

Term Information

Effective Term Summer 2021
Previous Value Autumn 2015

Course Change Information

What change is being proposed? (If more than one, what changes are being proposed?)

To add the option of teaching this course online.

What is the rationale for the proposed change(s)?

Our department wants to regularly offer a DL version of this class.

What are the programmatic implications of the proposed change(s)?

(e.g. program requirements to be added or removed, changes to be made in available resources, effect on other programs that use the course)?

We anticipate no programmatic implications as a result of this change.

Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? No

Is this a request to withdraw the course? No

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	Philosophy
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	Philosophy - D0575
College/Academic Group	Arts and Sciences
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	2465
Course Title	Death and the Meaning of Life
Transcript Abbreviation	Death Meaning Life
Course Description	Explore the question of whether there is a relation between mortality and a meaningful life.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	Yes
Is any section of the course offered	100% at a distance
<i>Previous Value</i>	<i>No</i>
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	No
Course Components	Lecture, Recitation
Grade Roster Component	Recitation
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never
Campus of Offering	Columbus

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites

Exclusions

Electronically Enforced No

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 38.0101
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore, Junior

Requirement/Elective Designation

General Education course:
Literature

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- The primary purpose of the course is to provide students with basic philosophical tools and to help them employ these tools in exploring complex philosophical questions concerning death and the meaning of life.

Content Topic List

- The meaning of life
- Meaning or purpose in life
- The good life
- Death
- Immortality
- Absurdism

Sought Concurrence

No

Attachments

- PHILOS 2465 ASC Tech Checklist.docx: ASC checklist
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Brown, Michelle E.)
- PHILOS 2465 GE assessment plan.docx
(GEC Course Assessment Plan. Owner: Brown, Michelle E.)
- PHILOS 2465 in-person syllabus.pdf: syllabus-in person
(Syllabus. Owner: Brown, Michelle E.)
- PHILOS 2465 DL syllabus.docx: syllabus-DL
(Syllabus. Owner: Brown, Michelle E.)
- Updated PHILOS 2465 DL syllabus.docx: Updated DL syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: Brown, Michelle E.)

COURSE CHANGE REQUEST
2465 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette
Chantal
02/10/2021

Comments

- We have resubmitted the same GE assessment plan that was approved for the in-person version because we do not think GE assessment will need to be done any differently for the DL version of the class.

I have uploaded the updated DL syllabus with the revisions requests. *(by Brown, Michelle E. on 02/09/2021 10:39 AM)*

- See 1-28-21 email to E. Lin and L. Shabel *(by Oldroyd, Shelby Quinn on 01/28/2021 01:25 PM)*

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Brown, Michelle E.	11/24/2020 03:53 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Lin, Eden	11/24/2020 03:58 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Haddad, Deborah Moore	11/24/2020 04:22 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Oldroyd, Shelby Quinn	01/28/2021 01:25 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Brown, Michelle E.	02/09/2021 10:39 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Lin, Eden	02/09/2021 10:49 AM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	02/10/2021 07:55 AM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Hilty, Michael Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Hanlin, Deborah Kay Oldroyd, Shelby Quinn	02/10/2021 07:55 AM	ASCCAO Approval

Death and the Meaning of Life Syllabus

Philosophy 2465 Spring 2021

Course Information

- **Course times and location:** Wednesdays and Fridays, 11:10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in CarmenZoom, with recordings made available for those who cannot attend synchronously
- **Credit hours:** 3
- **Mode of delivery:** Distance Learning

Instructor

- **Name:** Steven Brown
- **Email:** brown.2703@osu.edu
- **Office location:** 337F University Hall
- **Office hours:** By appointment on CarmenZoom
- **Preferred means of communication:**
 - My preferred method of communication for questions is **email**.
 - My class-wide communications will be sent through the Announcements tool in CarmenCanvas. Please check your [notification preferences](https://go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) (go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) to be sure you receive these messages.

Teaching Assistant

- **Name:** TBA
- **Email:** TBA
- **Recitation times:** This class does not have recitations

Course Prerequisites

None



Course Description

"Philosophy is preparation for death" — Socrates

This class will explore a wide variety of philosophical claims that have been made about the significance of death, the meaning of life, and how those interact with each other. We'll begin with a historical survey of classic philosophers from across history and the globe, and then transition to a more topically driven discussion in the second half of the semester. Along the way we will consider whether or not death is bad for us, if immortality would be a good thing, how the existence of God and the possibility of an afterlife might be relevant, if meaning is completely subjective or has objective components, and how the varied components of a life fit together in constituting meaning.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should successfully be able to:

- Articulate a variety of views about death and the meaning of life representing a broad cross-section of historical and cultural contexts
- Engage in thoughtful and respectful discussions with peers who disagree about difficult and important issues

General Education Category: Literature

This course is part of the "Literature" General Education category.

