



**Introduction to Philosophy:
Relationship of the Individual to the World**

PHIL 1012-004/11075 TuTh Time:12:30PM-01:45PM

Instructor: Hildebrand, David L

REMOTE COURSE: VIA ZOOM and Canvas

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Does life have meaning? This deceptively simple question will provide our entry point into philosophy. We will read and discuss a number of writers, from Plato to the present, who investigate this question. A range of fascinating topics will enter into our inquiry; these may include technology and art, religion and science, advertising and consumerism, and existential questions such as our place in the universe and our responses to death and mortality.

CORE COURSE AND CORE LEARNING OUTCOMES: This is a Core Course that fulfills a requirement in the Humanities. By the end of a general education course in the Humanities, students should be proficient in the following areas characteristic of critical thinking:

1. **Textual analysis:** Students analyze texts of a variety of types, distinguishing the various philosophical, historical, and/or literary elements. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.”
 - Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: (a) in-class discussion, (b) short writings, and (c) exams.
2. **Interpretive skills:** Students engage with texts to develop supported meaningful readings. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.”
 - Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: (a) in-class discussion, (b) short writings
3. **Context awareness:** Students identify the cultural, historical, and intellectual influences on a text.
 - Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: (a) in-class discussion, (b) short writings
4. **Ethical thinking:** Students recognize various ethical situations and ideas, and distinguish viable ethical positions from simple opinions or self-interest. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.”
 - Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: (a) in-class discussion, (b) short writings
5. **Verbalization.** Be able to summarize a philosophical position, without notes, using your own words. Be able to criticize a position this way. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.”
 - Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: in-class discussion and presentations
6. **Conversation and Debate.** Be able to discuss issues in a focused and informed way with others in the class. This will involve listening closely to their points, then responding in a way that moves the discussion ahead. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.”
 - Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: in-class discussion and occasional group projects.

CANVAS/WEBSITE:

Getting Started with Canvas: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/office-of-information-technology/software/how-do-i-use/canvas>

IMPORTANT: All readings, assignments, discussion threads will be given out and collected on Canvas.

There are two online sites related to this course. **Familiarize yourself with them right away.** Both will offer you access to information about the course such as study questions, announcements, grades, extra credit assignments.

1. The first and most important one is our course Canvas site: <https://ucdenver.instructure.com>. On this page are LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS. Please make sure you enroll right at the beginning of the class.
2. The second site is my home page at <http://www.davidhildebrand.org>. Here there are a variety of general study tips and resources in philosophy.

ZOOM LINKS FOR SYNCHRONOUS CLASS:

URL: <https://ucdenver.zoom.us/j/95255662677?pwd=aTc2eUFkODk5WERGOWFzQmNwaXBKQT09>

Meeting ID: 952 5566 2677

Passcode: 209341

Getting Started with Zoom:

<https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/office-of-information-technology/software/how-do-i-use/zoom>

and

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697>

OFFICE HOURS WITH ZOOM LINK:

HOURS: Thursdays 11-Noon and Every Tuesday 12:30 - 1:45 p.m. that we don't have anything synchronous for class.

ZOOM: Register once (for the semester) in advance for this meeting: <https://ucdenver.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJIsdeCvrjMqHdzugWqwmlxsiMFQzxoPV4U>

PATTERN OF WEEKLY CLASSES:

By SUNDAY NIGHT: Lecture materials (handouts, presentation slides, and/or videos) will be posted on Canvas. It is expected that you will review these before class sessions on Tuesday and Thursday.

TUESDAYS SESSION (typically): **Optional Discussion Synchronous Zoom.**

Details: “**Optional Discussion**” sessions will be synchronous Zoom meetings (12:30-1:45). Typically, they will be on Tuesdays but this may vary. Attendance for this session is *optional*, but anyone who comes regularly will improve their “Participation” grade. What will we do? I will facilitate organized discussions that have a plan but are especially open to your needs. We can discuss the readings, review past exams, talk about what’s coming up, or deepen connections between ideas we find interesting.

THURSDAYS SESSION (typically) **Required Class Synchronous Zoom.**

Details: Attendance for this class is **required** and is a key component of your “Participation” grade for the class. Class will devote time to student’s short papers, will review readings and go over the lecture/presentation materials posted on Sunday.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

ALL TEXTS ARE FREE AND AVAILABLE ON OUR COURSE CANVAS SITE: <https://ucdenver.instructure.com>

Please have your readings with you and open for class.

