

## Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2026

## Course Change Information

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

Add GE Themes: Health and Well Being Status

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

The course was previously in the GE Themes queue, where we wish to return it with revisions requested by the committee

**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)?**

Add GE Themes: Health and Well Being Status

**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	Civics, Law, and Leadership
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	Chase Center for Civics - D4260
College/Academic Group	Office of Academic Affairs
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	2200
Course Title	The Pursuit of Happiness: An American Tradition
Transcript Abbreviation	Happiness Pursuit
Course Description	The Declaration of Independence names "the pursuit of happiness" as an unalienable right. This course introduces the tradition of inquiry on happiness and the good life that informed the American Founders, as well as accounts of happiness from contemporary social science. Considers obstacles to measuring happiness and explores why our intuitions about what will make us happy are often wrong.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

## Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	No
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	No
Course Components	Lecture
Grade Roster Component	Lecture
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never
Campus of Offering	Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

## Prerequisites and Exclusions

**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

**Exclusions**

**Electronically Enforced** Yes

**Cross-Listings**

Cross-Listings

**Subject/CIP Code**

**Subject/CIP Code** 30.0000  
**Subsidy Level** Baccalaureate Course  
**Intended Rank** Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

**Requirement/Elective Designation**

Health and Well-being

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

***Previous Value***

*The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units*

**Course Details**

**Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes** • Students compare competing claims regarding the social and political conditions of flourishing, and evaluate assumptions about virtue, responsibility, and a good life that informed the American Founding

**Content Topic List** • Individual and Collective Virtue; Desire-Satisfaction and Subjective Well-Being; Pleasure and Duty; Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

**Sought Concurrence** Yes

**Attachments**

- Concurrence Exchanges - Education, Law, Glenn, Arts & Sciences (1).pdf: Concurrence Exchanges  
(Concurrence. Owner: Fortier,Jeremy)
- Memo Regarding Resubmission of CIVICLL 2200 (v3).pdf: Memo Regarding Resubmission (v3)  
(Cover Letter. Owner: Fortier,Jeremy)
- CIVICLL 2200 - GE Worksheet (v3).docx: GE Worksheet (v3)  
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Fortier,Jeremy)
- CIVICLL 2200 - Syllabus (v3).pdf: Syllabus (v3)  
(Syllabus. Owner: Fortier,Jeremy)

**Comments**

- Please see feedback email sent to the unit 11-11-2025 RLS (by Steele,Rachel Lea on 11/11/2025 03:20 PM)

**COURSE CHANGE REQUEST**  
2200 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Reed,Kathryn Marie  
12/12/2025

**Workflow Information**

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Fortier,Jeremy	10/17/2025 08:03 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Fortier,Jeremy	10/17/2025 08:03 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Reed,Kathryn Marie	10/20/2025 12:01 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Steele,Rachel Lea	11/11/2025 03:20 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Fortier,Jeremy	12/12/2025 07:28 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Fortier,Jeremy	12/12/2025 07:29 AM	Unit Approval
Approved	Reed,Kathryn Marie	12/12/2025 10:00 AM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Neff,Jennifer Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Steele,Rachel Lea	12/12/2025 10:00 AM	ASCCAO Approval

14 November 2025

Dear Committee,

Thank you very much for your generous feedback and patience with me while I learn how to navigate the GEN Course System. The changes I made were as follows.

The committee commented that the Health and Wellbeing Theme appeared to be not central to the course but rather something done in addition to the course's main content. Thus, I reverse-engineered my syllabus around the theme of Health and Wellbeing, with my readings, assignments, and discussions oriented toward that end.

The relationships among happiness, wellbeing, and health are entangled in sometimes surprising ways. For example, the empirical literature bears out that certain prosocial tendencies, such as generosity and kindness, tend to correlate with better health outcomes. However, this is not always the case. Certain virtues, or excellences of character (e.g., compassion and justice), sometimes come at the cost of good health. For example, Rosa Parks suffered from chronic insomnia, a heart condition, and stomach ulcers—conditions made severe by her uncompromising civil rights advocacy. The good work that defined Parks also made her ill because of racism and systemic issues. My intention in this course is to discuss the sometimes-uneasy relationship between goodness and wellness and how politics is often the 'middle term' in this relationship. I want students to evaluate what a happy life consists of, and how happiness is constrained by the conditions of our bodies, policies, and communities.

In this course, students will evaluate the distinctly American tradition of happiness, rooted in an unalienable right. We will ask the following questions: What does a right to happiness consist of? What protections are in place to make it feasible? What are the responsibilities of private citizens in securing the right of happiness? What does moral character have to do with a good life? Students will evaluate why depression and anxiety rates are so high in a country that articulates an interest in the happiness of its people. Students will assess whether the 'happiness' we speak of today is the same 'happiness' described by the Founders, and they will investigate the role moral character plays in supporting our wellbeing. I am excited about these questions. I think they are important at a time of great civic unrest and declining mental health. I think they can contribute a great deal to the Health and Wellbeing Theme.

**Contingency (d):** I provided a starting definition on page one: "The Founders conceived of happiness as an 'activity of the soul,' rooted human nature and constituted, in part, by virtue. They emphasized duty over pleasure, self-improvement over complacency, and intellect over physical condition. Students will evaluate whether happiness, conceived in these ways, is met in the contemporary American landscape. Using a scholarly and evidence-based framework, students will examine what material conditions, such as wealth, health, freedom, and leisure, must be in place to make such an account tenable. They will also critically assess the account of human nature that underpins the Founders' view of happiness."

The Founders' definition of happiness is theoretically interesting, since it emphasizes *arête* (excellence or virtue). A good life is about what one might feasibly *become*. It involves

striving or figuratively raising the ceiling rather than the floor (which seems an aristocratic enterprise and perhaps surprising in a democratic context). The Founders were not altogether forgetful of the material supports required to be happy. For example, they wrote about requiring leisure and a threshold of good health for happiness. However, the Founders were wealthy, free men and slaveowners. Material conditions of happiness were a secondary, rather than a primary, concern. For most other Americans, material conditions are not an afterthought. My aim is to have students evaluate whether their definition is tenable or might be qualified in certain ways. Is morality a necessary condition of happiness? What else might be required? Is wellness the same thing as happiness? Is a happy life necessarily an excellent one? Are there happy lives that involve sickness or great struggles? Do we have a significant degree of control over the quality of our lives?

In this course, I start with the Founders' definition of happiness. We explore philosophically where this definition came from and which virtues they understood as integral to happiness. We will take this view seriously and read it constructively. Then we will assess the limitations of this vision. For instance, we will discuss the relationship between wealth and wellbeing, race and happiness, injustice and wellness, collective considerations of wellbeing (e.g., whether the thriving of the *few* competes with the thriving of the *many*), and how to be happy in our new digital world. On my course reading schedule, I incorporated evidence-based, mixed-methods literature as required texts, rather than supplementary. This is a revision from my previous syllabus. We will discuss these readings in class, and they are testable. I still list additional supplementary readings to guide students' research and serve as a starting point for their term papers.

**Contingency (e).** Early in the course schedule, my readings were less evidence-based, and the connection to the theme was not fully developed. I have three responses to these comments.

(1) Initially, the course was structured to be discursive across a semester. My early readings were designed to establish historical terms (e.g., virtue, vice, flourishing), such that they could be responsibly engaged with questions of health and wellness later. I have now revised the syllabus to discuss health and wellness in tandem with these early readings, so that the table-setting of concepts is now accompanied by engagement with our theme.

(2) Early in the course, we are evaluating virtue. Virtue has uneasy relationships with evidence and measurement. (A few years ago, there was an excellent [conference](#) on this topic at the University of Birmingham, which yielded interesting scholarship.) For example, sometimes there are studies exploring the impact "compassion" has on good health. However, compassion—understood in the context of Aristotelian virtue theory—is a long-term, cross-situational *hexis* (active disposition) that must be performed from fitting motivations. Compassion is not something that lends easily to testing. Often what studies find is that, for example, compassion-tracking singular actions in a particular situation correlate with better health outcomes, all other things held constant. When you read these studies, you realize that the 'middle term' is often happy feelings. Doing something compassion-tracking (an action that externally accords with the virtue) can make one feel happy, and happy feelings generate better health outcomes than unhappy feelings do. Strictly speaking, this is not testing the virtue of

compassion. Moreover, being “prosocial” is sometimes used as a proxy for virtue, but prosocial does not necessarily mean virtuous. For example, it is considered prosocial to be cooperative, but if I am cooperating with Nazis or being amiable in the context of a grave injustice, the virtuous action would be to be uncooperative and not-prosocial. Prosociality has normative constraints. Additionally, studying “happiness” empirically presumes one knows what happiness is, such that we can operationally define it, and this concept is under investigation in this course. For example, the World Happiness Report presumes happiness is subjective wellbeing (counter to the Founders), and its dominant method is self-report. Self-report is malleable. For example, we rate our lives as *happier overall* if we are asked about our happiness immediately after being primed by finding a dime, which improves our mood. Academic rigor—when assessing questions of virtue and happiness—restricts the pool of relevant evidence-based scholarship considerably.

(3) Regardless, I am now including evidence-based work in this section, which means I will foreground the course with cautions about measurement. These topics are reflected in the “Guiding Questions” listed for each week and in the selection of required course readings. On week one, we will discuss the differences among related terms (happiness, wellness, prosperity, flourishing, and mental health). In the weeks that follow, we will discuss the impact of inequality on wellness and explore how Americans compare to Europeans in terms of self-reported happiness. We will evaluate socio-economic constraints on a person’s wellbeing, which is a theme we will unpack further in Week 4. We will also read an empirical article which demonstrates that people feel fulfilled when they perform the duties assigned to them. This is worrisome when the duties are bad, such as in an unjust regime (or the Milgram experiment, which was the context here). This reading will serve as a provocation to Cicero’s *On Duties*, which presupposes the importance of duty in civic happiness. Another research thread I introduced early in the term is on the interaction between wellness and digital media. Our subjective wellbeing declines when we spend too much time online as digital citizens, rather than in person. I expand this theme on the Temperance and the Good Life week to evaluate digital temperance (being ruled by our devices, losing control of our ability to self-govern in their presence). I included research on the correlation between TikTok usage and surging depression rates.