Goals:

Students evaluate significant texts in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; and critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Students analyze, interpret, and critique significant literary works.
- Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students appraise and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures.

This course fulfills these learning outcomes through critical reading and in class discussion of philosophical and literary texts from Ancient Greece, Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Early and Medieval Christianity, Existentialism, and Analytic Philosophy.

How This Online Course Works

Mode of delivery: This course is 100% online. Live CarmenZoom lectures with real time question/answer and discussion are available, but not required. If you cannot attend the live sessions, recordings are made available on CarmenCanvas for you to view or review as necessary to facilitate mastery of course material.

Notes for the entire class are made available in real time as lectures occur and are available at any point after that.

Quizzes, exams, and papers are all conducted on CarmenCanvas outside of regular class time and students have ample time to complete them according to their individual scheduling needs. Deadlines for each assignment will be announced during lecture and via CarmenCanvas announcements.

Credit hours and work expectations: This is a 3 credit-hour course. According to [Ohio State bylaws on instruction](http://go.osu.edu/credithours) (go.osu.edu/credithours), students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of C average.

Attendance and participation requirements: Research shows regular participation is one of the highest predictors of success. With that in mind, I have the following expectations for everyone's participation:

- **Attending/Viewing Lectures: required**
You are expected either to attend live CarmenZoom lectures, or watch the recordings of those lectures every week. You are highly encouraged to attend the live lectures if at all possible. Extra credit points will be given to those who regularly attend and participate in classroom discussion.
- **Personal Meetings/Office Hours: optional**
You are not required to meet with me or the graders, but we are available to you over email or in CarmenZoom meetings by appointment. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us as necessary.

Course Materials, Fees and Technologies

Required Materials and/or Technologies

- All readings for the class are made available on Carmen in PDF, EPUB, and MOBI formats to accommodate as many reading devices as possible.

Required Equipment

- **Computer:** current Mac (MacOS) or PC (Windows 10) with high-speed internet connection
- **Webcam:** built-in or external webcam, fully installed and tested
- **Microphone:** built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone
- **Other:** a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) to use for BuckeyePass authentication

If you do not have access to the technology you need to succeed in this class, review options for technology and internet access at go.osu.edu/student-tech-access.

Required Software

Microsoft Office 365: All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365. Visit the [installing Office 365](https://go.osu.edu/office365help) (go.osu.edu/office365help) help article for full instructions.

CarmenCanvas Access

You will need to use [BuckeyePass](https://buckeyepass.osu.edu) (buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you do each of the following:

- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the [BuckeyePass - Adding a Device](https://go.osu.edu/add-device) (go.osu.edu/add-device) help article for step-by-step instructions.
- Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click **Enter a Passcode** and then click the **Text me new codes** button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.
- [Install the Duo Mobile application](https://go.osu.edu/install-duo) (go.osu.edu/install-duo) on all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service.

If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at [614-688-4357 \(HELP\)](tel:614-688-4357) and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

Technology Skills Needed for This Course

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- [Navigating CarmenCanvas](https://go.osu.edu/canvasstudent) (go.osu.edu/canvasstudent)
- [CarmenZoom virtual meetings](https://go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings) (go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings)
- [Recording a slide presentation with audio narration and recording, editing and uploading video](https://go.osu.edu/video-assignment-guide) (go.osu.edu/video-assignment-guide)

Technology Support

For help with your password, university email, CarmenCanvas, or any other technology issues, questions or requests, contact the IT Service Desk, which offers 24-hour support, seven days a week.

- **Self Service and Chat:** go.osu.edu/it
- **Phone:** [614-688-4357 \(HELP\)](tel:614-688-4357)
- **Email:** servicedesk@osu.edu

Grading and Faculty Response

How Your Grade is Calculated

Assignment Category	Points
5 Short Quizzes	2 each (10 total)
2 Exams	25 each (50 total)
2 Essays	20 each (40 total)
Participation/Attendance Extra Credit	Up to 2

See [Course Schedule](#) for due dates.

Descriptions of Major Course Assignments

Short Quizzes

Description: Approximately every other week, there will be a 5-question, multiple-choice quiz made available on CarmenCanvas. It will be over all of the material covered in class since the previous quiz. Your top 5 quiz grades will count toward your class average.

Exams

Description: In the middle and at the end of the semester we will have a multiple-choice and short answer exam. We will distribute a study guide prior to the exam with key concepts that should be studied in preparation for these exams.