TIME MANAGEMENT AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT READING/UNDERSTANDING MATERIAL

Minimum Amount of Time You'll Need to Spend on this Class Per Week: Many of us have responsibilities that compete with this class. **To do well in this class, you can expect to spend a minimum 5 hours per week on this course, OUTSIDE of class.**

Extension Policy: If short term, non-emergency illnesses or other contingencies create problems with attending class or completing assignments in a timely manner, students must notify me before class time by email. Extensions will only be granted if I receive notification prior to the class or deadline except in cases of documented emergency.

Readings: It is expected that you have done the readings before we discuss them. As you read, copy out important points and questions you have onto a separate sheet of paper. (These will help you with your short reflection papers.) You may also want to note problem passages (e.g., with a "?" or "Q.") in your text as you read. These are good points for class discussion. **You should come to each class able to discuss the main issues of the reading and you could be asked during class to present the main points to the class.** If I find people are not prepared, I will start giving quizzes to test basic understanding. Your well-prepared participation is crucial for a successful class. Please see the tips section of my website.

Very important: please set aside about 10 minutes shortly before class to look back over (skim-review) the readings and whatever you have written for that day.

Philosophy needs to be re-read. Unlike some fiction, philosophy needs to be read slowly and deliberately. Don't rush through it -- think about issues as they are raised, going back and forth if necessary. And if you're burning out, take a break. You will find that a text can seem quite different the second time through. Thomas Kuhn, a noted philosopher, wrote

When reading the works of an important thinker, look first for the apparent absurdities in the text and ask yourself how a sensible person could have written them. When you find an answer, ...when these passages make sense, then you may find that more central passages, ones you previously thought you understood, have changed their meaning. (from *The Essential Tension*, p. xii.)

Nietzsche wrote,

In the midst of an age of 'work', that is to say, of hurry, of indecent and perspiring haste, which wants to 'get everything done' at once, including every old or new book: -this art [philosophy] does not so easily get anything done, it teaches to read well, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers. (*Dawn*, Preface)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION: 1000 TOTAL POINTS CAN BE ACCUMULATED FOR THIS COURSE

- Participation (attendance, participation) **160** points
- Short writings (8; each is 1-page, maximum) **160** points (20 pts. each)
- Exam 1 **200** points (covering material *up to* first exam) **due on Canvas by 3/01/21**
- Exam 2 **230** points (covering material *after* first exam) **due on Canvas by 3/22/21**
- Exam 3 **250** points (covering material *entire semester*) **due on Canvas by 5/11**

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE (160 points): Active participation is part of the class grade. It includes attendance, making oral or chat contributions to our Zoom sessions on Tuesday and Thursday, and participating on Canvas “discussion threads.” What kind of contributions? Asking pertinent questions, answering questions, making informed observations, presenting short papers in class, and participation in any group work, including breakout rooms on Zoom.

Attendance: Attendance is required at all “required” synchronous Zoom classes. Typically, these will happen on Thursdays, but the syllabus will specify. Two *unexcused* absences over the course of the semester are permitted without penalty. An *excusable* absence is a medical illness or emergency that is completely unavoidable. It is the student's responsibility to talk to me about excusable absences ASAP after the absence. Absences beyond 2 will diminish your overall “Participation” grade.

Visit (zoom or phone) with Dr. Hildebrand **Must be done by February 4th.** This will be an informal 10-15 minute “hello” visit. We will share interests, background, and hopes for the class. It’s a chance for you to tell me what you think may be your greatest challenges or areas of interest in the class so we can figure out, together, how to make the class a success for you.

How to sign up for a visit: Please contact me via Canvas or at david.hildebrand@ucdenver.edu to arrange a time slot.

SHORT WRITINGS (8 total: see course schedule below)

160 points

The purpose of these assignments is to help you clarify your understanding of the readings and to help you think critically about the issues. You will be expected to present them in class. Follow these instructions carefully, please.

