Philosophy of Well-Being
Dr Laura Candiotto
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Class: Tuesday 4-6, …..
Office Hour: Tuesday 3-4, DSB 5.04
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General
This course will examine well-being, a central issue in practical philosophy. It has three parts. In part 1 and 3 we examine the main theories of well-being, with an in-depth look at perfectionism. In part 2 we analyse some case studies regarding well-being and applied ethics, within an empirically informed debate.

Course Aims and Objectives
The aims of the course are:
1 To provide knowledge of the main theories of well-being, and their strengths and weakness;
2 To develop students’ understanding of some of the main philosophical debates and practical issues which the theory of well-being has implications for;
3 To develop students' capacity of addressing philosophical questions in relation to case studies and empirical evidence;
4 To further development of core philosophical skills in philosophy: interpreting authors, reconstructing and evaluating arguments, articulating theories, model-building, planning research projects etc;
5 To enhance students’ ability to write an essay on the theory of well-being which displays critical assessment along with knowledge of the literature;
6 To give students greater confidence in presenting ideas in forms other than essays, and in small-groups activities.

Assessment
Undergraduates
(1) Essay 3,000 words (worth 80%). Deadline: Thursday 14th December, by 12pm (mid-day)
(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 23rd October, By 12pm (mid-day)
- Deadline for handing the essay in: Tuesday 19th December, by 12pm (mid-day)

Participation
The participation marks will take the form of small-groups presentations of research projects based on the analysis of case studies.

Small-groups activity will take place in weeks 5 and 6 (small-groups analysis of case studies, discussion, and project planning – either group projects or individual) and in weeks 10 and 11 (giving an in-class projects' presentation)

Project
- When to submit it: by Monday 13th of November
- 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 a case study with the conceptual tools of well-being theories. Try also to prospect new paths of inquiry (regarding theories, methods, contexts, or tools for promoting well-being).**

You’ll be assessed according to the following criteria:
- How clearly and accurately you explain the case study and the relevant (e.g.) theory applied;
- How accurately you analyse and how well you evaluate it;
- Originality and sense of ownership.

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 or a podcast (10 minutes)
4. 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.

1. **Theories of Well-Being 1: Hedonism, Desire-Fulfillment theory, and Objective list theories**

   **Core readings**

   **Secondary Readings**

2. **Theories of Well-Being 2: Eudaimonism and Perfectionist theories**

   **Core readings**
   - Fletcher, G. (2016) *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction* (chapters 4 and 5)

   **Secondary Readings**

3. **Positive psychology on happiness and well-being**
Core readings


Secondary Readings


Watch the documentary “Happy” (R. Belic, 2013)

4. Well-Being, friendship and gratitude

Core readings

- Bishop A. (2015) *The good life: Unifying the philosophy and psychology of well-being*, (OUP), chapters 1 and 4

Secondary readings


Watch the documentary “Human” (extended version vol. 1) (Y. Arthus-Bertrand, 2015)

5. Case studies and applied ethics. Small-groups work 1

Choose one of these topics and read the related readings:

a. Well-Being and Health


b. Well-Being and Disability


c. Well-being, spirituality and compassion


*Watch the talk delivered by D. Goleman “A force for good”*

short version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGbBwMdDbmg

long version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLCrFRGkijM

d. Welfare and Economics


e. Well-being in the workplace


f. Non-human animals and earth' well-being


*Watch the documentary “Tomorrow” (M. Laurent and C. Dyon 2015)*

6. Case studies and applied ethics. Small-groups work 2

*Bring your ideas to the classroom for designing and implementing the group projects*
7. Perfectionism 1: in depth analysis and criticism

Core readings

Secondary readings

8. Perfectionism 2: rationality and flourishing

Core readings

Secondary readings

9. Perfectionism 3: virtues and human capabilities

Core readings

Secondary readings:

10. Projects' presentation and discussion 1 (topics a; b; c)
For the next week's speakers: pick a second topic (see the readings list for week 5) and think some questions to address to your classmates.

11. Project's presentation and discussion 2 (topics d; e; f)
For the week 10’s speakers: pick a second topic (see the readings list for week 5) and think some questions to address to your classmates.

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. 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.