Essays

Description: For each of these essays, you will be invited to defend some piece of material that we considered in class. You need to clearly present the arguments you are assessing, show that you understand how people might object to them, and explain how you think the view can best respond to those objections. I will distribute a list of prompts at least two weeks before these are due.

Participation/Attendance Extra Credit



Description: We will be keeping track of attendance and participation in the Zoom lecture. Those who are exceptionally good attenders and/or contribute most to classroom discussion will be given a point or two of extra credit at the end of the semester.

Academic Integrity for Distance Learning

Because this class is being delivered entirely online, you are allowed to consult class notes and readings during quizzes and exams. You are not allowed to work together with other students or perform internet searches when taking quizzes or exams.

Your written assignments, including short-answer exams and essays, should be your own original work and should not be done in collaboration with other students. When writing your essays, you do not need to engage in research beyond the readings we discuss in class. If you do choose to quote a passage, or refer to external sources, you should clearly cite the ideas and words of your sources. I do not require any particular formatting for citations, as long as it is clear what your sources are. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.

Your essays will be processed by Turnitin to check for plagiarism, so do make sure to provide answers using your own words.

Late Assignments

Please refer to CarmenCanvas for due dates. Due dates are set to help you stay on pace and to allow timely feedback that will help you complete subsequent assignments. While we can accommodate some scheduling flexibility in these difficult times, so feel free to ask if your situation requires it. However, once we have gone over an assignment in class, there is no easy way for you to make it up, and special arrangements will only be made in extreme circumstances.

Instructor Feedback and Response Time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. Remember that you can call [614-688-4357 \(HELP\)](tel:614-688-4357) at any time if you have a technical problem.

- **Preferred contact method:** If you have a question, please contact me first through my Ohio State email address. I will generally be able reply to emails within **1 business day**.
- **Class announcements:** I will send all important class-wide messages through the Announcements tool in CarmenCanvas. Please check [your notification preferences](https://go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) (go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) to ensure you receive these messages.

- **Grading and feedback:** For assignments submitted before the due date, I will try to provide feedback and grades within **seven to ten days**. Assignments submitted after the due date may have reduced feedback, and grades may take longer to be posted.

Grading Scale

93–100: A
90–92.9: A-
87–89.9: B+
83–86.9: B
80–82.9: B-
77–79.9: C+
73–76.9: C
70–72.9: C-
67–69.9: D+
60–66.9: D
Below 60: E

Other Course Policies

Discussion and Communication Guidelines

The topics of this class can be tremendously delicate and personal. The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Discussing Death:** I am acutely aware of the fact that this class attracts people experiencing existential crisis, and has the potential to induce such crises in people who might not otherwise have experienced them. As such, we must always be aware that our colleagues might be suffering in ways we do not understand. If at any point you or one of your colleagues find yourselves contemplating suicide or self-harm, please seek help as soon as possible. I am not a mental health professional, but I will be happy to help you find appropriate resources as necessary. Relatedly, please see the section entitled “Your Mental Health” on this syllabus.
- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across well, especially online. I will provide specific guidance for discussions on controversial or personal topics as the need arises.
- **Backing up your work:** Never write long form content in CarmenCanvas if you can avoid it. Consider composing answers in a word processor, where you can save your work, and then copy it into the CarmenCanvas when you are done.
- **Synchronous sessions:** During our Zoom sessions I ask you to use your real name and a clear photo of your face in your Carmen profile. During our full-group lecture time, you may turn your camera off if you choose. When in breakout rooms or other small-group discussions, having cameras and mics on as often as possible will help you get the most out of activities. You are always welcome to use the [free, Ohio State-themed virtual backgrounds](https://go.osu.edu/zoom-backgrounds) (go.osu.edu/zoom-backgrounds). Remember that Zoom and the Zoom chat are our classroom space where respectful interactions are expected.

Academic Integrity Policy

See [Descriptions of Major Course Assignments](#) for specific guidelines about collaboration and academic integrity in the context of this online class.

Ohio State's Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the university's [Code of Student Conduct](https://studentconduct.osu.edu) (studentconduct.osu.edu), and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in

the university's *Code of Student Conduct* and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the university's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by university rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the university's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- [Committee on Academic Misconduct](http://go.osu.edu/coam) (go.osu.edu/coam)
- [Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity](http://go.osu.edu/ten-suggestions) (go.osu.edu/ten-suggestions)
- [Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity](http://go.osu.edu/cardinal-rules) (go.osu.edu/cardinal-rules)

Copyright for Instructional Materials

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities,

academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Office of Institutional Equity:

1. Online reporting form at equity.osu.edu,
2. Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605,
3. Or email equity@osu.edu

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Office of Institutional Equity to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

Your Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. No matter where you are engaged in distance learning, The Ohio State University's Student Life Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) is here to support you. If you find yourself feeling isolated, anxious or overwhelmed, [on-demand mental health resources](https://go.osu.edu/ccsondemand) (go.osu.edu/ccsondemand) are available. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at [614- 292-5766](tel:614-292-5766). **24-hour emergency help** is available through the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline website](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) (suicidepreventionlifeline.org) or by calling [1-800-273-8255\(TALK\)](tel:1-800-273-8255). [The Ohio State Wellness app](https://go.osu.edu/wellnessapp) (go.osu.edu/wellnessapp) is also a great resource.

