



The Good Life

Course information:

Course #: PHIL 202
Term: Winter 2023
Course pre-requisites: None
Course schedule: Mon/Wed/Fri 10:35-11:25
Course location: McConnell Engineering 304

Instructor information:

Name: Dr. Oran Magal
Email: oran.magal@mcgill.ca
Office hours: Mon/Wed 11:30-12:30
Office location: Leacock 940



La Dolce Vita, by Mirek

How can philosophy help us to have a better life? One philosophical reply to this question is to ask: what counts as a good life, to begin with? What kind of life ought we aspire to, and based on that, how can we work to achieve it? In this course, we will consider a range of philosophical approaches to these questions, drawing on sources both old (Classical Greek, Chinese, and Indian) and new (present-day philosophers).

Required Course Materials:

All the readings will be provided through *MyCourses*. Readings will include both primary sources and secondary literature. Optional readings will be provided for students who wish to explore further.

Instructional Method:

For the first two weeks, lectures will take place Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Starting from the third week of lectures, and until the 12th week (inclusive), the Friday lecture will be replaced by a tutorial conference (see detailed schedule below).

The lectures will be recorded and posted automatically on *MyCourses* (as long as McGill's systems cooperate). Nevertheless, students are strongly encouraged to attend in person, especially since in-person studying has proved to be more pedagogically effective than watching a recorded lecture. **For the best results, students should read the assigned materials before attending the relevant lectures.**

Tutorial conferences with the TAs: starting on the *third* week of lectures and until the 12th week of the course, inclusive, the Friday lecture is replaced by tutorial conferences with a TA. During the last two weeks of classes, we will once again have lectures on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (see detailed schedule below).

Attendance in these conferences is required, and there will be assignments linked with the conferences (see below). Students who cannot attend some or all conferences due to a serious reason outside their control should contact the instructor as soon as possible to work out alternative work for the same credit. Please note that these classes with the TAs will not be recorded.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

The required readings for each week are listed below. Optional readings will be posted on *MyCourses* for each topic for students who are interested in learning more.

Week	Dates	Topic	Readings + assignments
1	W, Jan 4 th F, Jan 6 th	Introduction “Euthyphro’s Dilemma”	Wed.: Please read the syllabus Fri: Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>
2	M Jan 9 th W Jan 11 th F Jan 13 th	Socrates, Plato, and “the examined life”	Plato, <i>Apology</i> <u>Optional:</u> Raymond Geuss, <i>Changing the Subject</i> , Ch. 1: Socrates, Harvard Univ. Press, 2017 Jan Zwicky, “The Ship to Delos”, in Bringham & Zwicky, <i>Leaning to Die</i> , Univ. of Regina Press, 2018 (e-book available via McGill)
3	M Jan 16 th W Jan 18 th F Jan 20 th	Confucianism (<i>Rujia</i> , 儒家), Part I	Kongzi (Confucius), <i>Analects</i> , excerpts <u>Optional:</u> multiple sources, see <i>MyCourses</i> NB: Conferences begin this week, Friday’s lectures replaced by group you joined
4	M Jan 23 rd W Jan 25 th F Jan 27 th	Confucianism (<i>Rujia</i> , 儒家), Part II: Mencius	Mengzi (Mencius), excerpts <u>Optional:</u> Karyn Lai, <i>Learning from Chinese Philosophies</i> , Ch. 3: “Elements of Confucian Moral Thinking”
5	M Jan 30 th W Feb 1 st F Feb 3 rd	Aristotle, Part I	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Books I and X <u>Optional:</u> D. S. Hutchinson, “Ethics”, in J. Barnes (ed.), <i>The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle</i> , 1995 G. J. Hughes, <i>The Routledge Phil. Guidebook to Aristotle’s NE</i> (2013), Ch. 3: “The Fulfilled Life”
6	M Feb 6 th W Feb 8 th F Feb 10 th	Aristotle, Part II	Aristotle, NE, Books II and VI (continued on next page) <u>Optional:</u>