What to write on short/critical reaction papers:

- Short papers should be:
 - o one-page, typewritten reactions or questions about some specific issue which you find compelling in the readings.
- Your paper must not simply sum up the reading or repeat points made there. (I.e., no book reports, please.)
 - o State in 1-2 sentences a summary of what the paper is about.
 - o Then, raise a question or discuss some original insight. E.g.,
 - Focus on a claim or argument made; is it convincing or not? Give some reasons which test its strength.
 - Consider an interesting concept/idea in the readings and relate it to an experience you have had; how does the concept illuminate your experience?
 - Take an idea/concept in the readings and then see how it might be extended -- trace out further implications of that idea, either in more theoretical or practical ways.

See my davidhildebrand.org website link called: "Writing short, critical papers" for further hints about how to write a good paper.

When to write short papers:

- **Due Date/Time:** It would be *best* if you turn in your short paper by **Tuesdays at 12:30 pm** and **no later than Thursday at 12:30 p.m.**
- **No short papers will be accepted after Thursday at 12:30 p.m. on on the they are due.**
- Only papers written on a reading or topic that will be discussed in the class immediately coming up are acceptable.
- **Please note: you MUST come to the class where we discuss the papers for your paper to be accepted.**

Grading on short papers

- There are 12 opportunities to do short papers. **You must do 8.** If you fewer than 8, each missing paper will get a zero. If you do more than 8, no extra points can be earned, but I will read them!
 - o Very few comments will be put on short papers, but if they are not satisfactory, I will explain how to improve them.
- There are three possible grades.
 - o S-satisfactory (full credit or 20 points),
 - o U-unsatisfactory (half credit or 10 points), or
 - o zero (0) if nothing (or next to nothing) is turned in on time.
- **TWO MAKE-UPS:** If you get a Unsatisfactory on up to two papers, you may revise and resubmit them. Use the rubric below and the comments on the paper as a guide to what needs improvement or see me. If the revised version is satisfactory, the old grade will be dropped in favor of the revised paper's grade.

Grading Rubric for Short Papers

A **Satisfactory** paper deserving will do at least the following:

Content/Ideas: The paper will raise and answer a question or offer a commentary on the reading. It must not be vague or confusing. It will likely include examples, though not necessarily.

Thesis/Argument: As mentioned below, the paper will offer an early, summary glimpse about the paper's topic and objectives.

Organization: Even though the paper is short, it should not ramble. It should have a beginning, middle, and end, and paragraphs should be in a clear sequence, leading one to another.

Grammar, Syntax, & Mechanics: Papers should not contain misspellings and grammar need not be perfect but it must not get in the way of the points being made. Papers which cannot be understood or are filled with spelling, grammar, and other mechanical errors will not be passed.

EXAMS (3 exams, total; due dates: 2/22/21, 3/15/21, 5/11)

There are 3 Exams. Format is likely to be a mixture of short answers, multiple choice, and essay. Material on exams can include required readings and anything (lecture, film, assignment) done in class.

Warning: NO MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN WITHOUT EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND ARRANGEMENTS MADE PRIOR TO THE EXAM. A ZERO WILL BE GIVEN FOR ANY MISSED EXAM NOT ARRANGED FOR IN ADVANCE. "Extenuating circumstances" include severe medical problems; talk to me about which other circumstances would count as "excusable."

GRADE DISSEMINATION AND SCALE: Papers and exams will be returned in class. As much as possible, I will update grades on Canvas, but please keep track of your grades, too. Final grades will be available on Canvas through UCD Access as soon as they're ready. **SCALE:** I use the plus/minus system. There are 1000 possible points for this class. An "A" for the course will be a body of work achieving at or above 930 points; an "A-" will be 900-929 points; a "B+" is 870-899 points, etc. Values for those letters, as well as the policies regarding other grades such as *Incomplete*, are available in the CU Academic Policies and Regulations section of the handbook. I have set out my standards of what a grade means on my FAQ section of my website.

COURSE POLICIES

Plagiarism/ Academic Dishonesty Plagiarism is a form of stealing. It occurs when an author uses the words or ideas of others as if they were the author's own original thought. (It may include word-for-word copying, interspersing one's own words with another's, paraphrasing, inventing or counterfeiting sources, submitting another's work as one's own, neglecting quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged.) Plagiarism is often unintentional. It can be avoided by always acknowledging one's debt to others by citing the exact source of a quotation or paraphrase. Since plagiarism is such a serious violation of academic honesty, the PENALTY for it will be an AUTOMATIC "F" FOR THIS COURSE.

