

Past Course Syllabus: 2022-23 syllabus will be similar but not identical

Philosophy 102-003: Introduction to Philosophy II (Topic: Happiness)

Lectures: MW 10-11 a.m., Hennings 202; Winter Session, Term 2, 2019-20.

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Course overview

It's a good bet that you want to be happy. Pretty much everyone does. But it's a lot harder to say what happiness is, how to become and stay happy, how to tell if you or others are happy, and how to compare the importance of happiness to other goods. For those who think about ethics, it is important to have answers to these sorts of questions, since a lot of ethicists think that it is important to promote happiness, both for oneself and those one cares about, as well as for society more generally. It's typically hard to be or to like a grump.

For these reasons, philosophers have been interested in happiness since the earliest days of philosophy, but it seems only quite recently that scientists have turned to making a careful study of it. Science's findings—some of them very surprising—have given philosophers (and others) a lot to think about, and may require some big revisions to our approaches to ethics and political philosophy.

This course will take the topic of happiness as an invitation for thinking about philosophy, ethics, action theory, and the good life. We will aim to learn both about happiness and its place in ethics, as well as about what philosophy is, how philosophers approach these subjects perhaps differently than others, and how philosophy relates to other disciplines such as psychology, economics, and political science. And with a little luck, it might make us all a bit happier too.

Prerequisites/Target audience

This course is appropriate for almost all undergraduate students, both those who are new to philosophy, and those who have some background in it. There are no prerequisites for this course, and it assumes no special prior knowledge of philosophy. If you have already taken a handful of philosophy courses and/or declared a major in philosophy, you may want to talk to me about whether this is still an appropriate course for you to take.

Course format

This course will consist of two large lecture meetings each week, followed by a smaller discussion section meeting (you must register separately for one of these discussion sections in addition to the lecture section). Each week will be focused on a specific topic, with readings assigned for both Monday and Wednesday's lectures. The discussion sections following the second lecture will give you a chance to take up particular questions and further your understanding of the readings. They will also sometimes ask you to do some writing or other form of intellectual exercise that will count toward your course mark.

Students are expected to do the assigned readings prior to the relevant lectures for the course. It would be best if you attempt to complete all of a week's readings before the Monday lecture, because sometimes the lectures on Monday will speak to all of the week's readings; this is not essential, however. In addition, you are expected to bring the relevant texts with you to the lectures and discussions. This course involves a moderate amount of reading: I anticipate that most weeks will require 2-3 hours of time to complete the readings in preparation for class. It will be very difficult to do well in this course if you do not keep up with the readings in addition to attending the lectures and discussion meetings.

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Course readings

This course has one required book, *Theories of Happiness*, a collection of essays edited by Mulnix and Mulnix, available for sale at the UBC Bookstore (also available directly from the publisher, Broadview Press). Besides this book, there will be a number of readings available for you to download via the course's Canvas website. You should print out these readings at your own convenience, or else have them available electronically during class-time (say, on your laptop or e-reader).

There is also one *suggested* book, *Happier* by Tal Ben-Shahar, available in a limited quantity at the bookstore (and easily found elsewhere). This book is more for your edification and enjoyment than directly useful for the course, though you may find that it helps prompt some further thinking about whether and how one can become happier through making a specific attempt at it.

The online downloadable readings are either used in accordance with Canadian copyright law's standards for fair dealing, or are in the public domain. Most, if not all, are available via online databases subscribed to by the UBC library.

Please note: it is unlikely you will be able to do well in this course without having done the readings carefully in advance of the sessions in which we discuss them.

Attendance

The Academic Calendar says: "Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes."

Regular attendance is strongly recommended. It will be very difficult to do well in this course if you do not make use of readings, the lectures, and in-class discussions. There will also be a variety of in-class activities during your discussion section meetings which will contribute to your course mark. However, I will not take attendance on a regular basis, and you do not need to make a formal request to miss a class. If you know that you will be absent in advance, please let me know, and I will help you keep up during your absence. However, make-ups of exercises done during discussion sections will be provided only in the case of genuine medical or personal emergency, and only when the exercise missed cannot be dropped as one of the two lowest scores.