Additionally, I included a research-based assignment, based on the work of Yale’s Laurie Santos. Counted among quizzes are various **Happiness Challenges**. Students will complete four throughout the term. They involve undertaking a “happiness strategy”—a set of practices that are empirically shown to improve subjective wellbeing. Examples include mindfulness practices, gratitude lists, social time, improving sleep hygiene, and daily exercise. Students will undertake each strategy for a week and journal about how it impacted their sense of wellbeing. They will identify, reflect on, and apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing. This way, students can engage with ways to improve their mental and emotional health, in addition to the character practice that aligns more closely with the Founders’ vision of happiness.

**Contingency (f).** As stated above, I incorporated empirical readings into the required set of class readings. They will be directly treated during class lectures and discussions. I am grateful for your prompting me to do this. This will make the lectures much richer and create greater continuity with the theme.

**Contingency (g).** I expanded my explanations of the Ben Franklin and Self-Help Book paper requirements to explain how to engage with sources suitably. I stipulate in both explanations that students must include both theoretical and empirical sources concerning happiness, health, and wellbeing.

**Contingency (i).** I added the intellectual diversity statement and corrected the religious accommodations statement.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,  
Sabrina B. Little

## *CIVICLL 2200: The Pursuit of Happiness: An American Tradition*

[Semester]

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Format of Instruction : Seminar  
Meeting Day /Time:  
Classroom Location:  
Contact Hours:

Instructor: Dr. Sabrina B. Little  
Email: little.802@osu.edu  
Office:  
Office Hours:

### **Course Description**

The Declaration of Independence names “the pursuit of happiness” as an unalienable right, alongside life and liberty. This course introduces students to the tradition of inquiry on happiness and the good life that informed the American Founders, with special attention paid to considerations of health and wellbeing (ELO 3.1). Students will engage in critical thinking about happiness (ELO 1.1), exploring theoretical (e.g., eudaimonic, desire-satisfaction, hedonic accounts), socio-economic (e.g., relationship between reported happiness and wealth), scientific (e.g., findings from contemporary social sciences on the relationships among mental and physical health, happiness, and well-being), historical (e.g., the American Founding), cultural (e.g., Western philosophical tradition), and personal (e.g., self-report) perspectives (ELO 3.1). They will identify, describe, and synthesize these different approaches—for example, asking whether happy feelings are also part of eudaimonism (ELO 2.1).

Due to the civic emphasis of this course, students will investigate whether the wellbeing of the collective (the city) has costs for the wellbeing of the citizen, or vice versa. They will examine what role, if any, a government might play in supporting the health and vitality of its citizens and discuss where suffering fits into a good life. The Founders conceived of happiness as an “activity of the soul,” rooted human nature and constituted, in part, by virtue. They emphasized duty over pleasure, self-improvement over complacency, and intellect over physical condition. Students will evaluate whether happiness, conceived in this way, is met in the contemporary American landscape. Using a scholarly and evidence-based framework, students will examine what material conditions, such as wealth, health, freedom, and leisure, must be in place to make such an account tenable. They will also critically assess the account of human nature that underpins the Founders’ view of happiness.”

By undertaking various happiness practices throughout the term, students will demonstrate a developing sense of self through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, and by reflecting on various accounts of happiness in writing and discussion, they will build on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts (ELO 2.2, ELO 3.2). Students will write a term paper, placing a contemporary self-help book in conversation with empirical, historical, and philosophical approaches to a good life (ELO 1.2).

### **II. Learning Outcomes**



The Pursuit of Happiness is designated a **GEN THEMES: Health and Well-Being** course. It counts for 3 credits in this category. As such, students will work on the following objectives:

**Goal 1:** Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

- 1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.
- 1.2. Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.

**Goal 2:** Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

- 2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.
- 2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

**Goal 3:** Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing through attention to at least two dimensions of wellbeing. (Ex: physical, mental, emotional, career, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, creative, financial, etc.).

- 3.1. Explore and analyze health and wellbeing from theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, cultural, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives.
- 3.2. Identify, reflect on, or apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing.

### How this Course Meets the Goals & ELOs of Health and Well-Being

The Declaration of Independence names the pursuit of happiness as an unalienable right. However, in the United States, currently 42.5 million adults suffer from anxiety disorders, and 22.5 million adults and 4.8 million youth (8.8 percent and 19.5 percent of the population, respectively) suffer from major depression.<sup>1</sup> If happiness is an unalienable right, we might wonder why so many people seem to be alienated from it.

Happiness is a civic question. It concerns the material supports required to be mentally and physically healthy enough to thrive. It concerns opportunities for work and for education, relationships with others, public health policies, quality of food, and opportunities for leisure. If

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<sup>1</sup> Quick facts and statistics about mental health. 2025. Mental Health America. Web <<https://mhanational.org/resources/quick-facts-and-statistics-about-mental-health/>> Accessed 14 November 2025.

we are to believe the Founders, happiness also concerns virtues like temperance, justice, and righteous anger, and living a life fitting of one's human nature. Moreover, it is a pursuit (or activity), rather than a condition. This course investigates the critical civic and interdisciplinary question of "happiness" in a time when happiness seems to many Americans to be untenable.

The Pursuit of Happiness serves the Health and Well-Being GEN Theme by investigating a range of interdisciplinary resources (**Goal 2**), using an in-depth scholarly approach (**Goal 1**), and assisting students to reflect and act on the findings from our course (**Goal 3**). In more precise terms, see the chart below. See also the designations on the Assignment Descriptions and Course Reading Schedule on the final pages of this syllabus.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Expected Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
<b>Goal 1:</b> Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.	1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.	<b>Weekly Quizzes, Reading Checks, and Final Exam.</b> Students are regularly evaluated on course readings, which are arduous and reflect various perspectives on wellness, happiness, and health. (See assignment descriptions and course schedule for details.)
<b>Goal 1:</b> Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.	1.2. Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.	<b>Self-Help Book Term Paper.</b> Students will undertake a research project, evaluating a contemporary self-help book of their choosing. They will place it in conversation with writings from the American Founders, the ancient and modern thinkers who formed the basis of their understanding, contemporary empirical work, public policy research, etc. Students will use interdisciplinary peer-reviewed research to evaluate the feasibility of their book's self-help approach and examine how it squares with (or departs from) the vision of American Founders on happiness.
<b>Goal 2:</b> Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.	2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.	<b>Final Exam.</b> Students will be asked to place different approaches to happiness (e.g., eudaimonic, desire-satisfaction, hedonic) in conversation with one another. They will identify which ideas belong to which thinker, compare and critique different views, and describe met and unmet aspects of the Founders' vision of the pursuit of happiness.



		<p>Students will also identify, describe, and synthesize approaches in our <b>Reading Questions</b> and <b>Course Discussions</b>.</p> <p>Identifications, including the grammar or key concepts of particular perspectives, will also appear in <b>Weekly Quizzes</b>.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.</p>	<p>2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.</p>	<p><b>In-Class Discussions.</b> Students will engage in Socratic discussion on various approaches (e.g., Locke, Mill, Lyubomirsky, Bloom, Jefferson). They will assess families of ideas (e.g., Mill's utilitarianism and certain forms of hedonism) and reflect on how well each approach captures American life and their own understandings of what it means to be happy and well. One refrain of the course is the relationship between morality and good health. For example, certain excellences of character (e.g., diligence, patience) may broadly support good health. For example, the diligent person is more likely than one absent this trait to brush their teeth consistently. However, certain excellences of character (e.g., compassion or justice) sometimes come at the cost of good health. For example, Rosa Parks suffered from chronic insomnia, a heart condition, and stomach ulcers—conditions made severe by her uncompromising civil rights advocacy. The good work that defined Parks also made her ill because of racism and systemic issues. We will discuss the sometimes-uneasy relationship between goodness and wellness and how politics is often the 'middle term' in this relationship. We will reflect on other cases and our own experiences with respect to these topics.</p> <p><b>Reading Checks:</b> These are basic open-ended questions concerning key themes and perspectives of course readings. These are assigned to encourage students to engage well with the reading. These are worth <b>3 points each</b> (1 for attending, 2 for meaningfully "reflecting and self-</p>



		assessing” on the course content). Students will complete 10-12 of these per term at the start of classes.
<b>Goal 3:</b> Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing through attention to at least two dimensions of wellbeing. (Ex: physical, mental, emotional, career, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, creative, financial, etc.).	3.1. Explore and analyze health and wellbeing from theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, cultural, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives.	<p>Our course readings are history, philosophy, and science heavy. Some of these thinkers as follows:</p> <p><b>Historical</b> – Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Frankl, Tocqueville, DeYoung (on monastic traditions), Douglass, Lincoln</p> <p><b>Socio-economic</b> – Lyubomirsky, Budrys</p> <p><b>Theoretical</b> – Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Mill, Nussbaum, Annas, Little, Nozick, Williams, Smart, Geach, MacIntyre</p> <p><b>Scientific</b> – Paul Bloom, Jonathan Haidt, Stevenson &amp; Hicks, Hawkins, Redlich &amp; Kellert, Delle Fave, Massimini, &amp; Bassi, Frick</p> <p><b>Policy</b> – Beauchamp, Budrys, Murray, Debnath &amp; Shankar</p> <p><b>Technological</b> – Twenge, Michael Lamb on digital temperance</p> <p><b>Personal</b> – Laurie Santos, Ben Franklin, Frankl, Veenhoven</p> <p>This learning objective is evaluated as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Quizzes</b> – On two of the weekly quizzes, students will be asked to place perspectives fruitfully in common. (Week 5) Place Callicles’ view on temperance and self-rule from Plato’s <i>Gorgias</i> in conversation with Twenge and Lamb on digital temperance. Is Callicles correct that having free access to whatever one wants is the key to a happy life? (Week 6) Is good health a moral achievement? Answer this question placing Aristotle in conversation with Little and the clinical research we explored on compassion.</li></ul>
<b>Goal 3:</b> Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing through attention to at least two dimensions of wellbeing. (Ex: physical, mental,	3.2. Identify, reflect on, or apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing.	<b>Ben Franklin Project</b> (See project description below). Students will engage in virtue development similar to those recorded in Franklin’s autobiography.

emotional, career, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, creative, financial, etc.).		<b>Happiness Challenges.</b> Throughout the term, they will choose among several social science-backed practices (e.g., meditation) and journal about impact on wellness. For context, see this <a href="#">link</a> for Laurie Santos' happiness course at Yale.
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### III. Texts

Students are required to purchase the following text, which is available at Barnes & Noble and on Amazon:

Rosen, S. 2024. *The Pursuit of Happiness: How Classical Writers on Virtue Inspired the Lives of the Founders and Defined America*. Simon & Schuster.

All other course readings will be available online or by PDF on Blackboard.