Academic dishonesty is the intentional disregard of course or university rules. This may include (but is not limited to) collaborating with others when rules forbid (such as on exams) or using sources/experts not permitted by an assignment. The CU handbook has a more complete description of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Anyone caught violating the rules of an exam or an assignment can expect a failing grade for the assignment and possibly the course as well.

Access, Disability, Communication: The University of Colorado Denver is committed to providing reasonable accommodation and access to programs and services to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 177 Arts Building, phone (303) 315-3510, fax (303) 315-3515. I will be happy to provide approved accommodations, once you provide me with a copy of DRS's letter. [DRS requires students to provide current and adequate documentation of their disabilities. Once a student has registered with DRS, DRS will review the documentation and assess the student's request for academic accommodations in light of the documentation. DRS will then provide the student with a letter indicating which academic accommodations have been approved.]

Students called for military duty: If you are a student in the military with the potential of being called to military service and /or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact your school/college Associate Dean or Advising Office immediately.

Course Communication: In addition to announcements made and written handouts distributed in class, I may need to contact you between classes, which I'll do through individual and group email messages. **One of the requirements for this course is that you maintain an email address, check it regularly for messages, be sure it is working, and let me know if you change your email**

address. You are responsible for any messages, including assignments and schedule changes, I send you via email. You also may contact me via email, in addition to seeing me during office hours or calling me.

Civility and Technology: Students who are speaking deserve your attention and respect as much as I do. Listen to one another. Adherence to the Student Conduct Code is expected.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture, etc. I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official records, please let me know.
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to talk with me. I want to be a resource for you. Remember that you can also submit anonymous feedback (which will lead to me making a general announcement to the class, if necessary to address your concerns). If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, is an excellent resource.
- I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, including by me, please talk to me about it. (Again, anonymous feedback is always an option).

Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious or other cultural events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The necessary campus response to the pandemic emergency has impacted our entire campus community. We recognize that faculty, staff and students may be experiencing disruptions and challenges as temporary shifts in the ways we teach, learn, work and live have occurred.

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, traumas, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. **If you or someone you know is struggling, you can find supportive campus and community resources at the Health Center at Auraria or the CU Denver Counseling Center. On weekends, holidays or after-hours you can contact the 24/7 Mental Health Crisis and Victim Assistance Line at 303-615-9999 or text Talk to 38255.**

CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS

Zoom link : <https://ucdenver.zoom.us/j/91457126668>

Hours Th 11-12 or by appointment.

E-mail: david.hildebrand@ucdenver.edu **Website:** <http://davidhildebrand.org>

Purpose: I *strongly* encourage you to participate by dropping by during office hours. We can talk about the class readings and lectures, exams and papers, your progress, or just philosophy in general. Note: If you are a student with a disability, I will make myself available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations. Before accommodations will be made, you may be required to provide documentation. **Students with disabilities** will be accommodated. Students with disabilities are required to register

disabilities with the UCD Disability Services Office, and are responsible for requesting reasonable accommodations at the beginning of the term.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL COURSE REQUIREMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR.

COURSE SCHEDULE: READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, FOCAL QUESTIONS

Date	Day	Required Class or Optional Discussion	Assignments Due	Readings/Films (read <i>before</i> class)	Class Theme	Key issues & focal questions
1/19	Tu	Required Class		none	Class Introductions	Mapping the course: what is involved in asking and answering the question, What is the meaning of life? What does it mean to raise the question, “What is the meaning of life?” How does philosophy raise such questions? From where does it get the questions and what can philosophy do with such questions? Is a meaningful life a pleasurable one? A self interested one? What is the relation between self interest and fulfillment or meaningfulness in life?

