose of this course is to teach philosophy majors how to understand, write and present philosophical arguments. The course will be somewhat unorthodox: no exams, no long lectures, no rows of seats, and so on, but lots of presentations and writing. The idea is that continued feedback on your writing and presentational skills will provide a kind of "crash course" in the talents one needs to be a good philosopher. Since strong aptitude in comprehension/writing/presenting is needed outside philosophy, I hope that this course will serve students later on, no matter in what profession their future lie.

The secondary goal of this course is to study happiness and well-being. What makes a person happy? Are particular ingredients needed, e.g., a labradoodle and a convertible? What is it for a person to live a good life? Is there more to a good life than happiness? Philosophers have studied these questions and related ones since the dawn of the field. We'll examine the answers that have been given. But we'll also try to bring this work to bear on recent research in psychology and behavioral economics. One of the most exciting areas of contemporary science is the study of happiness. Surprising discoveries have been made about what makes us happy. What do these discoveries mean for the philosophical questions, and how should we interpret these experimental

results in light of what we've learned from the philosophy? Should these studies inform public policy, as many scientists hope, or do they measure the wrong thing? The topic of happiness will force the student to come to grips with a diverse range of texts: ancient and modern philosophy, contemporary ethics, contemporary science. Hence it is the perfect topic to help us realize the primary goal of the course.

### **Class Structure**

- **Essays.** The first five essays are due in term, and the first few of these will be on very specific questions. These essays will be between 3-4 pages each, single-spaced. The last, and sixth, essay is due during exam week (on the day the exam for this class is scheduled). It is to be a slightly longer, rewritten and (one would expect) improved version of one of the previous five shorter papers. (You'll talk with me about which one to pick.)
- **Revisions.** Before being handed in to me, you'll trade drafts of your paper with another classmate. That classmate will read your paper and suggest improvements and you'll do the same for him or her. When revised, the paper is then ready for me.
- **Preparedness.** Come to every class prepared for discussion. This means carefully reading everything assigned for the day. A discussion class (seminar) is doomed if everyone hasn't done the reading prior to class; consequently, your reading will be monitored through a variety of means.
- **Attendance.** Come to every class. In a seminar, you harm others by not showing up and also lose out on valuable feedback. The expectations for attendance are different than in a lecture. Hence one will be penalized for missing classes (see below).
- **Presentations.** You will be assigned two-to-three (depending on class size) 10 minute class presentations, in which one (a) succinctly introduces the material, (b) discusses its merits and demerits, and (c) raises interesting discussion questions about it. These presentations will be graded (by me) and critiqued (by me and the class), as presentations, right there and then in the class. But no worries --- the criticism will be constructive in spirit. You will stand at the front of the class and use the projector.
- **One-on-one meeting(s).** After the first two essays have been graded, we'll set up a meeting to go over your work to see if I spot any general trends, good or bad. Meeting with me in my office is a mandatory part of the course.
- We may also organize in-class 'writing centers,' to be explained.

### **Grading**

The grade will be determined as follows: papers 1,2 and 6 (10% each), 3,4,5 (15% each); presentations (15%); participation (10%). The participation grade will be determined by your attendance, class readiness, and of course participation.

### **Fine Print**

In your short papers, all sources, including discussions with classmates, must be appropriately acknowledged. All ideas must be in your own wording. Closely paraphrasing or simply copying the work of others (such as authors of books or articles, or classmates) is not allowed and will be severely penalized. You must ask me in case you are uncertain whether something constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism, the stealing of an idea or actual text, and other forms of academic dishonesty will be immediately reported to the Academic Integrity Office. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site. You must observe the University's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, which can be found at <http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>. Late papers will be accepted, but docked at the rate of 5% per day.

### **Reading**

Please purchase the following two books.

- *Stumbling on Happiness*, Gilbert
- *The Best Things in Life: A Guide to What Really Matters*, Hurka

Both books go for about \$12 on Amazon (which has free two day shipping for college students) and other online sources. You might also be interested in getting Dan Haybron's *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*. Otherwise, all the articles used in the course will be made available either through the electronic library, direct web addresses or email.

### **Links to good "How-to-write-philosophy" pages:**

"How to Write a Philosophy Paper"  
<http://www.cariboo.bc.ca/ae/php/phil/mclaughl/courses/howrit.htm>

Jim's Pryor's page: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/>

Holton: <http://homepages.ed.ac.uk/rholton/write/writehome.html>

Vargas, "How to Write Philosophy Papers That Don't Suck"  
<http://www.usfca.edu/fac-staff/mrvargas/Handouts/Howtowrite.pdf>

## **Tentative Order of Initial Topics and Readings**

### **1 Introduction**

Introduction "[The Hippies Were Right All Along About Happiness](#)" (FT, 1/19/06)  
Hurka, chapter 1

### **2 A Brief History**

Plato, *Protagoras*, from "You would admit, Protagoras, that some men live well and others ill?"  
[ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/plato/p71pr/protagoras.html](http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/plato/p71pr/protagoras.html)  
Epicurus (Cicero, *De Finibus*, [selection](#))  
<http://www.epicurus.net/en/finibus.html>

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, [Book I](#)  
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, [Book X](#)

Kraut, "[Two Conceptions of Happiness](#)

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, [ch. II](#)  
Brink, "[Mill's Deliberative Utilitarianism](#)" read only 67-83

### **3 Well-Being**

Crisp, SEP

### **4 Pleasure (Hedonism)**

Hurka, chapters 1-3  
Crisp, "[Hedonism Reconsidered](#)"  
Gilbert, tba

### **5 Desire Theories**

Railton, "Facts and Values"  
Sobel, "[Full Information Accounts of Well-Being](#)"

### **6 Flourishing (Objective List)**

Nussbaum, "[Women and Cultural Universals](#)" [Part 2](#)  
Arneson "[Human Flourishing versus Desire Satisfaction](#)

6 **Other Goods: Knowledge, Morality, Achievement, Etc**

Hurka

7 **Balance, Time and the Good Life**

Velleman,  
Hurka  
Suhler and Callender

8 **The Science of Happiness**

Gilbert, tba  
Habron, D. "[Life Satisfaction, Ethical Reflection, and the Science of Happiness](#)"

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Much more tba

9 **The Politics of Happiness**

Thaler and Sunstein, "[Paternalistic Libertarianism](#)";  
Layard, "[Towards a Happier Society](#)"

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Much more tba