On the Course Reading Schedule, on the final pages of the syllabus, students will also find supplementary readings. These readings are present for three reasons—to engage students who wish to examine each topic further, to model the scholarly process by introducing students to suitable secondary literature addressing each topic from opposing and supporting perspectives, and to serve as a starting point for students as they begin their semester writing projects.

### IV. Assignments and Grading

Attendance and Participation	Coming to class, basic reading checks	15%
Quizzes	On average weekly; Happiness challenges – 4 per term	15%
Scaffolded Ben Franklin Virtue Project Tasks	Deadlines Rolling	10%
Ben Franklin Term Paper – Final Deadline	Week 10, Friday	25%
Self-Help Book Project	Week 13, Friday	15%
Final Exam	TBD Exam period	20%

#### Attendance and Participation (3.1, 2.1, 2.2)

Attendance is imperative in this discussion-based course. Students should come to class well-prepared to engage in the discussion. Our readings are interdisciplinary, representing historical, theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, cultural, policy, and personal perspectives throughout the

term. Through conversations and Socratic dialogue, we will identify, analyze, synthesis, and compare them.

We will do regular **reading checks** to start the class, asking students to recount or compare key ideas they remember from the reading, or to answer very basic questions. These hold students accountable to doing the reading without becoming stressed if there are ideas they do not understand.

Students are encouraged to take notes by hand, rather than using a laptop. If a student must use a laptop for some reason, they are required to keep it in airplane mode. iPhones must be turned off and put away at all times. Again, this is a discussion-based course. Devices diminish our strength of presence.

Attendance is taken every day. Each day is worth 2 points. 1 point is deducted for using iPhones or computers for unrelated work during class. 1 point is deducted for being tardy. If your absence is excusable according to the school handbook, email ahead of time.

### **Weekly Quizzes** (ELOs 2.1, 2.2, 3.2)

Unless there is a major deadline that week, students will complete weekly content quizzes. These are short multiple-choice and true-false quizzes, located on Canvas. They are open-note but not to be taken with peers or internet assistance. Their function is to encourage students to complete readings, attend lectures, and assess their understanding week after week.

Counted among quizzes are various **Happiness Challenges**. Students will complete four throughout the term. They involve undertaking a “happiness strategy”—a set of practices that are empirically shown to improve subjective wellbeing. Examples include mindfulness practices, gratitude lists, social time, improving sleep hygiene, and daily exercise. Students will undertake each strategy for a week and journal about how it impacted their sense of wellbeing. They will identify, reflect on, and apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing.

### **Ben Franklin Virtue and Wellbeing Paper** (ELO 2.2, 3.2)

This assignment is a **virtue-developmental task** akin to Ben Franklin’s project quest for moral perfection. Students will select two virtues to practice over the course of the semester, journaling about the process. These papers involve both theory and reflection. They will provide an overview of their two virtues in a broadly Aristotelian virtue theory literature, then will describe their attempts at growing in virtue throughout the term and assess any impacts on their health, wellbeing, and happiness. For example, does growing in virtue impact one’s subjective sense of wellbeing? Did the health status of the student change, or was it changed by, participation in virtue practices? Did the project contribute to a sense of meaning or purpose in any way? Since

this paper concerns growth in virtue, students should explore both virtue theory literature and empirical resources on character development.

This paper's tasks are scaffolded throughout the term. Students will select virtues, outline research and name scholarly sources, complete an early draft to discuss among classmates, then turn in the final paper. The paper should be eight to ten pages, double-spaced, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and be carefully edited. It will include a minimum of **six** scholarly sources across disciplines. **For example, students cannot exclusively draw on history or philosophy. They must engage with social science research on wellness as well.** The final paper is due at 11:59pm on the date listed in the syllabus.

This course intends to mature a student's "sense of self as a learner through reflection [and] self-assessment...building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts." Having the opportunity to reflect on one's character as pertains to happiness and develop oneself in certain ways is a means of preparing students for life beyond the classroom. An example is that students may find (as students often do), that they struggle with digital intemperance—experiencing an outsized reliance on their devices and on social media, in ways that interrupt their ability to self-govern and commit to their own good choices, such that they can flourish. **Making these changes can impact one's emotional constitution and feelings of wellness, as well as contribute to mental and emotional health. In this project, students will have the opportunity to self-evaluate in these respects.**

### **Self-Help Book Project (ELOs 1.2, 3.2)**

Students will select a **contemporary self-help book** and critique it, in conversation with the Founders and philosophers we read this term, as well as empirical resources on wellbeing and health. Students will investigate whether the book provides a robust and defensible vision of happiness compatible with a flourishing citizenry. They will also ask whether the approach seems empirically apt. For example, if the book suggests socializing more, is there research to support that doing so generally yields increased wellness, happier lives, or better health outcomes?

This project involves formal writing. Students are encouraged to select their self-help book early in the term and have it approved by the professor. Examples of texts include *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, *Atomic Habits*, *Think and Grow Rich*, *The Power of Now*, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, *The Success Principles*, *The Purpose Driven Life*, and *Me, But Better*. Students will engage with a range of perspectives on these papers, in service to the varied content and diverse interpretations requirement of the GEN Theme: Health and Wellbeing.

To see an example of what mature scholarly engagement involves, see the range and quality of supplementary readings on our course reading schedule. Essays should engage dissenting voices on the topic. For example, a student should not assume the Founders views were correct (or incorrect). They might include Ben Franklin on why virtue matters for happiness. A dissenting voice may include Aristotle, insofar as the reasons he supplies for why virtue matters for happiness are quite different than for Franklin. Students should also include voices that deemphasize the importance of virtue, perhaps with a greater emphasis on material supports of

health or wellbeing, with counterarguments. Students should evaluate the conception of a good life assumed by their self-help author and assess any limitations of this view. The goal is an “advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration” of the theme. Scholarly explorations are honest insofar as they engage with the best available arguments, in support and against their own positions. Scholarly explanations also take evidence seriously, meaning that successful papers will engage with research on happiness and wellbeing whenever available.

This paper is scaffolded into smaller tasks throughout the semester, and students will have ample opportunity to clarify their positions on their chosen self-help book, refine their arguments, and discuss their papers with classmates.

### **Final Exam (2.1)**

This is a cumulative exam on the landscape of happiness, in conversation with the American Founders, their philosophical influences, and contemporary voices in wellness and flourishing. Students will be asked to compare “identify, describe, and synthesize approaches” to happiness and wellbeing. A review guide will be provided. The exam is given during finals week.

### **Grading Scale**

All assignments will be graded out of a 100-point scale and then converted into the final grade (also on a 100-point scale) using percentages outlined below. Your letter grade will be determined using the following ranges.

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

### **V. Statement Regarding AI, ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Related Technologies**

The objectives of this course are to learn, and to be transformed by reading and reckoning with ideas in a serious way. You fail to do this with AI and related technologies. If you use ChatGPT, Grammarly, or other assistive technologies to assist in your writing at all, even taking ChatGPT’s ideas and re-writing them as your own, you will receive a 0 on the assignment with no opportunity to make up the grade.



In Mortimer Adler's "An Invitation to the Pain of Learning," he writes that "the process of learning that must be dominated at every moment by the activity of the learner. And the fundamental activity that is involved in every kind of genuine learning is intellectual activity, the activity generally known as thinking...Without thinking, the kind of learning which transforms a mind, gives it new insights, enlightens it, deepens understanding, elevates the spirit simply cannot occur."

If you are not doing the arduous task of thinking—organizing thoughts, defining, synthesizing, comparing, writing—you are not receiving an education.

## **VI. Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-48.7 (B)). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct.

## **VII. Disability Services**

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. 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. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; or [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu).

## **VIII. Religious Accommodations**

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests

for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office.

## **IX. Intellectual Diversity**

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

### **Reading Schedule**

#### **Notes:**

- This reading schedule is structured to satisfy ELO 3.1. Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing from a range of perspectives, including theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, cultural, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives. We will discuss these ideas together in class.



- On most class days, there are additional readings listed under ‘See also.’ These readings are available for two reasons—to encourage interested students to read more on a given topic and to demonstrate scholarship. For our formal writing assignments, students may start with these texts or locate texts of similar caliber. To reduce reading load, students are not required to read these additional texts for the designated class days.

### Week 1: *Health, Wellbeing, and the Pursuit of Happiness*

- o Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>:

- o **Reading:** Erdman S. E. (2016). Defining 'good health'. *Aging*, 8(12), 3157–3158. [Declaration of Independence](#) – “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (link)
- o Syllabus Review

**Guiding Question(s):** Define good health. What is the ‘pursuit of happiness’? How does it relate to concepts such as *wellness*, *flourishing*, *prosperity*, *contentment*, and *mental health*?

- o Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>:

- o **Reading:** World Health Organization – [Definition of Health](#); Ch. 1 – Order (*The Pursuit of Happiness*, Rosen – hereafter, *POH*), 1-16; Alesina, A., Di Tella, R., & MacCulloch, R. (2004). Inequality and happiness: are Europeans and Americans different? *Journal of public economics*, 88(9-10), 2009-2042. D.M. McMahon. Happiness in America Isn’t What It Used to Be. *Time Magazine*. Web <<https://time.com/6244240/happiness-america-history/>>. McManus, J., Medvedev, O.N., van Zyl, L. et al. 2024. Measuring Virtue: An Aristotelian Perspective on Advancing Positive Psychology. *Int J Appl Posit Psychol* 9, 1313–1337
- o **See also:** N.K. Badhwar. 2014. Objectivity and subjectivity in theories of wellness. *Philosophy & Public Policy Quarterly* 32(1): 1-28. Lavazza A. (2016). Happiness, Psychology, and Degrees of Realism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 1148. C.N. Conklin. 2015. The Origins of the Pursuit of Happiness. *Washington University Jurisprudence Review* 7(2): 195.

**Guiding Question(s):** Is there something distinctly American about the ‘pursuit of happiness’? How happy are Americans compared to Europeans? What are socio-economic constraints on a person’s wellbeing? Describe difficulties in measuring virtue.

### Week 2: *Happiness and Government*

- o Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>:

- o No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

- o Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>:

- o **Reading:** Ch. 1 – Order (*POH* continued) 1-16; Cicero, *The Tusculan Disputations* (excerpt, [link](#)); Cicero, *On Duties* (excerpt, [link](#)); T.D. Sonenshine, 2024. Haslam SA, Reicher SD, Millard K, McDonald R. 'Happy to have been of service': the Yale archive as a window into the engaged followership of participants in Milgram's 'obedience' experiments. *Br J Soc Psychol*. 2015 Mar;54(1):55-83. doi: 10.1111/bjso.12074.