1/21	Th	Required Class		<p>3 short videos</p> <p>1. Debouvoir 5 min https://youtu.be/Ws2Y2cWme8c</p> <p>2. Camus: https://youtu.be/vPtzpjC7TF4</p> <p>3. Ollie on Philosophy Tube 9 minutes https://youtu.be/DV_nwUq6uQI</p>	<p>In this class, we will watch 3 short videos on the meaning of life and then discuss each one.</p> <p>If you want to watch them in advance, here they are:</p>	<p>Why do we go to college?</p> <p>How does learning affect our life's meaning?</p> <p>Why does life seem absurd or meaningless sometimes?</p> <p>What does philosophy have to contribute to life or meaning in life?</p>
PART 1 APPROACHING THE QUESTION AND A COUPLE BIG GUESSES ABOUT THE MEANING OF LIFE						
1/26	Tu	Optional Discussion		<p>On the Meaning of Life by Schlick</p>	<p>Why purposes and goals can't make life meaningful. Only play can give meaning to life.</p>	<p>Is play the key to meaning in life? Schlick argues that meaning in life is thought to come from our goals and purposes; but these don't lead to meaning. We should embrace the enthusiasm, creativity, and play we see in youth.</p>
1/28	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	

2/2	Tu	Optional Discussion		"The Vanity and Suffering of Life" by Schopenhauer	Our destiny is suffering, either through boredom or pleasure. We should come to terms with this as the meaning of life.	Whether one's goal is pleasure or happiness, the result is always the same—suffering, according to Schopenhauer. There might be ways to escape suffering, but they're difficult, Schopenhauer says. What are they?
2/4	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	
PART 2 SOCRATES: THE VALUE OF ONE'S LIFE DEPENDS ON LIVING VIRTUOUSLY						
2/9	Tu	Optional Discussion		Plato and Socrates: Read: "Lavine Socrates to Sartre--on Plato and Socrates.pdf" Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i>	Historical background: Greece, Socrates, Main lecture: Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i>	Who were Plato and Socrates? In what context were they writing? How did their contributions set up many of the most important philosophical questions and traditions for the next 2500 years? What questions did they ask which are still important to you?
2/11	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i>	Discussion, short papers, review	Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i> dialogue seeks to show us how two people attempt to define a virtue (the virtue of piety). How does this attempt at definition lead to larger questions about ethics? What does it reveal about <i>Euthyphro</i> 's character? Notice that a dialogue can terminate with no "answers" and yet change participants by making them more prepared for further dialogue.

2/16	Tu	Optional Discussion		Plato's <i>Apology</i>	Philosophy-in-action: seeking the definition of a virtue. Socrates' mission as a philosopher and the anger this provokes.	Philosophy as tool for criticizing concepts. The search for knowledge is different than persuasion. Also: Philosophy as tool for changing society; the anger provoked by asking deep questions.
2/18	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	
2/23	Tu	Optional Discussion		Plato's <i>Crito</i>	Character as dependent upon ethical consistency.	Crito appeals to Socrates to escape, but Socrates refuses on moral grounds. Why is escape the wrong choice, according to Socrates? What does he reveal to be just as important (in this choice) beyond his single, individual life? Why is Socrates willing to obey the laws of the state?
2/25	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	Review for First Exam
3/1 EXAM 1 DUE BY MONDAY 3/01/21 by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas						
PART 3 PLEASURE, HAPPINESS AND CONSUMER "BLISS"						

3/2	Tu	Optional Discussion		<p>(a) “The Experience Machine” by Nozick and</p> <p>(b) “Pleasure and Desire,” an excerpt from Plato's Gorgias</p> <p>(c) Short video, Alan Watts on freedom: https://youtu.be/RsdoJ9x8IBs</p>	<p>What is pleasure? Is it the same as happiness? Socrates' warning that the goal of pleasure cannot lead to true fulfillment.</p>	<p>Would you live in a machine which guaranteed you pleasure rather than in the actual world? A thought experiment. Plus, in our excerpt from Plato's <i>Gorgias</i> dialogue, we see Callicles claiming that there's no more to happiness than pleasure. What is Socrates' response to this vision of happiness? How does Socrates argue that pleasure is <i>not</i> equivalent to good?</p>
3/4	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	Film clips?
3/9	Tu	Required Class (special day)		<p>(a) Study guide <i>Advertising and the End of the World</i> (in class)</p> <p>(b) Hildebrand Lecture on Advertising</p>	<p>FILM: <i>Advertising and the End of the World</i> (watch before class)</p> <p>Discussion, short papers, review</p>	<p>Many in our culture would like to define “happiness” for us. Advertising is an institution designed to do this. Often, we hear stories told by advertising. How do the patterns of advertising communicate what happiness is? How are those things we take to be beyond our individual pleasure (society, morality) affected by the construction of reality that advertising creates? Is this reality-portrait of advertising ethical?</p>