Student Academic Services

Student academic services offered on the OSU main campus:

<http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>.

Student Support Services

Student support services offered on the OSU main campus: <http://ssc.osu.edu>.



Accessibility Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Requesting Accommodations

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with [Student Life Disability Services \(SLDS\)](#). After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services.

Disability Services Contact Information

- Phone: [614-292-3307](tel:614-292-3307)
- Website: slds.osu.edu
- Email: slds@osu.edu
- In person: [Baker Hall 098, 113 W. 12th Avenue](#)

Accessibility of Course Technology

This online course requires use of CarmenCanvas (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations as early as possible.

- [CarmenCanvas accessibility](http://go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility) (go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility)
- Streaming audio and video
- [CarmenZoom accessibility](http://go.osu.edu/zoom-accessibility) (go.osu.edu/zoom-accessibility)

Course Schedule

We will be following a loose schedule to allow for maximum flexibility and freedom for discussion. I reserve the right to alter this schedule for any reason at any time.

Exact due dates for assignments and any schedule changes that occur will be announced on CarmenCanvas. All students are responsible for staying up to date on those announcements.

Week	Topics and Readings	Assignments
1: Jan 11 - 17	Introduction & Plato (Phaedo, Part 1, 15 pgs.)	
2: Jan 18 - 24	Plato, Cont. (Phaedo, Part 2, 16 pgs.)	
3: Jan 25 - 32	Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics, Book 1, 8 pgs.)	Quiz 1
4: Feb 01 - 07	Aristotle, Cont. (Nicomachean Ethics, Book 10, 9 pgs.)	
5: Feb 08 - 14	Epicurus (Letter to Menoeceus, 4 pgs.)	
6: Feb 15 - 21	Hinduism (Katha Upanishad, 23 pgs.)	Quiz 2
7: Feb 22 - 28	Buddhism (The Four Noble Truths, 3 pgs.)	
8: Mar 01 - 07	Daoism & Zen (Selections, 8 pgs.)	Quiz 3
9: Mar 08 - 14	Early Christianity (Sermon on the Mount, 6 pgs.)	Exam 1
10: Mar 15 - 21	Later Christianity (Aquinas and Tolstoy, 12 pgs.)	Essay 1
11: Mar 22 - 28	Existentialism (Sartre, 17 pgs.)	Quiz 4
12: Mar 29 - Apr 04	Is Life Absurd? (Nagle, 12 pgs.)	Quiz 5
13: Apr 05 - 11	Is Death Bad? (Kagan, 20 pgs.)	Quiz 6
14: Apr 12 - 18	Would Immortality be Good? (Rosati, 21 pgs.)	Quiz 7
15: Apr 19 - 25	What is the Meaning of Life? (Wolf, 23 pgs.)	Exam 2, Essay 2

SP20 PHILOS 2465 - Death Meaning Life (32066)

[Jump to Today](#)

Philosophy 2465 - Death and the Meaning of Life

Contact Information & Office Hours

Steven Brown

Instructor

337F University Hall

brown.2703@osu.edu

[\(mailto:brown.2703@osu.edu\)](mailto:brown.2703@osu.edu)

We/Fr 9:15a-10:15a

Chulmin Yoon

Grader

337E University Hall

yoon.386@osu.edu

[\(mailto:yoon.386@osu.edu\)](mailto:yoon.386@osu.edu)

[\(mailto:marsolek.2@osu.edu\)](mailto:marsolek.2@osu.edu)

Tu/Th 11:00a-12:00p

About This Class

"Philosophy is preparation for death" — Socrates

This class will explore a wide variety of philosophical claims that have been made about the significance of death, the meaning of life, and how those interact with each other. We'll begin with a historical survey of classic philosophers from across history and the globe, and then transition to a more topically driven discussion in the second half of the semester. Along the way we will consider whether or not death is bad for us, if immortality would be a good thing, how the existence of God and the possibility of an afterlife might be relevant, if meaning is completely subjective or has objective components, and how the varied components of a life fit together in constituting meaning.

