Philosophy of Well-Being 20/21.

Course organiser: Dr Guy Fletcher
Course secretary name: Ann-Marie Cowe [philinfo@ed.ac.uk]

Schedule: Tbc

I.   The seminar element of this course is too big to take place in-person. It will therefore be online and aynschronous (details on the learn page in the list of weekly tasks).
II. You will have a weekly synchronous tutorial. Details tbc.

Office Hour: tbc

GENERAL

This course will examine well-being, a central issue in practical philosophy and practical thinking. We will look at some classic theories (hedonism, desire theory etc) and some relatively new areas of inquiry (well-being contextualism, children's well-being, disability, the badness of pain). Our focus will be ahistorical, focusing on the philosophical issues and especially upon recent work on these issues.

COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

We all have views about what makes life go well and why. This course will scrutinise them. It will also lead to:
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 weakness.
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.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Email can be useful in some circumstances but it's an inefficient and alienating way for me to keep in touch with you as a class, not least because answering a question means that only one person sees it. Thus, we won't use email to communicate with each other on this course. (Exception: if you have an issue you need to discuss with me in private.) Instead we will use the following:

-   The discussion board on LEARN. There are two forums with the following, snappy, titles:
     (1) Philosophical Discussion
     (2) General Administrative Questions -***questions about class, assessments etc should go here**.*

-   I've also created a Discord server for informal interaction, should you wish to do that. (This is an optional extra to build community among you guys, not an official part of the course). I have put the link to access that on the LEARN page, to make sure it's only available to people on this course.

Finally, answers to some of the most common queries are available in:
-   The FAQ section (below).
-   Handbooks on the Philosophy webpage: **https://bit.ly/38nF3Id**: (general assessment and academic support information).

ASSESSMENT

[All deadlines are UK time]

(1) <u>Essay</u> 3,000 words (worth 80%). **Deadline: Noon on Thursday 10th December.**

(2) <u>Participation</u> (worth 20%). (more details below).

For students taking this course by <u>coursework dissertation</u> the relevant details are:

- The dissertation is worth 100%.

- Deadline for notifying the teaching office that you'll be doing this course by dissertation: **Noon on Monday 19th October**

- Deadline for handing the Coursework Dissertation in: **Noon on Tuesday 15th December.**

Polite Request regarding written work: Please use a, readable, serif, font if possible. I prefer Baskerville, Garamond, or Bell MT and dislike Cambria / Calibri.

PARTICIPATION

The participation marks will come from:

a. **Quizzes** (collectively worth 10% of the overall mark)

- There will be a very short comprehension quiz each week from weeks 1-5. Each quiz contributes 2%. Quizzes will be available on the LEARN page within the folder for each week.

b. **Project** (either individual or small group), worth 10% of the overall mark.

- <u>Basic idea</u>: A creative project based on the content of the course.

- <u>When</u> to submit it: by **noon on Friday November 27th.**

- <u>How</u> to submit it: You must submit your project (hard copy, *if possible*, or electronic copy by email) **to the teaching office /** philinfo@ed.ac.uk (please cc me into your email so I can get started on evaluating your project asap).

The task is as follows: explain, analyse, evaluate some theory, idea, argument, or objection from the course (in any format <u>except</u> a written essay).

You'll be assessed against the following criteria: clarity, accuracy, understanding. I'll grade them *coarsely* and *generously*, taking account of the fact that different forms of project will allow for different amounts of content. Don't worry about what form gets you the best grade. Instead, focus on producing something in the form that you'd find most interesting and fulfilling. <u>Suggestion</u>: use it as a way of exploring and presenting the ideas you want to explore in your final essay.

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 (please create a before and after, so I can see precisely what you did).

(3) Recording a short video (5-10 minutes)

(4) Poster

(5) Short story

(6) Poems

(7) Leaflet / infographic

If you have another idea for a format, that's fantastic, just run it by me first.

CLASS READINGS AND TOPICS

- Listed below are the topics and readings for each week.

- The LEARN page will contain a more comprehensive plan for each week. You **must** consult that to get the full lowdown on what you need to do, and in what order, each week.

- For further additional readings please consult the bibliographies of the papers we read. Absolutely everything listed below is available online through DiscoverED or is on the LEARN page so should be easy to access. Any problems with accessing readings, please notify me through the discussion board.
KEY
[T] = <u>required</u> reading for the <u>tutorial</u>
** = necessary to engage fully in the week's activities
* = recommended

WEEK 1. INTRO & HEDONISM
[T] Hewitt, S. (2010) 'What do our intuitions about the experience machine really tell us about hedonism?', *Philosophical Studies,* 151 (3), 331-349.
** Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (chapter 1)
* Fletcher, G. (2020) Philosophy of Well-Being for the Social Sciences: A Primer. (Very introductory)
* Lin, E. (2016). How to use the experience machine. *Utilitas*, 28, 314–332.