3/11	Th	Reading Day: No class.		Film clips: Zeynep Tufekci TED talk, https:// www.youtube.com/ watch? v=iFTWM7HV2U I Douglas Rushkoff: https:// www.youtube.com/ watch? v=wa48ky3TXhE	How does social media change our emotions and actions? How are some people driven to extremes and how is money and power involved in this process?	
3/16	Tu	Optional Discussion		Kilbourne on women and advertising https:// ucdenver.kanopy. com/video/killing- us-softly?pos=1		
3/18	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	
3/22			EXAM 2 DUE BY MONDAY 3/22/21 by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas	PART 4	Existential Crisis: Is Faith the Answer -- or Not?	

PART 4 EXISTENTIAL CRISIS: IS FAITH THE ANSWER -- OR NOT?

3/23	Tu	Optional Discussion		"Pensées" by Pascal	Why God is the best gamble to escape the problem of insignificance in life.	When one considers how great the universe is, our significance seems small, puny, meaningless. How to cope? For Pascal, we can face our smallness with at least a wager on the existence of God. What are the benefits and costs of believing in God for these reasons?
3/25	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	
3/30	Tu	Optional Discussion		FILM: <i>The Seventh Seal</i> by Ingmar Bergman HERE: https://ucdenver.kanopy.com/video/seventh-seal	Consider the different characters' views of God and death. For some, there is solace in God, but not for all. What questions does the film raise for you about the meaning of these issues? Can one have true faith if they only have it out of fear? Can one avoid fear of death if one does not believe in God?	Plot: "A Knight and his squire are home from the crusades. Black Death is sweeping their country. As they approach home, Death appears to the knight and tells him it is his time. The knight challenges Death to a chess game for his life. The Knight and Death play as the cultural turmoil envelopes the people around them as they try, in different ways, to deal with the upheaval the plague has caused." John Vogel IMDB
4/1	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	

4/6	Tu	Optional Discussion		"The Purpose of Man's Existence" by Baier	An argument that religion confuses people about the role that "purpose" plays in life, and the damage this can do to the pursuit of morality.	Does religion make people more or less moral? Baier, like Stace, questions the need for a grand, religious backdrop to give meaning to our lives. He says that the problem of living meaningfully without God is just based on a confusion of two different senses of "purpose." We may have no ultimate purposes but we still have purposes. Besides confusing us, he goes on, religion also induces people to live in a way too child-like to be truly moral.
4/8	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	
4/13	Tu	Optional Discussion		"Man Against Darkness" by Stace	One theory about why some people stop believing in a god. The role science plays in this phenomenon.	The crisis in human culture when scientific and technological ways of thinking undermine the magic and mystery of the religious vision. What fills the void left by religion? How successfully?
4/15	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	
4/20	Tu			Spring Break		
4/22	Th			Spring Break		
4/27	Tu	Optional Discussion		"What I Believe" by John Dewey	What if the nature of spiritual belief could shift from an otherworldly focus to <i>this</i> world--to human experience?	Dewey proposes that while religious feeling is genuinely felt by people, it needs to be directed to experience and moral needs here on earth rather than toward an afterlife.
4/29	Th	Required Class	Short Paper	same as last class	Discussion, short papers, review	
5/4	Tu	Optional Discussion		TBD		

5/6	Th	Required Class		Class Wrap UP	Review and final discussions before Final Exam	
5/11	Tu		THIRD EXAM Due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday May 11th to Canvas			

SYLLABUS SCHEDULE IN TEXT ONLY FORMAT

1/19 Tu **Required Class**

Class Introductions

Mapping the course: what is involved in asking and answering the question, What is the meaning of life? What does it mean to raise the question, “What is the meaning of life?” How does philosophy raise such questions? From where does it get the questions and what can philosophy do with such questions? Is a meaningful life a pleasurable one? A self interested one? What is the relation between self interest and fulfillment or meaningfulness in life?