Grades

5 Short Quizzes: 2 points each (10 total)

Approximately every other week, there will be a 5-question, multiple-choice quiz made available on Carmen. It will be over all of the material covered in class since the previous quiz.

2 Large Quizzes: 10 points each (20 total)

In the middle and at the end of the semester there will be a 10-question, multiple-choice quiz made available on Carmen.

2 Short-Answer Exams: 15 points each (30 total)

In the middle and at the end of the semester there will be an in-class, 5 question, short-answer exam. You will be allowed to use a single-sided, handwritten page of notes for each exam. Also, about a week before each exam, I will distribute a list of topics to help you review.

2 Essays: 20 points each (40 total)

For each of these essays, you will be invited to defend some piece of material that we considered in class. You need to clearly present the arguments you are assessing, show that you understand how people might object to them, and explain how you think the view can best respond to those objections. I will distribute a list of prompts at least two weeks before these are due.

Extra Credit: Up to 2 class grade points

I will be keeping track of attendance and participation. Those who are exceptionally good attenders and/or contribute most to classroom discussion will be given a point or two of extra credit at the end of the semester.

- Submit your Daily Attendance
 - Fill this out every day
 - <https://forms.gle/MypYoNMGqaVUWXsgZ> [_ \(https://forms.gle/MypYoNMGqaVUWXsgZ\)](https://forms.gle/MypYoNMGqaVUWXsgZ)
- Explain your Absences
 - Fill this out when you have an excusable absence
 - <https://forms.gle/2YvrH1haHMiaDYTJ6> [_ \(https://forms.gle/2YvrH1haHMiaDYTJ6\)](https://forms.gle/2YvrH1haHMiaDYTJ6)
- Register for the Participation Extra Credit
 - [Upload an easily recognizable picture of yourself](#)

What You Need

- <http://carmen.osu.edu> [_ \(http://carmen.osu.edu\)](http://carmen.osu.edu)
 - All readings will be downloadable on Carmen

Absence Policy

If you need to miss class, [use this form](https://forms.gle/uwy7oXFETLAgrixt6) [_ \(https://forms.gle/uwy7oXFETLAgrixt6\)](https://forms.gle/uwy7oXFETLAgrixt6) to provide a reason for your absence. In most circumstances, this is all you should do.

Please do not email to ask if you missed anything important. Of course you did.

Get notes from a colleague, make sure you are up on the readings, and then see me after class or come to office hours if you have specific questions.

However, **if you need to reschedule an exam**, you must contact me over email before the end of the scheduled exam day.

General Education Curriculum (GEC)

In the GEC, this course is classified under Literature. As such, this course has the following expected learning outcomes:

1. Students analyze, interpret, and critique significant literary works.
2. Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students appraise and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures.

Academic Integrity

I have absolutely no tolerance for cheating in any form. Students who are caught cheating will be given the strongest possible consequences allowed by the university. Students who cheat and are not caught will be haunted by the memory of their misdeeds for the rest of their miserable lives.

Disability Statement

Students needing accommodation due to the impact of a documented disability should contact me privately to discuss their needs. The Office of Disability Services will help you to coordinate reasonable accommodation: (614) 292-3307, 098 Baker Hall, www.ods.osu.edu [_\(http://www.ods.osu.edu\)_](http://www.ods.osu.edu) [_\(http://www.ods.osu.edu\)](http://www.ods.osu.edu)

Sources of Help

- OSU Emergency Grant and Financial Education and Coaching:
 - <http://advocacy.osu.edu/emergency-grant/> [_\(http://advocacy.osu.edu/emergency-grant/\)](http://advocacy.osu.edu/emergency-grant/)
- OSU Food Pantry:
 - <https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org> [_\(https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org\)](https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org)
- How to access OSU disability resources:
 - <http://advocacy.osu.edu/health-personal-crisis/disabilities/> [_\(http://advocacy.osu.edu/health-personal-crisis/disabilities/\)](http://advocacy.osu.edu/health-personal-crisis/disabilities/)
- How to gain an OSU advocate that will maintain confidentiality if one is hospitalized:
 - <http://advocacy.osu.edu/health-personal-crisis/hospitalization/> [_\(http://advocacy.osu.edu/health-personal-crisis/hospitalization/\)](http://advocacy.osu.edu/health-personal-crisis/hospitalization/)

[crisis/hospitalization/](#)

- How to confidentially access OSU mental health resources:
 - <http://advocacy.osu.edu/health-personal-crisis/mental-health/> [\(http://advocacy.osu.edu/health-personal-crisis/mental-health/\)](http://advocacy.osu.edu/health-personal-crisis/mental-health/)
- OSU resources for students that are veterans:
 - <http://veterans.osu.edu/current-students/academic-resources> [.\(http://veterans.osu.edu/current-students/academic-resources\)](http://veterans.osu.edu/current-students/academic-resources)

Class Schedule

We will be following a loose schedule to allow for maximum flexibility and freedom for discussion.