Further Reading
- Crisp, R. (2006), 'Hedonism Reconsidered', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 73: 619–645.

WEEK 2. DESIRE THEORIES
[T] Tully, I. (2017). Depression and the Problem of Absent Desires. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 11 (2):1-16.
** Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (chapter 2)
* Sumner, W. (1999) Chapter: 'The Desire Theory' in his book *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics.*
* Lauinger, W. (2011) 'Dead Sea Apples and Desire-Fulfillment Welfare Theories', *Utilitas*, 23, 324-43.

WEEK 3. OBJECTIVE LIST THEORIES
[T] Fletcher. G. (2013) 'A Fresh Start for the Objective-List Theory of Well-Being', *Utilitas*, 25, 206-220.
* Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (chapter 3).

Further Reading
- Lin, E. (2016) 'Monism and Pluralism about well-being' in Fletcher, G. (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-Being* (Routledge).
- Rice, C. (2013) 'Defending the Objective List Theory of Well-Being,' *Ratio* 26:2, pp. 196-211.
- Fletcher, G. (2016) 'Objective List Theories of Well-Being' in Fletcher, G. (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-Being* (Routledge).

WEEK 4. PERFECTIONISM
[T] Bradford, G. (forthcoming) 'Perfectionist Bads' *Philosophical Quarterly.* [See LEARN page]
** Dorsey, D. (2010),Three Arguments for Perfectionism. *Noûs*, 44: 59–79.
** Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (chapter 4).

Further Reading
- Bradford, G. (2016) 'Perfectionism' in Fletcher, G. (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-being.*

WEEK 5. INTERNALISM
[T] Sarch, A. (2011) 'Internalism about a Person's Good: Don't Believe It', *Philosophical Studies*, 154(2).
** Rosati, C. (1996) 'Internalism and the good for a person', *Ethics*, 106(2), 297–326.
[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)

WEEK 6. WELL-BEING AND TIME: SHAPE OF A LIFE
[T] Velleman, D. (1991) 'Well-Being and Time' *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly,* 72 (1):48-77.
** Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (chapter 7)

Further Reading
- Dorsey, Dale (forthcoming) 'The Significance of a Life's Shape' *Ethics*, 125 (2), 303-330.
- Glasgow, J. (2013) 'The Shape of a Life and the Value of Loss and Gain', *Philosophical Studies*, 162/3, 665-82.
- Rosati, C. S. (2013)'The story of a life', *Social Philosophy and Policy* 30(1-2):21-50.

WEEK 7. HOW MANY THEORIES OF WELL-BEING?
[T] Tomlin, P. (2018). Saplings or Caterpillars? Trying to Understand Children's Wellbeing. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35 (S1):29-46.
** Lin, E. (2018). Welfare Invariabilism. Ethics 128 (2):320-345.
* Cormier, Andrée-Anne & Rossi, Mauro (2019). Is children's wellbeing different from adults' wellbeing? *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 49 (8):1146-1168.

WEEK 8. HOW MANY CONCEPTS OF WELL-BEING?
[T] Fletcher, G. (2019) 'Against Contextualism about Prudential Discourse', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 69(277), 699-720.
** Alexandrova, A. 'Is There a Single Concept of Well-Being?' Chapter in her *A Philosophy for the Science of Well-Being* (OUP).
* Campbell, S. 'The Concept of Well-Being', in G. Fletcher (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-Being*. London: Routledge.

Further Reading
- Kagan, Shelly. "Me and My Life." Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series, 94 (1994): 309-24.

WEEK 9. DISABILITY AND WELL-BEING
[T] Gregory, A. (2020) 'Disability as Inability', *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy,* https://doi.org/10.26556/jesp.v18i1.572
** Barnes, E. (2014) 'Valuing Disability, Causing Disability', *Ethics*, 125 (1), 88-113.
* Kahane, G. & Savulescu, J. (2016) 'Disability and Mere Difference', *Ethics*, 126, 774-788.
* Stoner, Ian (2016). Ways to Be Worse Off. *Res Philosophica* 93 (4):921-949.

Further Reading
- Andrić, V. & Wündisch, J. (2015) 'Is It Bad to Be Disabled? Adjudicating Between the Mere-Difference and the Bad-Difference Views of Disability', *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy,* 9 (3),1–16.
- Barnes, E. (2016) 'Reply to Guy Kahane and Julian Savulescu', *Res Philosophica*, 93 (1), 295-309.

WEEK 10. PAIN AND ILL-BEING
[T] Bradford, Gwen (2020). The badness of pain. Utilitas 32 (2):236-252.
**Kahane, Guy. (2009). Pain, Dislike, and Experience. Utilitas 21(3): 327–36.

WEEK 11. SPILLOVER, CATCH UP, WRAP UP

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) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) 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

(4) I need an extension / I have special circumstances
You must contact the teaching office and the student support officers (SSOs) about extensions and special circumstances.