1/21 Th **Required Class 3 short videos**

1. Debouvoir 5 min <https://youtu.be/Ws2Y2cWme8c>

2. Camus: <https://youtu.be/vPtzpjC7TF4>

3. Ollie on Philosophy Tube 9 minutes https://youtu.be/DV_nwUq6uQI In this class, we will watch 3 short videos on the meaning of life and then discuss each one.

Why do we go to college?

How does learning affect our life’s meaning?

Why does life seem absurd or meaningless sometimes?

What does philosophy have to contribute to life or meaning in life?

PART 1 Approaching the Question and a couple Big Guesses about the Meaning of Life

1/26 Tu **Optional Discussion; READING(s):** On the Meaning of Life by Schlick

Why purposes and goals can't make life meaningful. Only play can give meaning to life. Is play the key to meaning in life? Schlick argues that meaning in life is thought to come from our goals and purposes; but these don't lead to meaning. We should embrace the enthusiasm, creativity, and

play we see in youth.

1/28 **Th Required Class**

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

2/2 **Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s):** "The Vanity and Suffering of Life" by **Schopenhauer**

Our destiny is suffering, either through boredom or pleasure. We should come to terms with this as the meaning of life. Whether one's goal is pleasure or happiness, the result is always the same—suffering, according to Schopenhauer. There might be ways to escape suffering, but they're difficult, Schopenhauer says. What are they?

2/4 **Th Required Class**

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

PART 2 Socrates: The Value of One's Life Depends on Living Virtuously

2/9 **Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s):** Plato and Socrates: "**Lavine** Socrates to Sartre--on Plato and Socrates.pdf" and Plato's *Euthyphro*

Main lecture: Who were Plato and Socrates? In what context were they writing? How did their contributions set up many of the most important philosophical questions and traditions for the next 2500 years? What questions did they ask which are still important to you? Plato's *Euthyphro* dialogue seeks to show us how two people attempt to define a virtue (the virtue of piety). How does this attempt at definition lead to larger questions about ethics? What does it reveal about *Euthyphro's* character? Notice that a dialogue can terminate with no "answers" and yet change participants by making them more prepared for further dialogue.

2/11 **Th Required Class**

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

2/16 **Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s):** **Plato's *Apology***

Philosophy-in-action: seeking the definition of a virtue. Socrates' mission as a philosopher and the anger this provokes. Philosophy as tool for criticizing concepts. The search for knowledge is different than persuasion. Also: Philosophy as tool for changing society; the anger provoked by asking deep questions.

2/18 **Th Required Class**

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

2/23 **Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s): Plato's Crito** Character as dependent upon ethical consistency.

Crito appeals to Socrates to escape, but Socrates refuses on moral grounds. Why is escape the wrong choice, according to Socrates? What does he reveal to be just as important (in this choice) beyond his single, individual life? Why is Socrates willing to obey the laws of the state?

2/25 **Th Required Class**

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review Review for First Exam

3/1 **EXAM 1 DUE BY MONDAY 3/01/21 by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas PART 3 Pleasure, Happiness and Consumer "Bliss"**

3/2 **Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s):** (a) "The Experience Machine" by **Nozick** and

(b) "Pleasure and Desire," an excerpt from Plato's *Gorgias*

(c) Short video, Alan Watts on freedom: <https://youtu.be/RsdoJ9x8IBs> What is pleasure? Is it the same as happiness? Socrates' warning that the goal of pleasure cannot lead to true fulfillment.

Would you live in a machine which guaranteed you pleasure rather than in the actual world? A thought experiment. Plus, in our excerpt from Plato's *Gorgias* dialogue, we see Callicles claiming that there's no more to happiness than pleasure. What is Socrates' response to this vision of happiness?

How does Socrates argue that pleasure is *not* equivalent to good?

3/4 **Th Required Class**

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review Film clips?

3/9 **Tu Required Class**

(special day) (a) **Study guide Advertising and the End of the World** (in class); (b) **Hildebrand** Lecture on Advertising

Many in our culture would like to define "happiness" for us. Advertising is an institution designed to do this.