Readings will be announced in class as we go along and will all be made available on Carmen.

Here are the main authors and topics we will be covering, in roughly the order I expect us to cover them. However, I reserve the right to alter this schedule for any reason at any time.


1. Socrates/Plato
2. Aristotle
3. Epicurus
4. Katha Upanishad
5. Gautama Buddha
6. Lao Tzu, Zhuangzi, and selected Zen koans
7. Jesus of Nazareth
8. Thomas Aquinas
9. Leo Tolstoy
10. Jean-Paul Sartre
11. Subjectivism, Objectivism, and Hybrid Views of Meaning
12. The Role of Narrative















Dates for all major assignments will be announced in class shortly before they are due.






Here are a few other important dates:

- Monday, January 20 - No Class - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- March 9 to March 13 - No Class - Spring Break
- Monday, April 20 - Short-Answer Exam II

Course Summary:

Date	Details	
Fri Feb 14, 2020	 Quiz 1 - Greek Philosophers (https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463811)	due by 10am

Date	Details	due by
Wed Mar 4, 2020	 Quiz 2 - Asian Philosophies https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463809	due by 10am
Fri Mar 27, 2020	 Essay #1 https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463819	due by 11:59pm
Wed Apr 1, 2020	 Large Quiz #1 https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463816	due by 11:59pm
Wed Apr 1, 2020	 Short Answer Exam 1 https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1563318	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 13, 2020	 Quiz 3 - Jesus and Aquinas https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463814	due by 10am
Mon Apr 13, 2020	 Quiz 4 - Tolstoy and Sartre https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463815	due by 10am
Fri Apr 17, 2020	 Quiz 5 - Nagle https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463813	due by 10am
Mon Apr 20, 2020	 Quiz 6 - Kagan and Rosati https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463817	due by 10am
Fri Apr 24, 2020	 Quiz 7 - Wolf https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463810	due by 10am
Tue Apr 28, 2020	 Large Quiz #2 https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463812	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 28, 2020	 Essay #2 https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463820	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 28, 2020	 Short Answer Exam 2 https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1592676	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 28, 2020	 Attendance https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463818	
Tue Apr 28, 2020	 Participation Extra Credit https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463821	

Date	Details
	 Short Answer Exam 1 #1 (https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463827)
	 Short Answer Exam 1 #2 (https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463828)
	 Short Answer Exam 1 #3 (https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463829)
	 Short Answer Exam 1 #4 (https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463830)
	 Short Answer Exam 1 #5 (https://osu.instructure.com/courses/75484/assignments/1463831)

GE–Literature Proposal for PHIL 2465

‘Death and the Meaning of Life’

1 GE RATIONALE

1.1 How do the course objectives address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

The primary objectives of the course are to provide students with basic analytic tools and to help them employ these tools in exploring complex philosophical questions concerning death and the meaning of life. These basic tools are systematic thinking, critical reading, and analytical writing, that is, they coincide with the first GE expected learning outcome in the Literature category. This means that the course places emphasis on close readings of difficult literary and philosophical texts, the identification of arguments and implicit assumptions in a text, as well as careful textual analysis and interpretation. The second GE expected learning outcome for Literature is similarly central to the course objectives: through class discussion, the assigned readings, and the writing assignments, students are expected to understand and assess a number of very different perspectives on the meaning of life and its relation to mortality. Since attitudes toward death and life have a deeply personal as well as a social aspect, the course objectives align perfectly with the second expected learning outcome.

1.2 How do the readings assigned address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

Students in the course are expected to explore the course topic by reading, analyzing, and critiquing a wide variety of different texts, some literary, others straightforwardly philosophical, and yet others a combination of the two. For instance, the sample syllabus assigns poems by Emily Dickinson about death and immortality, a novel by Simone de Beauvoir, letters written by the ancient philosopher Epicurus, as well as literary essays, short stories, and scholarly articles. Encountering such a wide range of texts written in such a wide range of styles about the course topic will enable students not only to develop or hone skills in textual analysis, interpretation, and criticism, but also to acquire a much more nuanced understanding of the course topic. Moreover, the assigned readings invite reflections about personal and social attitudes toward the meaning of life across different cultures since the readings portray a great variety of such attitudes. In these ways, the course readings address both GE expected learning outcomes.