- See also: Rahe, P. A. (1994). Cicero and republicanism in America. *Ciceroniana* online, 8. Why are Americans so Unhappy? *The Hill*. Manca, J. (2003). Cicero in America: Civic Duty and Private Happiness in Charles Willson Peale's Portrait of William Paca. *American Art*, 17(1), 69-89

**Guiding Question(s):** Haslam (et al) describe that sometimes performing duties (regardless of moral quality) make us feel fulfilled. Why this is a problem? Describe what we learn from the Milgram study. Name an example of a civic duty. What do civic duties have to do with flourishing? Does a happy life have a certain moral quality to it? What are Americans so unhappy?

### Week 3: *Happiness and Government (continued)*

- Monday, January 26th:
  - **Reading:** *Federalist Papers* 62 and 43; reference [link](#); J.M. Twenge. 2019. The Sad State of Happiness in the United State and the Role of Digital Media. *World Happiness Report*.
  - See also: Pangle, T. L. (1986). The Federalist Papers' Vision of Civic Health and the Tradition Out of Which That Vision Emerges. *Western Political Quarterly*, 39(4), 577-602; Cahn, E. N. (1952). Madison and the Pursuit of Happiness. *NYUL Rev.*, 27, 265
- Wednesday, January 28th:
  - **Reading:** Duncan, G. (2010). Should happiness-maximization be the goal of government? *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 11(2), 163-178; C. Murray, *In Pursuit: Of Happiness and Good Government* [excerpt](#)
  - See also: Debnath, R. M., & Shankar, R. (2014). Does good governance enhance happiness: a cross nation study. *Social indicators research*, 116(1), 235-253.

**Guiding Question(s):** What are governments for? How might a government support the health and happiness of its citizens? Why might it be a problem for our civic flourishing if many of our interactions are now online?

### Week 4: *Happiness and Justice*

- Monday, February 2nd:
  - **Reading:** Ch. 11 – *POH*, Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln's Self-Reliance, 243-262; Braveman et al (2022). Systematic and structural racism: Definitions, examples, health damages, and approaches to dismantling. *Health Affairs* 41(2). Iceland, J., & Ludwig-Dehm, S. (2019). Black-white differences in happiness, 1972-2014. *Social science research*, 77, 16–29. Beauchamp, D. E. (1976). Public Health as Social Justice. *Inquiry*, 13(1), 3–14.
  - See also: Leverenz, D. (1987). Frederick Douglass's Self-Refashioning. *Criticism*, 29(3), 341-370; Marinković, D. (2019). Forging of the American Identity in the Works of Henry David Thoreau and Frederick Douglass (Doctoral dissertation, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences). Budrys Ch 9. Social Determinants & Longevity in US Counties (PDF).
- Wednesday, February 4th:



- **Reading:** Proceedings of the Colored national convention, Rochester, July 6-8, 1853 [excerpt](#)

**Guiding Question(s):** What does justice have to do with happiness? Describe trends between health and race. What does Douglass mean by self-reliance?

### Week 5: *Temperance and the Good Life*

- Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Ben Franklin's Quest for Moral Perfection ([link](#)); Nguyen, L., Walters, J., Paul, S., Monreal Ijurco, S., Rainey, G. E., Parekh, N., Blair, G., & Darrah, M. (2025). Feeds, feelings, and focus: A systematic review and meta-analysis examining the cognitive and mental health correlates of short-form video use. *Psychological Bulletin*, 151(9), 1125–1146. (*This is about temperance with respect to using TikTok!*); M. Lamb and D. Brown. 2022. Digital temperance: adapting an ancient virtue for a technological age. *Ethics and Information Technology* 24(4): 1-13.
  - **See also:** Higgins, N. (2016). Achieving Human Perfection: Benjamin Franklin contra George Whitefield. *Journal of American Studies*, 50(1), 61-80; Fiering, N. S. (1978). Benjamin Franklin and the way to virtue. *American Quarterly*, 30(2), 199-223; Pangle, L. S. (2012). Ben Franklin and Socrates, 137-152.
- Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** *Autobiography*, excerpt 1 and *Autobiography*, excerpt 2; Twenge, J.M. (2019). More time on technology, less happiness? Associations between digital-media use and psychological well-being. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28, 372-379.
  - **See also:** Franklin, B. (2012). *The Art of Virtue: Ben Franklin's Formula for Successful Living*. Skyhorse Publishing Inc, 61-78; Weintraub, K. J. (1976). The Puritan Ethic and Benjamin Franklin. *The Journal of Religion*, 56(3), 223-237.

**Guiding Question(s):** Define temperance according to Franklin. What does temperance have to do with a happy life? Define digital temperance. Does this seem feasible to you? How much leisure time do you spend online? Would digital temperance contribute to your own wellbeing? What is forfeited in a life spent in digital contexts instead of among people?

### Week 6: *Well and 'Good': The Relationship between Virtue and Health*

- Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Ch. 2 – Temperance (*POH*), 17-48; S. Little. Is Good Health a Moral Achievement?; McClean, J. (2017). Human Flourishing: Implications For Medicine, Education and Commemoration. In *Commemorations and Memorials: Exploring the Human Face of Anatomy* (pp. 27-39).
  - **See also:** Kidd, T. S. (2017). *Benjamin Franklin: The religious life of a founding father*. Yale University Press, 105-127; Fiering, N. S. (1978). Benjamin Franklin and the way to virtue. *American Quarterly*, 30(2), 199-223.
- Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>



- **Reading:** Plato, *Gorgias* 479e–527e; Schulz, R., & Sherwood, P. R. (2008). Physical and mental health effects of family caregiving. *The American journal of nursing*, 108(9 Suppl), 23–27; The science of compassion: How kindness benefits our health – [link](#).
- **See also:** White, F. C. (1990). The Good in Plato's *Gorgias*. *Phronesis*, 35(2), 117–127; Doyle, J. (2007). Desire, Power and the Good in Plato's *Gorgias*. *Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities*, 94, 15; White, F. C. (2001). Plato's Last Words on Pleasure. *The Classical Quarterly*, 51(2), 458–476.
- **Ben Franklin Virtue Paper Due**

**Guiding Question(s):** Describe the relationship between health and virtue. Is good health a moral achievement? Does a good character generally support or undermine good health? Explain. Why are these difficult questions?

### Week 7: Plato (continued) on Happiness and Public Spirit

- Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - **Reading:** Plato, *Republic* Book IV selections, 419a–434c; Florida, R., Mellander, C., & Rentfrow, P. J. (2011). The Happiness of Cities. *Regional Studies*, 47(4), 613–627.
  - **See also:** Greenberg, G. (2018). America and Its Discontents: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of common unhappiness. *The Baffler*, (41), 12–18. Nussbaum, M. C. (2012). Who is the happy warrior? Philosophy, happiness research, and public policy. *International Review of Economics*, 59(4), 335–361; Scott, D. (2024). *Contemplation and Civic Happiness in Plato and Aristotle*. Cambridge University Press, Ch. 3; Beatty, J. (1976). Plato's Happy Philosopher and Politics. *The Review of Politics*, 38(4), 545–575.
- Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Plato, *Republic* selections, 434c–445e
  - **See also:** Duncan, C. M., & Steinberger, P. J. (1990). Plato's Paradox? Guardians and Philosopher-Kings. *The American Political Science Review*, 84(4), 1317–1322; Giombini, S. (2022). Happy city: justice, law, and happiness in pre-platonic thought. *A Literary, Philosophical and Religious Journey into Well-Being: Fulfilled Lives*, 29–63; C. DeVega. 14 April 2025. America's Happiness Crisis is a Generational Divide. The U.S. falls to its lowest rank ever in the 2025 World Happiness Report. *Salon*.

**Guiding Question(s):** What does it mean for a city to be happy? Does a happy city mean the citizens, individually, are happy? How does the U.S. compare to other nations on the World Happiness Report (WHR)? What does the WHR measure, and is this a suitable operational definition of happiness?

### Week 8: Aristotle on Happiness

- Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - **Reading:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I; Mauss, I. B., Tamir, M., Anderson, C. L., & Savino, N. S. (2011). Can seeking happiness make people unhappy? Paradoxical effects of valuing happiness. *Emotion*, 11(4), 807.





- See also: Owens, J. (1968). Teleology of nature in Aristotle. *The Monist*, 159-173; Dudley, J. (2004). Happiness, human nature and teleology in ancient and mediaeval philosophy. *Mediaevalia. Textos e estudos*, 23, 347-354; Rosenthal-Pubul, A. S. (2019). Aristotelian Teleology: The Bridge Between Natural Philosophy and the Problem of “The Good Life”. In *The Theoretic Life-A Classical Ideal and its Modern Fate: Reflections on the Liberal Arts* (pp. 37-48). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II
  - See also: Annas, J. (1988). Aristotle on virtue and happiness. *University of Dayton Review*, 19(3), 3; Curzer, H. J. (2018). Aristotle and moral virtue. *The Oxford handbook of virtue*, 104-129; Irwin, T. H. (1994). Happiness, Virtue, and Morality, 153-177; Ryff, C. D. (2017). Eudaimonic well-being, inequality, and health: Recent findings and future directions. *International review of economics*, 64(2), 159-178.

**Guiding Question(s):** What does Aristotle mean when he says our lives aim at some great good? What does your life aim at? According to Mauss et al, can seeking happiness make people unhappy? How might this question be equivocating on the concept of ‘happiness’?

### Week 9: *Happiness as Eudaimonia*

- Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** J. Annas, “Happiness as Achievement” ([link](#))
  - See also: Gurtler, G. M. (2003). The activity of happiness in Aristotle's ethics. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 801-834; Martin, M. W. (2007). Happiness and virtue in positive psychology. *Journal for the theory of social behaviour*, 37(1), 89-103.
- Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** S. Little, 3 models of happiness – hedonic, goal-satisfaction, eudaimonic, *The Examined Run* excerpt (PDF), 180-208
  - See also: Homiak, M. L. (1985). The Pleasure of Virtue in Aristotle's Moral Theory. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 66(1-2), 93-110; Kraut, R. (1976). Aristotle on choosing virtue for itself, 223-239; Diener, E., & Diener, C. (1996). Most people are happy. *Psychological science*, 7(3), 181-185; Ryff, C. D., & Boylan, J. M. (2016). Linking happiness to health: Comparisons between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Handbook of research methods and applications in happiness and quality of life*, 53-70.

**Guiding Question(s):** Is happiness an activity, a condition, a state, or something else? Explain. Explain the differences among hedonism, eudaimonism, and goal-satisfaction accounts of happiness. Place these terms in conversation with earlier theorists from our course.