Grading

I hope that you will find that the intellectual work required in this course is challenging and rewarding because of its very nature. Facing up to and tackling the kind of challenges philosophy presents is critical to higher education. The purpose of grading in a course like this is three-fold: First, it gives you a very rough measure of your progress in learning and using the material that is the subject matter of the course. Second, it gives others a very rough measure of the quality of your intellectual work while at the University. Third, it gives you some external incentive to perform the reading assignments, attend the lectures and discussion sections, and do the thinking that is part of studying philosophy, as well as to avoid some of the shortcuts or dishonest practices that undercut the value of attending a University. Grading is, however, only a blunt instrument in any of these areas, and it is, from my perspective, one of the least important aspects of this course or of a university education.

The marks for this course will be determined on the following basis:

Four reading responses, to be completed before the lecture in which the reading is assigned: 4
x 5% = 20%

One "radio magazine" essay (3-5 minutes in length) to be written, recorded, and shared on
Canvas: 15%

Five or six written exercises to be completed during discussion sections. Your lowest two
scores will be dropped: 20% total

One midterm exam: 15%

One final exam: 30%

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Instructions about the reading response assignments, the “radio magazine” essay, and exams will be provided via the Canvas website well in advance of the due dates for the tasks.

There will be a variety of exercises to be done during your discussion sections which will contribute to your overall course grade. Unless there are extenuating circumstances such as a prolonged illness, there will be no make-ups given for these exercises.

The date of the final exam will be announced as soon as possible. Please notify the instructor of any conflicts with the final exam as soon as possible.

Standards for grading this course will be in accordance with those given in the Academic Calendar and the grading guidelines published in the university calendar. See:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,42,0,0>

The information below is copied verbatim from the above webpage:

In most faculties, individual courses are normally graded as follows:

Percentage (%)	Letter Grade		
		68-71	B-
		64-67	C+
90-100	A+	60-63	C
85-89	A	55-59	C-
80-84	A-	50-54	D
76-79	B+	0-49	F (fail)
72-75	B		

Faculties, departments and schools reserve the right to scale grades in order to maintain equity among sections and conformity to university, faculty, department or school norms. Students should therefore note that an unofficial grade given by an instructor might be changed by the faculty, department or school. Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record.

The instructor hopes to be able to determine overall scores for the course by simply adding the scores from the individual components, but I reserve the right to scale the final scores for the same reasons mentioned in the Academic Calendar. (Please consult Canvas for a record of your grades.)

Students should retain a copy of their submitted written assignments, in case of loss. You should also save frequently, and to a variety of backup locations, in the process of writing your reading responses, so as to avert difficulties in completing these assignments on time.

Policy on late or missing work

The only work you need to submit for this course besides in-class exercises and exams are the reading responses and your “radio magazine” essay. You need to complete a total of four reading responses, at least one per every 3 weeks or so of the course. Each of these needs to be submitted before the lecture for which the reading is assigned. You may submit these as early as you like, and do them on any reading not yet lectured upon. But late submissions of these (that is, after each of four “last chance” deadlines) will not be accepted except under extenuating circumstances. The due date for the “radio magazine” essay is on the syllabus. Late submissions of this assignment will be accepted. However, you must also complete and email your TA the “late work form” found on the Canvas website. Penalties for late submission will apply.

