Philosophy of Well-Being  
Dr Guy Fletcher

Class: Tuesday 2-4, DSB 1.17  
Office Hour: Tuesday 1-2, DSB 4.03  
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**General**

This course will examine well-being, a central issue in practical philosophy and practical thinking. It has two parts:

**Part 1**: We’ll examine the main theories of well-being. These include hedonism, desire-fulfilment theory, objective-list theory, perfectionism. We will also look at some more recent views, including hybrid theories.

**Part 2**: We’ll examine some general theoretical issues connected to well-being. We will look at whether well-being is holistic by examining whether lifetime well-being is some simple function from momentary well-being (the ‘shape of a life’ debate). We will also examine how time and death connect to well-being, by looking at issues such as the 

**Course Aims and Objectives**

The aims of the course are:

1. To further development of core philosophical skills in philosophy: interpreting authors, reconstructing and evaluating arguments, articulating theories, etc
2. To provide knowledge of the main theories of well-being, and their strengths and weakness.
3. To enhance students’ ability to write an essay on the theory of well-being which displays critical assessment along with knowledge of the literature.
4. To develop students’ understanding of some of the main philosophical debates and practical issues which the theory of well-being has implications for
5. To give students greater confidence in presenting ideas in forms other than essays.

**Assessment**

**Undergraduates**

1. Essay 3,000 words (worth 80%). Deadline: Thursday 27th April by 12 noon.
2. Participation (worth 20%). (Details below)

**Coursework Dissertation**

For undergraduates taking this course by coursework dissertation the relevant details are:

- Deadline for notifying the teaching office which course you’ll be completing the dissertation on: Monday 27th February, 12 noon.
- Deadline for handing the essay in: Tuesday 25th April 2017, 12 noon.
MSc Students
(1) Essay 3,000 words (worth 80%). Deadline tbc.
(2) Participation (worth 20%). (Details below)

Participation
The participation marks will take the form of
a. Two in class quizzes (each worth 5%)
b. Project (either individual or small group), worth 10%.

In Class Quizzes
- Will take place at the beginning of the class in week 3 (assessing material from weeks 1 & 2) and in week 10 (assessing material from weeks 7-9).
- Will consist of short response questions (3-4 sentences maximum) and multiple-choice questions.

Project
- A project based on the content of the course.
- **When** to submit it: by **12 noon on Friday 24th February**.
- **How** to submit it: You must submit your project (either hard copy, if appropriate, or electronic copy by email) **to the relevant teaching office** (i.e. undergraduate or postgraduate).

You must discuss your project with me before getting started on it.

Your task is as follows: **Explain, analyse and evaluate some theory, idea, argument, or objection from the course (in any format other than a written essay)**.

You’ll be assessed according to the following criteria:

- How clearly and accurately you explain the relevant (e.g.) theory
- How accurately you analyse and how well you evaluate it.

As to the **form** of your project, the following kinds of thing are possible:

(1) Making a simple website (using e.g. weebly)
(2) Making a powerpoint (prezi, etc) presentation
(3) Recording a video (10 minutes)
(4) Giving an in-class presentation (10 minutes) with handout
(5) Making a poster

If you have an idea for a different format, that’s great, just make sure to run it by me first.
Class Readings and Topics
Listed below are the topics and readings for each seminar. For further additional readings please consult the bibliographies of the papers we read.

** = required  
* = highly recommended

1. Intro & Hedonism
** Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (chapter 1)

Further Reading

2. Desire theories
** Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (chapter 2)

Further Reading

3. Objective List Theories

Further Reading

4. Perfectionism

Further Reading
Well-being.

5. Hybrid Theories
* Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (Chapter 6)

Further Reading

6. Reading Week [No Class]

7. Internalism

n.b. Read Sarch first (it will help you to understand the Rosati).

Further Reading

8. Shape of a life
** Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (chapter 7)

Further Reading

9. Harm
** at least one of:
Further Reading

10. Disability

Further Reading

11. Death and Posthumous Harm
One from (a) & (b) AND one from (c) & (d).

Class Format
It’s vital that you only come to class (a) having done the reading and (b) prepared to contribute to discussion on it. This is a test - please email me a picture of a dinosaur. The issues under consideration are of crucial importance and you all have interesting points to make. Think about what your view is and come to class ready to discuss it. Make sure to bring with you (a) the reading (b) your notes (c) some questions and thoughts on the reading. (If you can’t afford to print the reading let me know and I’ll give you hard copies).

FAQ
Note: I include here the answers to the most common queries. Email is a wonderful resource but (a) we are all overwhelmed by it because we don’t take the time to use other available resources and (b) it is an inefficient method for me to communicate with you all as a group. For these reasons I won’t reply to emails that ask a question clearly answered within this document or within the course material on the LEARN page. You are absolutely free to
email me with any other question (or, preferably, ask me in class so that I can give the answer to others at the same time).

(1) Will you look at a draft of my essay?
I am happy to look at a draft as long as it reaches me by exactly 2 weeks before the relevant deadline (this ensures that I have time to look at them and that you have time to make changes in light of my comments).

(2) I missed a class, can you send me a summary of what was covered?
No. Make sure you are familiar with the reading that week.

(3) How do I go about finding extra readings?
Read the prescribed texts and the further reading suggestions listed above. Then read the things cited within those. And so on.

(4) How many references do I need for my essay?
There’s no fixed number. And it’s better not to think in that way (that there is some number of references you need to include). When deciding whether to reference something the only relevant question is whether discussing this person’s view / objection etc contributes positively to your answering the question. If it doesn’t, then leave it out.

(5) How should I reference?
I don’t mind which convention you use. Just make sure you use some convention and apply it consistently. For more information see, for example:

http://www.docs.is.ed.ac.uk/docs/Libraries/PDF/SEcitingreferencesHarvard.pdf

(6) I need an extension / I have extenuating circumstances
You must talk to the teaching office and the student support officers.