1.3 How do the topics address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

The course topics reflect the range of positions that people in different cultures and historical periods have taken on the questions whether life has a meaning and whether this meaning is in conflict with mortality. In one section of the course, for instance, we will read absurdist texts—both literary and philosophical—which argue for, or illustrate, the view that the search for meaning is futile. In another section, we will encounter the view, endorsed by some prominent ancient philosophers, that happiness or pleasure is the purpose of human existence. Yet another section of the course examines the possibility that personal immortality might make our lives meaningful, while still another section looks at arguments that the survival of our species and culture might be sufficient for giving meaning to our

existence and to our pursuits. These different approaches to the course topic reflect a variety of theories of value: they provide completely different answers to the question what can render a life valuable, or what the value of human existence might be. Here again, there is a close connection to the second GE expected learning outcome. Likewise, because these topics are quite complex and require students to grapple with very profound philosophical questions, exploring these topics involves a high level of critical thinking, careful reading, and clear writing.

1.4 How do the written assignments address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

Through the writing assignments and the website project, students add their own perspectives and reflections to the conversation about the meaning of life and actively engage with the readings and course topics in an additional way. The feedback they receive on these assignments—from the instructor, the graders, and peers—will enable them to refine their analytic writing skills. Producing good philosophical prose requires writers to choose their words extremely carefully, weigh the strength of their arguments judiciously, and structure their presentation meticulously. It also requires a nuanced grasp of the subject matter. The writing assignments are designed to build these skills, in accordance with the first GE expected learning outcome. Insofar as these assignments also require careful reflection about the meaning or value of life, they also help foster the second expected learning outcome.

1.5 How does the course aim to sharpen students' response, judgment, and evaluation skills?

The course will teach students some basic techniques from informal logic, such as identifying valid and fallacious argument forms, reconstructing the argument contained in a philosophical text, and supplying implicit premises. These techniques will improve students' ability to respond to and evaluate philosophical texts, as well as to refine and express their own views. On the literary side, these techniques can also help defend a particular interpretation of a text. Furthermore, the course aims to teach students how to engage in close readings of important passages, which is a crucial skill for studying and evaluating texts of any genre.

2 GE ASSESSMENT PLAN

The success of Philosophy 2465 in achieving the two expected learning outcomes of the Literature GE area will be assessed in three interrelated ways: direct assessment through qualitative evaluation of student writing, indirect assessment through student questionnaires, and comparative assessment of student achievement across different years.

a) Expected Level of Student Achievement

The expected level of student achievement with respect to **the first GE expected learning outcome for Literature** is the following: if the course is successful, a large percentage of the students should show significant improvement in their analytic writing skills (that is, in their abilities to analyze, interpret, and critique literary texts), measured in the ways described below.

The expected level of student achievement with respect to **the second GE expected learning outcome for Literature** is for every student to engage in at least some reflection about the connection between cultural and personal values and different views on death and the meaning of life. This will be measured in the ways described below, as well as through class participation.

If the course succeeds in its objectives, at least 80% of the students should receive at least a B on their final papers, which requires that they are able to interpret and evaluate a difficult literary text critically and express their analysis of the text clearly. It also requires that they show evidence of having thought about the ways in which different personal and cultural values may have shaped the assigned texts.

b) Direct Measures of Student Success

The two short writing assignments will serve as direct measures of student success with respect to the **first expected learning outcome** since it is their purpose to test the students' critical reading, thinking, and writing skills. Because one of the writing assignments will be due early in the semester, and the second one closer to the end, these assignments will also reveal whether there has been improvement. The two writing assignments are moreover designed to prepare students for the final paper, which in turn will serve as additional evidence of student success in achieving this expected learning outcomes. More specifically, the instructor and graders will pay particular attention to whether individual students have become (a) more careful readers of the assigned texts, as evidenced by the way they engage with these texts in the writing assignments, (b) more systematic and critical thinkers, based on the arguments they present in the assignments, and (c) clearer and more careful writers. The pop quizzes will also serve as indirect measures of student success with respect to the first expected learning outcome because they are meant to test how carefully the students have read the assigned texts and how well they are able to identify the most crucial features of these texts.