			<p>G. Lawrence, <i>Excellence in Virtue and Character</i>, in <i>A Companion to Aristotle</i>, Wiley-Blackwell 2013</p> <p>Martha Nussbaum, <i>The Therapy of Desire</i>, Ch. 2: Medical Dialectics: Aristotle on Theory and Practice, Princeton Univ. Press, 2013</p> <p>Jonathan Lear, “Integrating the Non-Rational Soul”, in <i>Wisdom Won from Illness</i>, Harvard Univ. Press, 2017</p>
7	<p>M Feb 13th</p> <p>W Feb 15th</p> <p>F Feb 17th</p>	<p>The three Disciplines (Yogas) of the Bhagavad Gita: Knowledge, Action, and Devotion</p>	<p>Excerpts from the <i>Bhagavad Gita</i></p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>B. Gupta on the <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> and other sources on <i>MyCourses</i></p>
8	<p>M Feb 20th</p> <p>W Feb 22nd</p> <p>F Feb 24th</p>	<p>Daoism, Part I: Laozi</p>	<p>Laozi, <i>Daodejing</i>, excerpts (please read both translations provided)</p> <p>NB: Feb. 27th-March 3rd is McGill’s Reading Break.</p>
9	<p>M March 6th</p> <p>W March 8th</p> <p>F March 10th</p>	<p>M: Daoism, Part I: Continued</p> <p>W: Daoism, Part II: Zhuangzi</p>	<p>Zhuangzi, excerpts</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Karyn Lai, <i>Introduction to Chinese Philosophy</i>, chapters on Zhuangzi</p>
10	<p>M March 13th</p> <p>W March 15th</p> <p>F March 17th</p>	<p>Daoism, Part II: Zhuangzi, Continued</p>	<p>Zhuangzi, excerpts</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Karyn Lai, <i>Introduction to Chinese Philosophy</i>, chapters on Zhuangzi</p>
11	<p>M March 20th</p> <p>W March 22nd</p> <p>F March 24th</p>	<p>Hellenistic Philosophy: Epicureans and Cynics</p>	<p>Excerpts from Inwood & Gerson (eds.), <i>Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings</i></p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Peter Adamson, <i>Philosophy in the Hellenistic World</i>, Oxford 2015 – Excerpts</p> <p>Martha Nussbaum, <i>The Therapy of Desire</i>, Ch. 4: “Epicurean Surgery: Argument and Empty Desire”</p>
12	<p>M March 27th</p> <p>W March 29th</p> <p>F March 31st</p>	<p>Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoicism</p>	<p>Excerpts from Inwood & Gerson (eds.), <i>Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings</i></p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Peter Adamson, <i>Philosophy in the Hellenistic World</i>, Oxford 2015 - Excerpts</p> <p>D. J. Robertson, “The Stoic Influence on Modern Psychotherapy”, in <i>The Routledge Handbook of the Stoic Tradition</i>, 2016</p>

			NB: Last conferences take place this week
13	M April 3 rd W April 5 th F April 7th	Transformative Experience NB: Fri., April 7 th and Mon., April 10 th are holidays.	Laurie Ann Paul, “What You Can’t Expect While Expecting” (2015) <u>Optional:</u> see reviews and responses on <i>MyCourses</i> NB: No conferences this week
14	M April 10th W April 12 th Th April 13 th	The Role of the Imagination NB: Wednesday, April 12 th follows a Monday schedule. Thursday, April 13 th follows a Friday schedule.	Jan Zwicky, “Imagination and the Good Life”, in <i>Alkibiades’ Love: Essays in Philosophy</i> (2014) NB: No conferences this week

Means of Evaluation

The final grade in the course comprises the following (explanation below):

Assignment	Due date	% of final grade
Final Exam (“take-home”)	Set by McGill, during the exam period	30
Conference-related assignments (Required: 6 out of 9)	Weekly (once conferences begin)	10 (5x 2% each)
Short Essay	Week 5	20
Essay project, first version	March 31 st	30
Essay project, revised version	April 22 nd	10

Conference-related assignments

Starting from the third week of classes, the Thursday lecture is replaced by tutorial conferences. In each such conference there will be a short in-class assignment to do and to submit. You are expected to complete **6 out of 9** such assignments, and to do so you *must* attend your conference. These assignments will *not* be distributed on *MyCourses*. You can miss up to three conferences for any reason. If you have a valid reason for missing more than three conferences, please contact the instructor and we will find alternative work for the same credit.

Short Essay

Since many students are taking this as their first philosophy course, this exercise will be a chance to improve writing skills generally, as well as to adjust to the expectations of essay-writing in philosophy.

Final Essay Project (2 versions)

In this essay, students will be asked to combine an explanation of some of the philosophies of living well that we studied with examples that they develop for how these philosophies can be applied to concrete situations in our lives. Detailed instructions will be provided closer to the time. After

submitting the first version of this essay, students will receive feedback on their work and will be asked to revise their essay and submit an improved version.

Policy on extensions and late work

If you have a valid reason to ask for an extension, please **write to me** (oran.magal@mcgill.ca), not to your TA, **before the relevant work is due**. As a rule, extensions will be given only for medical reasons or serious personal/family issues.

How to Submit Your Work

Submitting work through MyCourses: reading assignments and essay instructions will be distributed through *MyCourses* (in the 'assignments' tab of the course page), and students should submit their work through the same part of the course page on *MyCourses*. Do not send your work by email to the instructor or the TAs unless you are specifically asked to do so.

Important: submit all work in PDF file format. It may help to know that Microsoft Word (for PC or Mac) is provided to you for free through McGill, and can generate PDF files (an option under 'save as'). If you are using any other software, simply use *export* or *save as* to save your work as a PDF prior to submitting it.

McGill Policies and Statements

Language of Submission

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information)

Varia

Mobile computing and communications devices are permitted in class insofar as their use does not disrupt the teaching and learning process. Please do not record the lectures without instructor's permission.

Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit

permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.