Academic honesty

I take academic honesty very seriously, as it is essential both to your ability to get full value from this course, as well as for treating fairly those who do their own work. I strongly encourage you to work together in reading and discussing the material, in preparing for the final examinations, and thinking about the writing

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your “radio magazine” essay. Nonetheless, your work on the reading responses, “radio magazine” essay, and examinations must be your own work. Cheating, copying, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty (including assisting others in dishonest activity) will be punished to the fullest extent provided for by the University. If you are unclear on what counts as honest or dishonest methods, you should read the Faculty of Arts’ pamphlet on plagiarism (<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoid-plagiarism/>) as well as the University’s policy on academic misconduct (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/?tree=3,54,111,959>), and ask me specific questions about what is and isn’t allowed in this course. I will not think worse of you for wanting to be clear about this. I will, however, be vigilant in hindering, uncovering and punishing those who fail to take this warning seriously.

Canvas Website

By virtue of being registered for this course, you will have access to the “Canvas” course website, a web-based program (<https://canvas.ubc.ca>) we will use to supplement a number of areas of the course. Almost all of the readings for the course will be linked to via this site; in addition, you will frequently find optional reading assignments, bibliographies, suggestions for excelling in the course, paper assignments, feedback/grades, announcements, and general course and philosophical information. You will also be required to turn your papers in via the Canvas website. Please check it periodically to see if the schedule has been updated or resources or assignments have been added. If you have trouble accessing Canvas, please let me know.

One caution, however: unless I have sent you one to which you are responding, please **do not send me instant messages (IMs) via Canvas**. I do not check messages regularly on Canvas; instead, please send any messages you have for me to my UBC mail account, scott.anderson@ubc.ca.

Student use of technology in the classroom

Many of you may wish to use computers during class for purposes of taking notes; this is perfectly acceptable. Many of you may also have the course readings in electronic form, which is also fine (though I would urge you to print and make a binder of the readings instead). So using a computer, etc., to access course readings is also permitted. Certain in-class assignments may also be completed using your laptop computer. *However, use of computers (or other devices) for other purposes during class is not permitted.* This means you should not do such things as check your email, send messages to friends, go shopping for snow boards, or check hockey scores. Besides being a distraction for you, it also creates a serious distraction for those around you, and this is not acceptable. I hope to be able to rely on the honor system to create an atmosphere in which such activity is avoided; however, if this hope is defeated, I will take other measures to discourage such activity.

Equity and special arrangements

Your instructor takes seriously the importance of making sure all students are given equal and full opportunities to participate and learn. The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let me know as soon as possible, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with me before the drop date.

If you require any particular arrangements in the classroom to facilitate your participation or learning, please let me know, and I will do what I can to make things suitable for you.

If you encounter serious health or personal difficulties during the term, please let me know of these at your earliest opportunity. There are lots of things more important in life than this class, and when one of those things goes wrong, this class should not add to the burdens you may then confront. Within reason, I

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will do what I can to work around any genuine, serious difficulties you may confront, but it will be helpful to know of them as soon as you are able to notify me.

The UBC-V Senate Policy V-130 mandates the inclusion of the following paragraph on course syllabuses:

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policiesresources-support-student-success>)

Office hours

I will hold regular office hours at the times noted at the top of the syllabus – no appointment is necessary – as well as by appointment at other times. You are strongly encouraged to come visit me at office hours and/or to make time to talk with me outside of class. You may want to bring specific questions about material in this course, or you may want to show up just to talk about whatever school- or philosophy-related issues are on your mind. Getting to know the teachers at your university is one of the most valuable parts of your higher education; unfortunately, it is unlikely to occur here unless you take at least a small bit of initiative. I will do what I can to reciprocate in getting to know you.

Schedule of readings/topics/assignments for the term

It is my intention to stick to the following schedule very closely, barring unforeseen disasters, etc. However some alterations to the schedule of readings may be necessary as time goes on. The dates of the assignments, however, will not change unless absolutely necessary. “ToH” below refers to our assigned text, *Theories of Happiness* (Mulnix and Mulnix, eds.) All other readings or videos, etc., are available via links from our Canvas course website. On the Canvas website you will also find occasional suggested readings to complement the assigned readings for a given topic. Please consult the Canvas website for updates and additional resources related to this course.