### Week 10: - *Spring Break*

### Week 11: *Happiness as Pleasure*

- Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>



- **Reading:** Robert Nozick - The Experience Machine - [excerpt](#) *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974); Laurie Santos – lecture from Happiness course; Jennifer Frey response (PDF)
- Wednesday, March 25th
  - **Reading:** John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, [link](#), 1-25. B. Williams. & J.J.C. Smart. 1973. Against Utilitarianism. *Utilitarianism: For and Against*, 77-135.
  - **See also:** Cambridge University Press; Hoag, R. W. (1986). Happiness and freedom: recent work on John Stuart Mill. *Philosophy & public affairs*, 188-199.

**Guiding Question(s):** Would Santos enter the experience machine? Would Jennifer Frey? Would you? Explain what their responses teach us about how they understand happiness. Be able to provide an overview of Mill's utilitarianism.

### Week 12: *Limitations of Happiness as Pleasure*

- Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Jonathan Haidt, Ch. 5 “Pursuit of Happiness” from *The Happiness Hypothesis*, 81-106
- Wednesday, April 1st
  - **Reading:** Jonathan Haidt, Ch. 8 “The Felicity of Virtue” from *The Happiness Hypothesis*, 155-180; Haidt, J., Patrick Seder, J., & Kesebir, S. (2008). [Hive psychology, happiness, and public policy. The Journal of Legal Studies, 37\(S2\), S133-S156](#)
  - **See also:** Keyes, C. L., & Haidt, J. (2003). Flourishing; Haidt, J. (2003). The moral emotions. *Handbook of affective sciences*, 11(2003), 852-870; Kim, K. (2019). Happy people does not compare: difference in social comparison between happy and unhappy people. *Asia-Pac J Conver Res Interchange*, 5, 21-30.

**Guiding Question(s):** Name benefits of the happiness as pleasure view. Name limitations. What is the assumed view of human nature behind this perspective?

### Week 13: *Limitations of Happiness as Pleasure (continued)*

- Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Paul Bloom – lecture: Our intuitions about what makes us happy are often wrong (PDF); Frick, J. D. (2014). 'Making People Happy, Not Making Happy People': A Defense of the Asymmetry Intuition in Population Ethics.
  - **See also:** Stevenson, S., & Hicks, R. E. (2016). Trust your instincts: The relationship between intuitive decision making and happiness. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(11), 463-483; Hawkins, J. S. (2010). The subjective intuition. *Philosophical Studies*, 148(1), 61-68.
- Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Peter Geach. 1977. Why Men Need the Virtues, *The Virtues* 1-18. Cambridge University Press. (PDF)
  - **See also:** MacIntyre, Alasdair. 2002. Virtues in Foot and Geach: 621-631; Lee, H. A Thomistic Critique of Peter Geach's Ethical Naturalism.





**Guiding Question(s):** Why are our intuitions often wrong about what will make us happy? Make a list of your assumptions about what will make you happy. Are there any you think are correct? Incorrect? According to Geach, why do we need virtues for a good life? What is ethical naturalism?

### Week 14: *Suffering and Happiness*

- Monday, April 13th
  - **Reading:** Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, [link](#) – part 1 only
  - **See also:** Arifin, M. Z. (2025). The Meaning of Life in the Thought of Al-Gazālī and Viktor Frankl: A Comparative Study of Spiritual and Psychological Approaches to Authentic Happiness. *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies*, 4(1), 132-147; Frankl, V. E. (1966). Self-transcendence as a human phenomenon. *Journal of humanistic psychology*, 6(2), 97-106; Schimmoeller, E. M., & Rothhaar, T. W. (2021). Searching for meaning with victor frankl and walker percy. *The Linacre Quarterly*, 88(1), 94-104.
- Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, [link](#) – part 1 (continued); Paul Bloom counter-hedonism – *The Sweet Spot*, preface (PDF)
  - **See also:** Veenhoven, R. (2003). Hedonism and happiness. *Journal of happiness studies*, 4(4), 437-457; Delle Fave, A., Massimini, F., & Bassi, M. (2010). Hedonism and eudaimonism in positive psychology. In *Psychological selection and optimal experience across cultures: Social empowerment through personal growth* (pp. 3-18). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands; Gregory, A. (2015). Hedonism. In *The Routledge handbook of philosophy of well-being* (pp. 113-123). Routledge; Lopes, M. P., Da Palma, P. J., Garcia, B. C., & Gomes, C. (2016). Training for happiness: the impacts of different positive exercises on hedonism and eudaemonia. *SpringerPlus*, 5(1), 744.
  - **Self-Help Book Project Due**

**Guiding Question(s):** Describe the relationship between a good life and a hard life. Can a hard life be a happy one? How much difficulty (and what kinds of difficulties) can be part of a life before it becomes a bad life?

### Week 15: *Silence and Happiness*

- Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Ch. 12 – POH, Pursuing Happiness Today, 263-280; Mahakud, G. C., & Yadav, R. (2015). Effects of happiness on mental health. *Int. J. Indian Psychol*, 2, 106-114.
- Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Ch. 13 – “Why the Americans Show Themselves so Restless in the Midst of their Well-Being,” 625-629 (Goldhammer); Redlich, F., & Kellert, S. R. (1978). Trends in American mental health. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 135(1), 22-28; Makki, N., & Mohanty, M. S. (2019). Mental health and happiness: evidence from the US data. *The American Economist*, 64(2), 197-215.



- See also: R.K. DeYoung. 2004. Resistance to the demands of love: Aquinas on the vice of Acedia. *The Thomist* 68 (2):173-204

**Guiding Question(s):** Define mental health. Describe the relationship between a happy life and good mental health. Define the vice of acedia. How might this vice impact mental health, and what can we do to avoid it? Why are Americans restless? Is this a particularly American problem, or is it a human problem? Explain your answer.

**Week 16:**

- Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>
  - Final Exam Review

## *CIVICLL 2200: The Pursuit of Happiness: An American Tradition* [Semester]

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Format of Instruction : Seminar  
Meeting Day /Time:  
Classroom Location:  
Contact Hours:

Instructor: Dr. Sabrina B. Little  
Email: little.802@osu.edu  
Office:  
Office Hours:

### **Course Description**

The Declaration of Independence names “the pursuit of happiness” as an unalienable right, alongside life and liberty. This course introduces students to the tradition of inquiry on happiness and the good life that informed the American Founders, with special attention paid to considerations of health and wellbeing (ELO 3.1). Students will engage in critical thinking about happiness (ELO 1.1), exploring theoretical (e.g., eudaimonic, desire-satisfaction, hedonic accounts), socio-economic (e.g., relationship between reported happiness and wealth), scientific (e.g., findings from contemporary social sciences on the relationships among mental and physical health, happiness, and well-being), historical (e.g., the American Founding), cultural (e.g., Western philosophical tradition), and personal (e.g., self-report) perspectives (ELO 3.1). They will identify, describe, and synthesize these different approaches—for example, asking whether happy feelings are also part of eudaimonism (ELO 2.1).

Due to the civic emphasis of this course, students will investigate whether the wellbeing of the collective (the city) has costs for the wellbeing of the citizen, or vice versa. They will examine what role, if any, a government might play in supporting the health and vitality of its citizens and discuss where suffering fits into a good life. The Founders conceived of happiness as an “activity of the soul,” rooted human nature and constituted, in part, by virtue. They emphasized duty over pleasure, self-improvement over complacency, and intellect over physical condition. Students will evaluate whether happiness, conceived in this way, is met in the contemporary American landscape. Using a scholarly and evidence-based framework, students will examine what material conditions, such as wealth, health, freedom, and leisure, must be in place to make such an account tenable. They will also critically assess the account of human nature that underpins the Founders’ view of happiness.”

By undertaking various happiness practices throughout the term, students will demonstrate a developing sense of self through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, and by reflecting on various accounts of happiness in writing and discussion, they will build on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts (ELO 2.2, ELO 3.2). Students will write a term paper, placing a contemporary self-help book in conversation with empirical, historical, and philosophical approaches to a good life (ELO 1.2).

### **II. Learning Outcomes**

The Pursuit of Happiness is designated a **GEN THEMES: Health and Well-Being** course. It counts for 3 credits in this category. As such, students will work on the following objectives:

**Goal 1:** *Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.*

- 1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.
- 1.2. Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.

**Goal 2:** *Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.*

- 2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.
- 2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

**Goal 3:** *Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing through attention to at least two dimensions of wellbeing. (Ex: physical, mental, emotional, career, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, creative, financial, etc.).*

- 3.1. Explore and analyze health and wellbeing from theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, cultural, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives.
- 3.2. Identify, reflect on, or apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing.

### **How this Course Meets the Goals & ELOs of Health and Well-Being**

The Declaration of Independence names the pursuit of happiness as an unalienable right. However, in the United States, currently 42.5 million adults suffer from anxiety disorders, and 22.5 million adults and 4.8 million youth (8.8 percent and 19.5 percent of the population, respectively) suffer from major depression.<sup>1</sup> If happiness is an unalienable right, we might wonder why so many people seem to be alienated from it.

Happiness is a civic question. It concerns the material supports required to be mentally and physically healthy enough to thrive. It concerns opportunities for work and for education, relationships with others, public health policies, quality of food, and opportunities for leisure. If

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<sup>1</sup> Quick facts and statistics about mental health. 2025. Mental Health America. Web  
<<https://mhanational.org/resources/quick-facts-and-statistics-about-mental-health/>> Accessed 14 November 2025.

we are to believe the Founders, happiness also concerns virtues like temperance, justice, and righteous anger, and living a life fitting of one's human nature. Moreover, it is a pursuit (or activity), rather than a condition. This course investigates the critical civic and interdisciplinary question of "happiness" in a time when happiness seems to many Americans to be untenable.

