Introduction to Philosophy: The Good Life

Professor Brittany Gentry
Office Hours: 1:30-2:30 MWF, and by appointment on zoom
Office: Old Main 002 A
Email: brittany.gentry@usu.edu

Course Description: One of the timeless questions of the human life is, “what makes for a good life?” What sorts of things done or thought lead a person to live a good life? How do things like education, science, mathematics, music, beauty, art, morality, religion, philosophy, contribute to that kind of life? How does what a person thinks about character, actions, free will, soul, God, afterlife, pleasure, pain, love, and nature influence the quality of that person’s life? We are going to consider thinkers across thousands of years who have struggled with these questions. They are thinkers who come from all sorts of persuasions and worldviews, who sometimes disagree and sometimes agree about the things that they think are important to living well. The point of the course is not to agree with everything we read, but to enter the discussion and think carefully about the accounts other people have given of the good life.

Course Learning Objectives:
1) Develop an understanding of various arguments and views read in this course
2) Develop and practice independent, critical thinking and reading skills
3) Develop philosophical writing, arguing, and articulation skills

Assignments:
You will be graded on three components:
1) Participation (10 points per day): Class will begin with student’s interpretations on the assigned material and so you should arrive prepared to share your thoughts. Many class periods will also include five to ten minutes of small group work where each group will be assigned a specific portion of the reading material to re-examine more carefully and present to the whole class. Participation includes engaging in small groups, asking questions, listening attentively to everyone (including fellow students), offering thoughts, and bringing a hardcopy of daily readings. I will keep track of participation daily.
   Grading for Participation:
   F—excessive absences, unprepared for class, no reading material, not paying attention, and distracting behavior such as whispering or sleeping in class
   D—less of “F” behaviors, and rarely offering comments or asking questions
   C—in class, paying attention, prepared, reading material in hand, and offering comments now and then (e.g. once a week)
   B—In class, paying attention, prepared, reading material in hand, and commenting or asking questions 1-2 times per class period in the large group or in small groups
   A—In class paying attention, prepared, reading material in hand, and commenting or asking questions 2-3 times per class period, in the large group or in small groups
2) Reading Quizzes: 24 quizzes total. Quizzes are announced. Each will cover the assigned material for the day and be worth 10 points. Students are responsible for being on time for quizzes (tardiness may result in missing a quiz and incurring a grade of 0 on that quiz). Makeup quizzes are not allowed, except in special circumstances. I will drop the three lowest quizzes. Open notes (NOT OPEN BOOK);
3) Four Papers. All papers should be 4-5 pages and worth 100 point each.
4) Extra Credit Opportunity:
   Extra Credit Paper on either Murdoch or Scruton and either The Painted Veil or Their Eyes Were Watching God (100 points)—whichever (The Painted Veil or Their Eyes Were Watching God) you don’t use for your final paper.

Grade Distribution (1000 point total):
~24% Quizzes: 240 points
~40% 4 Papers: 400 points (each paper worth 10%)
~36% Participation: 360 points
~10 Possible Extra Credit: 100 Points
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**Policies:**

1. Using electronics (such as phones, computers, or pads) is not permitted in class, except by special permission (persons with documented disabilities please be sure to see me for an exception).
2. Cheating—DON’T. First time offense earns zero on assignment and no more than C in the course; second offense earns an F for the entire course.
3. Hard copies of the day’s reading assignment must be brought to class—this requires printing articles provided electronically and counts as part of your participation grade.
4. Attendance is expected, missing more than three classes results in a 5 point deduction per additional classes missed.
5. No make-up quizzes (except in rare cases)—lowest three quiz scores dropped (this includes missed quizzes).
6. Papers should be double spaced, 12 point, New Times Roman font, with one-inch margins. Late papers receive a 2 point deduction per day late. Further explanation on the paper assignments in class.
7. Mistakes exist in this syllabus, so remember that this syllabus is more of a guideline—corrections as needed
8. Academic accommodations follow USU’s policy stated below:

Diversity Statement: USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, 435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

**Required Materials:**

Reading Material: The first four books are translation specific—the last five books can be any version

- Avicenna—*A Compendium on the Soul* (M0D1002540164, Reprints from the collection of the University of Michigan Library
- C.S. Lewis—*Till We Have Faces* (ISBN: 978-0-15-690436-0, any version)

Movies:

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1 Please note that all class policies are subject to Covid-19 related revisions and exceptions and accommodations.