Often, we hear stories told by advertising. How do the patterns of advertising communicate what happiness is? How are those things we take to be beyond our individual pleasure (society, morality) affected by the construction of reality that advertising creates? Is this reality-portrait of advertising ethical?

FILM: *Advertising and the End of the World* (watch before class)

Discussion, short papers, review

3/11 **Th Reading Day: No class.**

Assigned: Film clips:

Zeynep Tufekci TED talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFTWM7HV2UI>

Douglas Rushkoff: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wa48ky3TXhE>

QUESTION: How does social media change our emotions and actions? How are some people driven to extremes and how is money and power involved in this process?

3/16 **Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s): Kilbourne on women and advertising** <https://ucdenver.kanopy.com/video/killing-us-softly?pos=1>

3/18 **Th Required Class**

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

3/22 **EXAM 2 DUE BY MONDAY 3/22/21 by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas**

PART 4 Existential Crisis: Is Faith the Answer -- or Not?

3/23 **Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s): "Pensées" by Pascal**

Why God is the best gamble to escape the problem of insignificance in life. When one considers how great the universe is, our significance seems small, puny, meaningless. How to cope? For Pascal, we can face our smallness with at least a wager on the existence of God. What are the benefits and costs of believing in God for these reasons?

3/25 **Th Required Class**

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

3/30 **Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s): FILM: *The Seventh Seal* by Ingmar Bergman**

HERE: <https://ucdenver.kanopy.com/video/seventh-seal>

Consider the different characters' views of God and death. For some, there is solace in God, but not for all. What questions does the film raise for you about the meaning of these issues? Can one have true faith if they only have it out of fear? Can one avoid fear of death if one does not believe in God? Plot: "A Knight and his squire are home from the crusades. Black Death is sweeping their country. As they approach home, Death appears to

the knight and tells him it is his time. The knight challenges Death to a chess game for his life. The Knight and Death play as the cultural turmoil envelopes the people around them as they try, in different ways, to deal with the upheaval the plague has caused.” John Vogel IMDB

4/1 Th Required Class

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

4/6 Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s):

"The Purpose of Man's Existence" by **Baier**

An argument that religion confuses people about the role that “purpose” plays in life, and the damage this can do to the pursuit of morality. Does religion make people more or less moral? Baier, like Stace, questions the need for a grand, religious backdrop to give meaning to our lives. He says that the problem of living meaningfully without God is just based on a confusion of two different senses of "purpose." We may have no ultimate purposes but we still have purposes. Besides confusing us, he goes on, religion also induces people to live in a way too child-like to be truly moral.

4/8 Th Required Class Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

4/13 Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s):

"Man Against Darkness" by **Stace** One theory about why some people stop believing in a god. The role science plays in this phenomenon. The crisis in human culture when scientific and technological ways of thinking undermine the magic and mystery of the religious vision. What fills the void left by religion? How successfully?

4/15 Th Required Class

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

4/20 Tu Spring Break

4/22 Th Spring Break

4/27 Tu Optional Discussion; READING(s): "What I Believe" by John **Dewey** What if the nature of spiritual belief could shift from an otherworldly focus to *this* world--to human experience? Dewey proposes that while religious feeling is genuinely felt by people, it needs to be directed to experience and moral needs here on earth rather than toward an afterlife.

4/29 Th Required Class

Due: Short Paper;

Reading: same as last class.

Class agenda: Discussion, short papers, review

5/4 Tu **Optional Discussion; READING(s):** TBD

5/6 Th **Required Class** Class Wrap UP Review and final discussions before Final Exam

5/11 Tu **THIRD EXAM** Due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday May 11th to Canvas

Reading List

On the Meaning of Life by Schlick

"The Vanity and Suffering of Life" by Schopenhauer

“Lavine Socrates to Sartre--on Plato and Socrates.pdf”

Plato’s Euthyphro

Plato’s Apology

Plato’s Crito

“The Experience Machine” by Nozick

“Pleasure and Desire,” an excerpt from Plato's *Gorgias*

Study guide Advertising and the End of the World (in class)

Hildebrand Lecture on Advertising

Study guide on. Kilbourne on women and advertising FILM

"Pensées" by Pascal

"Man Against Darkness" by Stace

"The Purpose of Man's Existence" by Baier

"What I Believe" by John Dewey

TBD

Class Wrap UP