The Pursuit of Happiness serves the Health and Well-Being GEN Theme by investigating a range of interdisciplinary resources (**Goal 2**), using an in-depth scholarly approach (**Goal 1**), and assisting students to reflect and act on the findings from our course (**Goal 3**). In more precise terms, see the chart below. See also the designations on the Assignment Descriptions and Course Reading Schedule on the final pages of this syllabus.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Expected Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
<b>Goal 1:</b> <i>Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.</i>	1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.	<b>Weekly Quizzes, Reading Checks, and Final Exam.</b> Students are regularly evaluated on course readings, which are arduous and reflect various perspectives on wellness, happiness, and health. (See assignment descriptions and course schedule for details.)
<b>Goal 1:</b> <i>Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.</i>	1.2. Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.	<b>Self-Help Book Term Paper.</b> Students will undertake a research project, evaluating a contemporary self-help book of their choosing. They will place it in conversation with writings from the American Founders, the ancient and modern thinkers who formed the basis of their understanding, contemporary empirical work, public policy research, etc. Students will use interdisciplinary peer-reviewed research to evaluate the feasibility of their book's self-help approach and examine how it squares with (or departs from) the vision of American Founders on happiness.
<b>Goal 2:</b> <i>Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.</i>	2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.	<b>Final Exam.</b> Students will be asked to place different approaches to happiness (e.g., eudaimonic, desire-satisfaction, hedonic) in conversation with one another. They will identify which ideas belong to which thinker, compare and critique different views, and describe met and unmet aspects of the Founders' vision of the pursuit of happiness.

		<p>Students will also identify, describe, and synthesize approaches in our <b>Reading Questions</b> and <b>Course Discussions</b>.</p> <p>Identifications, including the grammar or key concepts of particular perspectives, will also appear in <b>Weekly Quizzes</b>.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> <i>Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.</i></p>	<p>2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.</p>	<p><b>In-Class Discussions.</b> Students will engage in Socratic discussion on various approaches (e.g., Locke, Mill, Lyubomirsky, Bloom, Jefferson). They will assess families of ideas (e.g., Mill’s utilitarianism and certain forms of hedonism) and reflect on how well each approach captures American life and their own understandings of what it means to be happy and well. One refrain of the course is the relationship between morality and good health. For example, certain excellences of character (e.g., diligence, patience) may broadly support good health. For example, the diligent person is more likely than one absent this trait to brush their teeth consistently. However, certain excellences of character (e.g., compassion or justice) sometimes come at the cost of good health. For example, Rosa Parks suffered from chronic insomnia, a heart condition, and stomach ulcers—conditions made severe by her uncompromising civil rights advocacy. The good work that defined Parks also made her ill because of racism and systemic issues. We will discuss the sometimes-uneasy relationship between goodness and wellness and how politics is often the ‘middle term’ in this relationship. We will reflect on other cases and our own experiences with respect to these topics.</p> <p><b>Reading Checks:</b> These are basic open-ended questions concerning key themes and perspectives of course readings. These are assigned to encourage students to engage well with the reading. These are worth <b>3 points each</b> (1 for attending, 2 for meaningfully “reflecting and self-</p>

		<p>assessing” on the course content). Students will complete 10-12 of these per term at the start of classes.</p>
<p><b>Goal 3:</b> <i>Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing through attention to at least two dimensions of wellbeing. (Ex: physical, mental, emotional, career, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, creative, financial, etc.).</i></p>	<p>3.1. Explore and analyze health and wellbeing from theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, cultural, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives.</p>	<p>Our course readings are history, philosophy, and science heavy. Some of these thinkers as follows:</p> <p><b>Historical</b> – Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Frankl, Tocqueville, DeYoung (on monastic traditions), Douglass, Lincoln</p> <p><b>Socio-economic</b> – Lyubomirsky, Budrys</p> <p><b>Theoretical</b> – Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Mill, Nussbaum, Annas, Little, Nozick, Williams, Smart, Geach, MacIntyre</p> <p><b>Scientific</b> – Paul Bloom, Jonathan Haidt, Stevenson &amp; Hicks, Hawkins, Redlich &amp; Kellert, Delle Fave, Massimini, &amp; Bassi, Frick</p> <p><b>Policy</b> – Beauchamp, Budrys, Murray, Debnath &amp; Shankar</p> <p><b>Technological</b> – Twenge, Michael Lamb on digital temperance</p> <p><b>Personal</b> – Laurie Santos, Ben Franklin, Frankl, Veenhoven</p> <p>This learning objective is evaluated as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Quizzes</b> – On two of the weekly quizzes, students will be asked to place perspectives fruitfully in common. (<u>Week 5</u>) Place Callicles’ view on temperance and self-rule from Plato’s <i>Gorgias</i> in conversation with Twenge and Lamb on digital temperance. Is Callicles correct that having free access to whatever one wants is the key to a happy life? (<u>Week 6</u>) Is good health a moral achievement? Answer this question placing Aristotle in conversation with Little and the clinical research we explored on compassion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 3: Exploring Perspectives</b></p>	<p>3.2. Identify, reflect on, or apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Ben Franklin Project</b> (See project description below). Students will engage in virtue development similar to those recorded in Franklin’s autobiography.</p>

		<b>Happiness Challenges.</b> Throughout the term, they will choose among several social science-backed practices (e.g., meditation) and journal about impact on wellness. For context, see this <a href="#">link</a> for Laurie Santos' happiness course at Yale.
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### III. Texts

Students are required to purchase the following text, which is available at Barnes & Noble and on Amazon:

Rosen, S. 2024. *The Pursuit of Happiness: How Classical Writers on Virtue Inspired the Lives of the Founders and Defined America*. Simon & Schuster.

All other course readings will be available online or by PDF on Blackboard.

On the Course Reading Schedule, on the final pages of the syllabus, students will also find supplementary readings. These readings are present for three reasons—to engage students who wish to examine each topic further, to model the scholarly process by introducing students to suitable secondary literature addressing each topic from opposing and supporting perspectives, and to serve as a starting point for students as they begin their semester writing projects.

### IV. Assignments and Grading

Attendance and Participation	Coming to class, basic reading checks	15%
Quizzes	On average weekly; Happiness challenges – 4 per term	15%
Scaffolded Ben Franklin Virtue Project Tasks	Deadlines Rolling	10%
Ben Franklin Term Paper – Final Deadline	Week 10, Friday	25%
Self-Help Book Project	Week 13, Friday	15%
Final Exam	TBD Exam period	20%

#### Attendance and Participation (3.1, 2.1, 2.2)

Attendance is imperative in this discussion-based course. Students should come to class well-prepared to engage in the discussion. Our readings are interdisciplinary, representing historical, theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, cultural, policy, and personal perspectives throughout the



term. Through conversations and Socratic dialogue, we will identify, analyze, synthesis, and compare them.

We will do regular **reading checks** to start the class, asking students to recount or compare key ideas they remember from the reading, or to answer very basic questions. These hold students accountable to doing the reading without becoming stressed if there are ideas they do not understand.

Students are encouraged to take notes by hand, rather than using a laptop. If a student must use a laptop for some reason, they are required to keep it in airplane mode. iPhones must be turned off and put away at all times. Again, this is a discussion-based course. Devices diminish our strength of presence.

Attendance is taken every day. Each day is worth 2 points. 1 point is deducted for using iPhones or computers for unrelated work during class. 1 point is deducted for being tardy. If your absence is excusable according to the school handbook, email ahead of time.

### **Weekly Quizzes (ELOs 2.1, 2.2, 3.2)**

Unless there is a major deadline that week, students will complete weekly content quizzes. These are short multiple-choice and true-false quizzes, located on Canvas. They are open-note but not to be taken with peers or internet assistance. Their function is to encourage students to complete readings, attend lectures, and assess their understanding week after week.

Counted among quizzes are various **Happiness Challenges**. Students will complete four throughout the term. They involve undertaking a “happiness strategy”—a set of practices that are empirically shown to improve subjective wellbeing. Examples include mindfulness practices, gratitude lists, social time, improving sleep hygiene, and daily exercise. Students will undertake each strategy for a week and journal about how it impacted their sense of wellbeing. They will identify, reflect on, and apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing.

### **Ben Franklin Virtue and Wellbeing Paper (ELO 2.2, 3.2)**

This assignment is a **virtue-developmental task** akin to Ben Franklin’s project quest for moral perfection. Students will select two virtues to practice over the course of the semester, journaling about the process. These papers involve both theory and reflection. They will provide an overview of their two virtues in a broadly Aristotelian virtue theory literature, then will describe their attempts at growing in virtue throughout the term and assess any impacts on their health, wellbeing, and happiness. For example, does growing in virtue impact one’s subjective sense of wellbeing? Did the health status of the student change, or was it changed by, participation in virtue practices? Did the project contribute to a sense of meaning or purpose in any way? Since

this paper concerns growth in virtue, students should explore both virtue theory literature and empirical resources on character development.

This paper's tasks are scaffolded throughout the term. Students will select virtues, outline research and name scholarly sources, complete an early draft to discuss among classmates, then turn in the final paper. The paper should be eight to ten pages, double-spaced, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and be carefully edited. It will include a minimum of **six** scholarly sources across disciplines. For example, students cannot exclusively draw on history or philosophy. They must engage with social science research on wellness as well. The final paper is due at 11:59pm on the date listed in the syllabus.

This course intends to mature a student's "sense of self as a learner through reflection [and] self-assessment...building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts." Having the opportunity to reflect on one's character as pertains to happiness and develop oneself in certain ways is a means of preparing students for life beyond the classroom. An example is that students may find (as students often do), that they struggle with digital intemperance—experiencing an outsized reliance on their devices and on social media, in ways that interrupt their ability to self-govern and commit to their own good choices, such that they can flourish. Making these changes can impact one's emotional constitution and feelings of wellness, as well as contribute to mental and emotional health. In this project, students will have the opportunity to self-evaluate in these respects.

### **Self-Help Book Project (ELOs 1.2, 3.2)**

Students will select a **contemporary self-help book** and critique it, in conversation with the Founders and philosophers we read this term, as well as empirical resources on wellbeing and health. Students will investigate whether the book provides a robust and defensible vision of happiness compatible with a flourishing citizenry. They will also ask whether the approach seems empirically apt. For example, if the book suggests socializing more, is there research to support that doing so generally yields increased wellness, happier lives, or better health outcomes?

This project involves formal writing. Students are encouraged to select their self-help book early in the term and have it approved by the professor. Examples of texts include *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, *Atomic Habits*, *Think and Grow Rich*, *The Power of Now*, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, *The Success Principles*, *The Purpose Driven Life*, and *Me, But Better*. Students will engage with a range of perspectives on these papers, in service to the varied content and diverse interpretations requirement of the GEN Theme: Health and Wellbeing.

To see an example of what mature scholarly engagement involves, see the range and quality of supplementary readings on our course reading schedule. Essays should engage dissenting voices on the topic. For example, a student should not assume the Founders views were correct (or incorrect). They might include Ben Franklin on why virtue matters for happiness. A dissenting voice may include Aristotle, insofar as the reasons he supplies for why virtue matters for happiness are quite different than for Franklin. Students should also include voices that deemphasize the importance of virtue, perhaps with a greater emphasis on material supports of

health or wellbeing, with counterarguments. Students should evaluate the conception of a good life assumed by their self-help author and assess any limitations of this view. The goal is an “advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration” of the theme. Scholarly explorations are honest insofar as they engage with the best available arguments, in support and against their own positions. Scholarly explanations also take evidence seriously, meaning that successful papers will engage with research on happiness and wellbeing whenever available.

