

WELL-BEING

Fall 2016

Time: Monday 9:30-12:30

Location: HSS SEMR M8

Email: andrewforcehimes@gmail.com (I try to answer student e-mails within 24-hours. If I do not get back to you within 24-hours, I probably overlooked it. Email me again. I will *not* think this rude.)

Office: HSS 06-14

Office Hour: Thursday 13:00-14:00

1. Course Description

1.1 What makes for a happy life? More precisely, what makes a life go well for the person living it? Theories of well-being or welfare attempt to answer this question. In this course, we will examine the most promising of such theories, evaluating each for their strengths and weaknesses.

2. A Non-Exhaustive List of Basic Policies

2.1 Use of laptops and cell phones in class is not permitted. Click [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) to see why.

2.2 Understand and conform to the NTU Honor Code. Click [here](#) for its content.

3. Grading

3.1 Your grade is determined by your performance on two papers and two homework assignments, which have the corresponding weights:

Homework #1	10%
Homework #2	10%
Midterm Test:	40%
Final Essay:	40%

3.2 Essay

3.2.1 Your paper, if late, will not be accepted. For this reason I suggest that you aim to finish your paper a full day before it is due. If you plan ahead in this way, you will be able to address any unexpected problems you encounter and still submit your paper on time. I also suggest that you periodically save your work by sending it to yourself via email, printing it, or otherwise securing a copy in case your computer crashes, is stolen, catches fire, etc.

3.2.2 In the interest of impartiality, the only excuses for a late paper that will be accepted are sent to me directly from the Dean or are due to serious [illness](#).

3.2.3 Your paper will be turned in electronically on Blackboard. The file name of should be: YOUR_FULL_NAME_PAPER_1.

3.2.4 Philosophical writing is different from much other writing you are familiar with. It is critical that you appreciate the particular expectations of writing in this discipline. Click [here](#) for guidance about writing a philosophy paper.

3.3 Take Home Test

3.3.1 Tests will assess students' knowledge of the course material, as well as their ability to reason critically about it.

3.3.2 One can reliably predict the content of each test by attending to: the course readings for the unit, the content emphasized in lectures, and the handouts distributed.

3.3.3 Tests are designed to probe mastery of the material, not memorization skills. Click [here](#) for more information.

3.3.4 Tests are divided into two parts: short answer questions (25%) and essay questions (75%).

3.3.5 Like the essay, make up tests are offered only to students with an excuse from the Dean's office.

3.4 Homework Charts

3.4.1 Charting out conceptual space is a very helpful way of understanding a topic in philosophy. In this class you will make two charts. The first, at the beginning of the class, will map the various theories of well-being. The second, near the end of the class, will again map the various theories but also include the objections that each theory faces.

4. Handouts

4.1 I often provide handouts to supplement the readings. They are designed to (i) serve as a handy reference for technical jargon and defined terms, (ii) provide a reliable guide to the text, and (iii) free up class time for discussion.

4.2 Handouts are not substitutes for the assigned reading. In many cases, I provide a potentially controversial interpretation of the text. You can't take it for granted that my interpretation is correct. One of the most important lessons you should learn from this course is that in philosophy there are no experts. Of course the professionals have read more than you have, and they've spent more time thinking about the issues. Nonetheless, when you are discussing a philosophical question, you can't say 'Plato says, X' as if that were an argument for X. And the same goes for me.

4.3 Past versions of my handouts can be found [here](#). These are *not* final versions. I will bring hardcopy handouts to class. These hardcopies are what you should use to study.

4.4 The main handout for all readings is [here](#).

6. Assignments

6.1 Readings are to be completed before class. E.g., If the class schedule states “16th Kagan, Well-Being” you are to read Kagan, Well-Being *before* the start of class on the 16th.

6.2 Tentative Schedule:

INTRODUCTION

- 16: Syllabus; Kagan, Well-Being
- 23: Parfit, What Makes Someone's Life Go Best; Heathwood, Welfare

28: Homework #1: Chart of Conceptual Space

HEDONISM

- 30: Heathwood, Subjective Theories of Well-Being; Sumner, Welfare, Happiness and Ethics (hedonism)
- 6: Crisp, Hedonism Reconsidered
(Recommended: Kagan, The Limits of Well-Being)
- 13: Feldman, Pleasure and the good life (chapter 4, Appendix)

DESIRE-SATISFACTION

- 20: Sumner, Welfare, Happiness and Ethics, pp. 122-137; Bykvist, Sumner On Desires and Well-Being
- 4: Lukas, Desire Satisfactionism and the Problem of Irrelevant Desire
(Recommended: Dorsey, Idealization and the Heart of Subjectivism)
- 11: Lin, Against Welfare Subjectivism
(Recommended: Heathwood, The Problem of Defective Desires)

16: Take Home Midterm Test

OBJECTIVE

- 18: Rice, Defending the Objective List Theory; Fletcher, Objective List Theories
(Recommended: Nussbaum, The Capabilities Approach)
- 25: Arneson, Human Flourishing versus Desire Satisfaction
(Recommended: Haybron, Well-Being and Virtue)
- 1: Dorsey, Three Arguments for Perfectionism
(Recommended: Rosati, Internalism and the Good for a Person)

6: Homework Assignment #2: Chart with Objections

HYBRID THEORIES

- 8: Kagan, Well-Being As Enjoying the Good; Class Wrap Up
(Recommended: Heathwood, Desire Satisfactionism and Hedonism; Keller, Welfare as Success)

11: Homework Assignment #2: Chart with Objections

23: Final Essay (2,000-2,500 words)