Similarly, the writing assignments will serve as direct assessment of the extent to which the **second expected learning outcome** was achieved: in the assignments, students will be asked to reflect on the ways in which the cultural and personal backgrounds of the authors they have read might be reflected in these authors' views on death and the meaning of life. Students will also be asked to think about the way their personal and cultural background might be shaping their attitudes toward the course topic. In order to receive at least a B on these assignments, students must engage in this kind of reflection; therefore, success on the assignments is direct evidence that the student has achieved the second expected learning outcome.

c) Indirect Measures of Student Success

In addition to these direct measures, the instructor will also employ indirect measures. As well as asking students to comment on their learning process with respect to **both GE expected learning outcomes** in the official SEIs, the instructor will conduct an anonymous in-class survey. The survey will contain questions specifically about the **two GE expected learning outcomes**, asking students to assess their progress toward these goals.

d) Follow-Up/Feedback Process

Finally, each time the course is offered, the instructor will compose and submit to the Department's Teaching Evaluation and Assessment Committee a short report summarizing overall student performance on quizzes, class projects, and writing assignments. The report will also integrate student

feedback from the survey described above. These reports will be grouped by term and saved on the shared departmental drive, so that teaching effectiveness in a particular semester can be evaluated by comparison to previous years. On the basis of these comparisons, the relative emphases of different elements of the course can be adjusted in order to help more students achieve the expected learning outcomes.

3 CURRICULUM MAP

PHIL 2465 will not be required for the major, but it can be taken as an elective course as illustrated by the following curriculum map:

Each Major must include:

1. PHIL 3000: Gateway Seminar (3 credits)
2. History of Philosophy: Any Three of the following (9 credits)
 - PHIL 3210: History of Ancient Philosophy
 - PHIL 3220: History of Medieval Philosophy
 - PHIL 3230: History of 17th Century Philosophy
 - PHIL 3240: History of 18th Century Philosophy
 - PHIL 3250: History of 19th Century Philosophy
 - PHIL 3261: Fundamental Concepts of Existentialism
3. Philosophical Topics (9 credits)
Required of all majors: PHIL 3300: Moral Philosophy (3 credits)
And two of the following (6 credits):
 - PHIL 3530: Philosophy of Logic
 - PHIL 3600: Introduction to Philosophy of Language
 - PHIL 3650: Philosophy of Science
 - PHIL 3680: Sex and Death: Introduction to the Philosophy of Biology
 - PHIL 3700: Introduction to Metaphysics
 - PHIL 3750: Introduction to Theory of Knowledge
 - PHIL 3800: Introduction to Philosophy of Mind
 - PHIL 3810: Philosophy of Action
 - PHIL 3820: Philosophy of Perception
4. Upper Level Coursework: Any Two PHIL 5xxx courses (6 credits)
5. Elective: Any one further Philosophy course at the 2xxx [such as **PHIL 2465: Death and the Meaning of Life**], 3xxx, 4xxx, or 5xxx level (3 credits)

Arts and Sciences Distance Learning Course Component Technical Review Checklist

Course: Philosophy 2465

Instructor: Steven Brown

Summary: Death and the Meaning of Life Syllabus

Standard - Course Technology	Yes	Yes with Revisions	No	Feedback/ Recomm.
6.1 The tools used in the course support the learning objectives and competencies.	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carmen • Office 365
6.2 Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronous or asynchronous Zoom lectures
6.3 Technologies required in the course are readily obtainable.	X			All materials are available under a site license agreement.
6.4 The course technologies are current.	X			All applications are web based tools and are updated on a regular basis.
6.5 Links are provided to privacy policies for all external tools required in the course.	X			No 3 rd party tools are used.
Standard - Learner Support				
7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to access it.	X			Links to 8HELP are present.
7.2 Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's accessibility policies and services.	X			a
7.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's academic support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them.	X			b
7.4 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student services and resources can help learners succeed and how learners can obtain them.	X			c
Standard – Accessibility and Usability				
8.1 Course navigation facilitates ease of use.	X			Recommend using the Carmen Distance Learning "Master Course" template developed by ODEE and available in the Canvas Commons to provide student-users with a consistent user experience in terms of navigation and access to course content.
8.2 Information is provided about the accessibility of all technologies required in the course.	X			No 3 rd party tools are used.
8.3 The course provides alternative means of access to course materials in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.	X			Recommend that resources be developed to address any requests for alternative means of access to course materials.
8.4 The course design facilitates readability	X			Recommend using the Carmen Distance Learning "Master Course" template developed by ODEE and available in the Canvas Commons to provide student-users with a consistent user experience in terms of navigation and access to course content.
8.5 Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.	X			All assignments and

				activities that use the Carmen LMS with embedded multimedia facilitates ease of use. All other multimedia resources facilitate ease of use by being available through a standard web browser
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Reviewer Information

- Date reviewed: 11/20/20
- Reviewed by: Ian Anderson

Notes: Good to go!

^aThe following statement about disability services (recommended 16 point font):
 Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307, slds@osu.edu; slds.osu.edu.

^bAdd to the syllabus this link with an overview and contact information for the student academic services offered on the OSU main campus.
<http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>

^cAdd to the syllabus this link with an overview and contact information for student services offered on the OSU main campus. <http://ssc.osu.edu>. Also, consider including this link in the “Other Course Policies” section of the syllabus.