This paper is scaffolded into smaller tasks throughout the semester, and students will have ample opportunity to clarify their positions on their chosen self-help book, refine their arguments, and discuss their papers with classmates.

### **Final Exam (2.1)**

This is a cumulative exam on the landscape of happiness, in conversation with the American Founders, their philosophical influences, and contemporary voices in wellness and flourishing. Students will be asked to compare “identify, describe, and synthesize approaches” to happiness and wellbeing. A review guide will be provided. The exam is given during finals week.

### **Grading Scale**

All assignments will be graded out of a 100-point scale and then converted into the final grade (also on a 100-point scale) using percentages outlined below. Your letter grade will be determined using the following ranges.

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

### **V. Statement Regarding AI, ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Related Technologies**

The objectives of this course are to learn, and to be transformed by reading and reckoning with ideas in a serious way. You fail to do this with AI and related technologies. If you use ChatGPT, Grammarly, or other assistive technologies to assist in your writing at all, even taking ChatGPT’s ideas and re-writing them as your own, you will receive a 0 on the assignment with no opportunity to make up the grade.

In Mortimer Adler's "An Invitation to the Pain of Learning," he writes that "the process of learning that must be dominated at every moment by the activity of the learner. And the fundamental activity that is involved in every kind of genuine learning is intellectual activity, the activity generally known as thinking...Without thinking, the kind of learning which transforms a mind, gives it new insights, enlightens it, deepens understanding, elevates the spirit simply cannot occur."

If you are not doing the arduous task of thinking—organizing thoughts, defining, synthesizing, comparing, writing—you are not receiving an education.

## **VI. Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-48.7 (B)). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct.

## **VII. Disability Services**

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. 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. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; or [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu).

## **VIII. Religious Accommodations**

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests

for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office.

## **IX. Intellectual Diversity**

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

### **Reading Schedule**

#### **Notes:**

- This reading schedule is structured to satisfy ELO 3.1. Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing from a range of perspectives, including theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, cultural, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives. We will discuss these ideas together in class.



- On most class days, there are additional readings listed under ‘See also.’ These readings are available for two reasons—to encourage interested students to read more on a given topic and to demonstrate scholarship. For our formal writing assignments, students may start with these texts or locate texts of similar caliber. To reduce reading load, students are not required to read these additional texts for the designated class days.

### Week 1: *Health, Wellbeing, and the Pursuit of Happiness*

- o Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>:
  - o **Reading:** Erdman S. E. (2016). Defining 'good health'. *Aging*, 8(12), 3157–3158. [Declaration of Independence](#) – “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (link)
  - o Syllabus Review

Guiding Question(s): Define good health. What is the ‘pursuit of happiness’? How does it relate to concepts such as *wellness*, *flourishing*, *prosperity*, *contentment*, and *mental health*?

- o Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>:
  - o **Reading:** World Health Organization – [Definition of Health](#); Ch. 1 – Order (*The Pursuit of Happiness*, Rosen – hereafter, *POH*), 1-16; Alesina, A., Di Tella, R., & MacCulloch, R. (2004). Inequality and happiness: are Europeans and Americans different? *Journal of public economics*, 88(9-10), 2009-2042. D.M. McMahon. Happiness in America Isn’t What It Used to Be. *Time Magazine*. Web <<https://time.com/6244240/happiness-america-history/>>. McManus, J., Medvedev, O.N., van Zyl, L. et al. 2024. Measuring Virtue: An Aristotelian Perspective on Advancing Positive Psychology. *Int J Appl Posit Psychol* 9, 1313–1337
  - o **See also:** N.K. Badhwar. 2014. Objectivity and subjectivity in theories of wellness. *Philosophy & Public Policy Quarterly* 32(1): 1-28. Lavazza A. (2016). Happiness, Psychology, and Degrees of Realism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 1148. C.N. Conklin. 2015. The Origins of the Pursuit of Happiness. *Washington University Jurisprudence Review* 7(2): 195.

Guiding Question(s): Is there something distinctly American about the ‘pursuit of happiness’? How happy are Americans compared to Europeans? What are socio-economic constraints on a person’s wellbeing? Describe difficulties in measuring virtue.

### Week 2: *Happiness and Government*

- o Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>:
  - o No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- o Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>:
  - o **Reading:** Ch. 1 – Order (*POH* continued) 1-16; Cicero, *The Tusculan Disputations* (excerpt, [link](#)); Cicero, *On Duties* (excerpt, [link](#)); T.D. Sonenshine, 2024. Haslam SA, Reicher SD, Millard K, McDonald R. 'Happy to have been of service': the Yale archive as a window into the engaged followership of participants in Milgram's 'obedience' experiments. *Br J Soc Psychol*. 2015 Mar;54(1):55-83. doi: 10.1111/bjso.12074.



- See also: Rahe, P. A. (1994). Cicero and republicanism in America. *Ciceroniana* online, 8. Why are Americans so Unhappy? *The Hill*. Manca, J. (2003). Cicero in America: Civic Duty and Private Happiness in Charles Willson Peale's Portrait of William Paca. *American Art*, 17(1), 69-89

Guiding Question(s): Haslam (et al) describe that sometimes performing duties (regardless of moral quality) make us feel fulfilled. Why this is a problem? Describe what we learn from the Milgram study. Name an example of a civic duty. What do civic duties have to do with flourishing? Does a happy life have a certain moral quality to it? What are Americans so unhappy?

### Week 3: *Happiness and Government (continued)*

- Monday, January 26th:
  - **Reading**: *Federalist Papers* 62 and 43; reference [link](#); J.M. Twenge. 2019. The Sad State of Happiness in the United State and the Role of Digital Media. World Happiness Report.
  - See also: Pangle, T. L. (1986). The Federalist Papers' Vision of Civic Health and the Tradition Out of Which That Vision Emerges. *Western Political Quarterly*, 39(4), 577-602; Cahn, E. N. (1952). Madison and the Pursuit of Happiness. *NYUL Rev.*, 27, 265
- Wednesday, January 28th:
  - **Reading**: Duncan, G. (2010). Should happiness-maximization be the goal of government? *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 11(2), 163-178; C. Murray, *In Pursuit: Of Happiness and Good Government* [excerpt](#)
  - See also: Debnath, R. M., & Shankar, R. (2014). Does good governance enhance happiness: a cross nation study. *Social indicators research*, 116(1), 235-253.

Guiding Question(s): What are governments for? How might a government support the health and happiness of its citizens? Why might it be a problem for our civic flourishing if many of our interactions are now online?

### Week 4: *Happiness and Justice*

- Monday, February 2nd:
  - **Reading**: Ch. 11 – *POH*, Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln's Self-Reliance, 243-262; Braveman et al (2022). Systematic and structural racism: Definitions, examples, health damages, and approaches to dismantling. *Health Affairs* 41(2). Iceland, J., & Ludwig-Dehm, S. (2019). Black-white differences in happiness, 1972-2014. *Social science research*, 77, 16–29. Beauchamp, D. E. (1976). Public Health as Social Justice. *Inquiry*, 13(1), 3–14.
  - See also: Leverenz, D. (1987). Frederick Douglass's Self-Refashioning. *Criticism*, 29(3), 341-370; Marinković, D. (2019). Forging of the American Identity in the Works of Henry David Thoreau and Frederick Douglass (Doctoral dissertation, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences). Budrys Ch 9. Social Determinants & Longevity in US Counties (PDF).
- Wednesday, February 4th:





- **Reading:** Proceedings of the Colored national convention, Rochester, July 6-8, 1853 [excerpt](#)

Guiding Question(s): What does justice have to do with happiness? Describe trends between health and race. What does Douglass mean by self-reliance?

### Week 5: *Temperance and the Good Life*

- Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Ben Franklin's Quest for Moral Perfection ([link](#)); Nguyen, L., Walters, J., Paul, S., Monreal Ijurco, S., Rainey, G. E., Parekh, N., Blair, G., & Darrah, M. (2025). Feeds, feelings, and focus: A systematic review and meta-analysis examining the cognitive and mental health correlates of short-form video use. *Psychological Bulletin*, 151(9), 1125–1146. (*This is about temperance with respect to using TikTok!*); M. Lamb and D. Brown. 2022. Digital temperance: adapting an ancient virtue for a technological age. *Ethics and Information Technology* 24(4): 1-13.
  - See also: Higgins, N. (2016). Achieving Human Perfection: Benjamin Franklin contra George Whitefield. *Journal of American Studies*, 50(1), 61-80; Fiering, N. S. (1978). Benjamin Franklin and the way to virtue. *American Quarterly*, 30(2), 199-223; Pangle, L. S. (2012). Ben Franklin and Socrates, 137-152.
- Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** *Autobiography*, excerpt 1 and *Autobiography*, excerpt 2; Twenge, J.M. (2019). More time on technology, less happiness? Associations between digital-media use and psychological well-being. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28, 372-379.
  - See also: Franklin, B. (2012). *The Art of Virtue: Ben Franklin's Formula for Successful Living*. Skyhorse Publishing Inc, 61-78; Weintraub, K. J. (1976). The Puritan Ethic and Benjamin Franklin. *The Journal of Religion*, 56(3), 223-237.

Guiding Question(s): Define temperance according to Franklin. What does temperance have to do with a happy life? Define digital temperance. Does this seem feasible to you? How much leisure time do you spend online? Would digital temperance contribute to your own wellbeing? What is forfeited in a life spent in digital contexts instead of among people?