Day/Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Mon, Jan 06	Intro to the course	none	
Wed, Jan 08	Intro to the course	“Introduction,” ToH pp. 3-10; Gilbert, “The Surprising Science of Happiness” (TED talk)	
Mon, Jan 13	Eudaimonia	“Introduction,” ToH pp. 16-18; Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> books I.1-II.7; you may omit section I.6, I.11, I.12. (ToH pp. 320-324; 326-333; 335-346)	
Wed, Jan 15		Seneca, “On the Happy Life”	
Mon, Jan 20	Hedonism	“Introduction,” ToH pp. 10-13; Bentham, <i>Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> (ToH pp. 21-26)	
Wed, Jan 22		Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (ToH pp. 44-56)	
Mon, Jan 27	Satisfaction	“Introduction,” ToH pp. 13-16; Tatariewicz, “Happiness and Time” (ToH pp. 117-126)	

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Day/Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Wed, Jan 29		Kekes, "Happiness" (ToH pp. 152-169)	Last chance for 1 st reading response: Wed. Jan 29.
Mon, Feb 03	Scientific challenges	Kahneman, "Experienced Utility and Objective Happiness" (ToH pp. 27-43)	
Wed, Feb 05		Gilbert and Wilson, "Miswanting" (ToH pp. 81-95)	
Mon, Feb 10	Philosophical challenges	Nussbaum, "Who is the Happy Warrior?" (ToH pp. 219-245)	
Wed, Feb 12		Nozick, "Happiness" (ToH pp. 246-262)	Midterm Examination in Wed/Fri discussion sections.
Winter Break			
Mon, Feb 24	Meaning vs. happiness	Wolf, "Happiness and Meaning"	
Wed, Feb 26		Cahn and Vitrano, "Living Well"	Last chance for 2 nd reading response: Wed. Feb. 26.
Mon, Mar 02	Unhappiness	Benatar, "Why it is Better Never to Come into Existence"	
Wed, Mar 04		Vitrano, "The Value of Unhappiness"	
Mon, Mar 09	Positive psychology	Seligman, "Flourish: Positive Psychology and Positive Interventions"	
Wed, Mar 11		Ehrenreich: "Positive Psychology"	
Mon, Mar 16	Cross-cultural comparisons	Tiberius, "Cultural Differences and Philosophical Accounts of Well-Being"	
Wed, Mar 18		Lu and Gilmour, "Culture and Conceptions of Happiness: Individual Oriented and Social Oriented SWB" (Note: this is a change from the printed syllabus.)	Last chance for 3 rd reading response: Wed., Mar. 18
Mon, Mar 23	Politics, society and happiness	Diener, "Subjective Well-Being"	
Wed, Mar 25		Duncan, "Should Happiness Maximization be the Goal of Government?"	"Radio magazine" essays due 11:59 p.m. Friday, 3/27.
Mon, Mar 30		Ahmed, "Feminist Killjoys"	
Wed, Apr 01		Delistraty, "The Happiness Ruse"	
Mon, Apr 06	Happiness how-tos	Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, "The Concept of Flow"	
Wed, Apr 08		Dalai Llama, "The Art of Happiness" (ToH pp. 407-429)	Last chance for 4 th reading response, Wed., Apr. 08

Other important dates

Friday, Jan. 17: Last day for changes in registration and for withdrawal from most Term 2 courses without withdrawal standing of W recorded on a student's academic record.

Friday, Feb. 14: Last day for withdrawal from most Winter Session Term 2 courses with withdrawal standing of W recorded on a student's academic record.

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Finally

I hope that this course is a good experience for all of us, and that we all have the chance to learn from each other. If you have suggestions, complaints, or questions as the term goes along, please raise them with me; this course will work best if you take an active role in its direction and intellectual work. For my part, I will do my best to make this a HAPPY and rewarding experience for everyone.