Philosophy of Well-Being
18/19. Semester 1
Dr Guy Fletcher

Class: Tuesday 2:10–4pm, David Hume Tower (DHT) 3.01
Office Hour: (This semester) Tuesday 1-2pm, DSB 4.03

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) and when, and why, it is true to say that someone was harmed by something or someone. We’ll also spend two weeks thinking about disability and well-being.

COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
The aims of the course are:
1. Further development of core philosophical skills in philosophy: interpreting authors, reconstructing and evaluating arguments, articulating theories, etc
2. Knowledge of the main theories of well-being, and their strengths and weaknesses.
3. Ability to write an essay on the theory of well-being which displays critical assessment along with knowledge of the literature.
4. Understanding of some of the main philosophical debates and practical issues which the theory of well-being has implications for
5. Confidence in presenting ideas in forms other than essays.

ASSESSMENT
UNDERGRADUATES
(1) Essay 3,000 words (worth 80%). Deadline: Noon, Thursday 13th December, 2018.
(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: Noon, Monday 22nd October, 2018.
- Deadline for handing the essay in: Noon, Tuesday 18th December, 2018.

Polite Request regarding written work: If you can, please use a, readable, serif, font. I have a strong preference for Baskerville, Garamond, or Bell MT and a strong preference against Cambria / Calibri.

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 4 (assessing material from weeks 1—3) and in week 11 (assessing material from weeks 7-10).
- 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 **Noon, Wednesday 7th November.**
- **How** to submit it: You must submit your project (either hard copy, if appropriate, or electronic copy by email) to the teaching office.

You **must** discuss your project with me before getting started on it. The 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 against 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) Writing a wikipedia entry
(3) Making a powerpoint (prezi, etc) presentation
(4) Recording a video (10 minutes)
(5) Making a poster
(6) In-class presentation (5-10 minutes, with handout)

If you have another idea for a format, that’s great, just please 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
4. Perfectionism

Further Reading

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

Further Reading

6. Internalism

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

Further Reading
- Fletcher, G. (2016) The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction (appendix to chapter 3)

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

Further Reading

Further resources
See also the Stanley Kubrick Film Barry Lyndon (based on the Thackeray novel).

8. Harm
** at least one of:

9. Disability (I)

Further Reading

10. Disability (II)

11. Wrap Up Class
- Details given in week 9

**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 tiger. 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, partly because we don’t use other available resources and (b) it is a very 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) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) 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’s some number of references you must 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.

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

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

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