### Week 6: *Well and 'Good': The Relationship between Virtue and Health*

- Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Ch. 2 – Temperance (*POH*), 17-48; S. Little. Is Good Health a Moral Achievement?; McClean, J. (2017). Human Flourishing: Implications For Medicine, Education and Commemoration. In *Commemorations and Memorials: Exploring the Human Face of Anatomy* (pp. 27-39).
  - See also: Kidd, T. S. (2017). *Benjamin Franklin: The religious life of a founding father*. Yale University Press, 105-127; Fiering, N. S. (1978). Benjamin Franklin and the way to virtue. *American Quarterly*, 30(2), 199-223.
- Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>





- **Reading:** Plato, *Gorgias* 479e–527e; Schulz, R., & Sherwood, P. R. (2008). Physical and mental health effects of family caregiving. *The American journal of nursing*, 108(9 Suppl), 23–27; The science of compassion: How kindness benefits our health – [link](#).
- **See also:** White, F. C. (1990). The Good in Plato's *Gorgias*. *Phronesis*, 35(2), 117–127; Doyle, J. (2007). Desire, Power and the Good in Plato's *Gorgias*. *Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities*, 94, 15; White, F. C. (2001). Plato's Last Words on Pleasure. *The Classical Quarterly*, 51(2), 458–476.
- **Ben Franklin Virtue Paper Due**

**Guiding Question(s):** Describe the relationship between health and virtue. Is good health a moral achievement? Does a good character generally support or undermine good health? Explain. Why are these difficult questions?

### Week 7: Plato (continued) on Happiness and Public Spirit

- Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - **Reading:** Plato, *Republic* Book IV selections, 419a–434c; Florida, R., Mellander, C., & Rentfrow, P. J. (2011). The Happiness of Cities. *Regional Studies*, 47(4), 613–627.
  - **See also:** Greenberg, G. (2018). America and Its Discontents: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of common unhappiness. *The Baffler*, (41), 12–18. Nussbaum, M. C. (2012). Who is the happy warrior? Philosophy, happiness research, and public policy. *International Review of Economics*, 59(4), 335–361; Scott, D. (2024). *Contemplation and Civic Happiness in Plato and Aristotle*. Cambridge University Press, Ch. 3; Beatty, J. (1976). Plato's Happy Philosopher and Politics. *The Review of Politics*, 38(4), 545–575.
- Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Plato, *Republic* selections, 434c–445e
  - **See also:** Duncan, C. M., & Steinberger, P. J. (1990). Plato's Paradox? Guardians and Philosopher-Kings. *The American Political Science Review*, 84(4), 1317–1322; Giombini, S. (2022). Happy city: justice, law, and happiness in pre-platonic thought. *A Literary, Philosophical and Religious Journey into Well-Being: Fulfilled Lives*, 29–63; C. DeVega. 14 April 2025. America's Happiness Crisis is a Generational Divide. The U.S. falls to its lowest rank ever in the 2025 World Happiness Report. *Salon*.

**Guiding Question(s):** What does it mean for a city to be happy? Does a happy city mean the citizens, individually, are happy? How does the U.S. compare to other nations on the World Happiness Report (WHR)? What does the WHR measure, and is this a suitable operational definition of happiness?

### Week 8: Aristotle on Happiness

- Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - **Reading:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I; Mauss, I. B., Tamir, M., Anderson, C. L., & Savino, N. S. (2011). Can seeking happiness make people unhappy? Paradoxical effects of valuing happiness. *Emotion*, 11(4), 807.



- See also: Owens, J. (1968). Teleology of nature in Aristotle. *The Monist*, 159-173; Dudley, J. (2004). Happiness, human nature and teleology in ancient and mediaeval philosophy. *Mediaevalia. Textos e estudos*, 23, 347-354; Rosenthal-Pubul, A. S. (2019). Aristotelian Teleology: The Bridge Between Natural Philosophy and the Problem of “The Good Life”. In *The Theoretic Life-A Classical Ideal and its Modern Fate: Reflections on the Liberal Arts* (pp. 37-48). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II
  - See also: Annas, J. (1988). Aristotle on virtue and happiness. *University of Dayton Review*, 19(3), 3; Curzer, H. J. (2018). Aristotle and moral virtue. *The Oxford handbook of virtue*, 104-129; Irwin, T. H. (1994). Happiness, Virtue, and Morality, 153-177; Ryff, C. D. (2017). Eudaimonic well-being, inequality, and health: Recent findings and future directions. *International review of economics*, 64(2), 159-178.

Guiding Question(s): What does Aristotle mean when he says our lives aim at some great good? What does your life aim at? According to Mauss et al, can seeking happiness make people unhappy? How might this question be equivocating on the concept of ‘happiness’?

### Week 9: *Happiness as Eudaimonia*

- Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** J. Annas, “Happiness as Achievement” ([link](#))
  - See also: Gurtler, G. M. (2003). The activity of happiness in Aristotle's ethics. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 801-834; Martin, M. W. (2007). Happiness and virtue in positive psychology. *Journal for the theory of social behaviour*, 37(1), 89-103.
- Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** S. Little, 3 models of happiness – hedonic, goal-satisfaction, eudaimonic, *The Examined Run* excerpt (PDF), 180-208
  - See also: Homiak, M. L. (1985). The Pleasure of Virtue in Aristotle's Moral Theory. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 66(1-2), 93-110; Kraut, R. (1976). Aristotle on choosing virtue for itself, 223-239; Diener, E., & Diener, C. (1996). Most people are happy. *Psychological science*, 7(3), 181-185; Ryff, C. D., & Boylan, J. M. (2016). Linking happiness to health: Comparisons between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Handbook of research methods and applications in happiness and quality of life*, 53-70.

Guiding Question(s): Is happiness an activity, a condition, a state, or something else? Explain. Explain the differences among hedonism, eudaimonism, and goal-satisfaction accounts of happiness. Place these terms in conversation with earlier theorists from our course.

### Week 10: - *Spring Break*

### Week 11: *Happiness as Pleasure*

- Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>



- **Reading:** Robert Nozick - The Experience Machine - [excerpt](#) *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974); Laurie Santos – lecture from Happiness course; Jennifer Frey response (PDF)
- Wednesday, March 25th
  - **Reading:** John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, [link](#), 1-25. B. Williams. & J.J.C. Smart. 1973. Against Utilitarianism. *Utilitarianism: For and Against*, 77-135.
  - **See also:** Cambridge University Press; Hoag, R. W. (1986). Happiness and freedom: recent work on John Stuart Mill. *Philosophy & public affairs*, 188-199.

Guiding Question(s): Would Santos enter the experience machine? Would Jennifer Frey? Would you? Explain what their responses teach us about how they understand happiness. Be able to provide an overview of Mill's utilitarianism.

### **Week 12: Limitations of Happiness as Pleasure**

- Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Jonathan Haidt, Ch. 5 "Pursuit of Happiness" from *The Happiness Hypothesis*, 81-106
- Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>
  - **Reading:** Jonathan Haidt, Ch. 8 "The Felicity of Virtue" from *The Happiness Hypothesis*, 155-180; Haidt, J., Patrick Seder, J., & Kesebir, S. (2008). Hive psychology, happiness, and public policy. *The Journal of Legal Studies*, 37(S2), S133-S156
  - **See also:** Keyes, C. L., & Haidt, J. (2003). Flourishing; Haidt, J. (2003). The moral emotions. *Handbook of affective sciences*, 11(2003), 852-870; Kim, K. (2019). Happy people does not compare: difference in social comparison between happy and unhappy people. *Asia-Pac J Conver Res Interchange*, 5, 21-30.

Guiding Question(s): Name benefits of the happiness as pleasure view. Name limitations. What is the assumed view of human nature behind this perspective?

### **Week 13: Limitations of Happiness as Pleasure (continued)**

- Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Paul Bloom – lecture: Our intuitions about what makes us happy are often wrong (PDF); Frick, J. D. (2014). 'Making People Happy, Not Making Happy People': A Defense of the Asymmetry Intuition in Population Ethics.
  - **See also:** Stevenson, S., & Hicks, R. E. (2016). Trust your instincts: The relationship between intuitive decision making and happiness. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(11), 463-483; Hawkins, J. S. (2010). The subjective intuition. *Philosophical Studies*, 148(1), 61-68.
- Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading:** Peter Geach. 1977. Why Men Need the Virtues, *The Virtues* 1-18. Cambridge University Press. (PDF)
  - **See also:** MacIntyre, Alasdair. 2002. Virtues in Foot and Geach: 621-631; Lee, H. A Thomistic Critique of Peter Geach's Ethical Naturalism.



Guiding Question(s): Why are our intuitions often wrong about what will make us happy? Make a list of your assumptions about what will make you happy. Are there any you think are correct? Incorrect? According to Geach, why do we need virtues for a good life? What is ethical naturalism?

### Week 14: *Suffering and Happiness*

- Monday, April 13th
  - **Reading**: Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, [link](#) – part 1 only
  - **See also**: Arifin, M. Z. (2025). The Meaning of Life in the Thought of Al-Gazālī and Viktor Frankl: A Comparative Study of Spiritual and Psychological Approaches to Authentic Happiness. *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies*, 4(1), 132-147; Frankl, V. E. (1966). Self-transcendence as a human phenomenon. *Journal of humanistic psychology*, 6(2), 97-106; Schimmoeller, E. M., & Rothhaar, T. W. (2021). Searching for meaning with victor frankl and walker percy. *The Linacre Quarterly*, 88(1), 94-104.
- Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading**: Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, [link](#) – part 1 (continued); Paul Bloom counter-hedonism – *The Sweet Spot*, preface (PDF)
  - **See also**: Veenhoven, R. (2003). Hedonism and happiness. *Journal of happiness studies*, 4(4), 437-457; Delle Fave, A., Massimini, F., & Bassi, M. (2010). Hedonism and eudaimonism in positive psychology. In *Psychological selection and optimal experience across cultures: Social empowerment through personal growth* (pp. 3-18). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands; Gregory, A. (2015). Hedonism. In *The Routledge handbook of philosophy of well-being* (pp. 113-123). Routledge; Lopes, M. P., Da Palma, P. J., Garcia, B. C., & Gomes, C. (2016). Training for happiness: the impacts of different positive exercises on hedonism and eudaemonia. *SpringerPlus*, 5(1), 744.
  - **Self-Help Book Project Due**

Guiding Question(s): Describe the relationship between a good life and a hard life. Can a hard life be a happy one? How much difficulty (and what kinds of difficulties) can be part of a life before it becomes a bad life?

### Week 15: *Silence and Happiness*

- Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading**: Ch. 12 – POH, Pursuing Happiness Today, 263-280; Mahakud, G. C., & Yadav, R. (2015). Effects of happiness on mental health. *Int. J. Indian Psychol*, 2, 106-114.
- Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>
  - **Reading**: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Ch. 13 – “Why the Americans Show Themselves so Restless in the Midst of their Well-Being,” 625-629 (Goldhammer); Redlich, F., & Kellert, S. R. (1978). Trends in American mental health. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 135(1), 22-28; Makki, N., & Mohanty, M. S. (2019). Mental health and happiness: evidence from the US data. *The American Economist*, 64(2), 197-215.



- See also: R.K. DeYoung. 2004. Resistance to the demands of love: Aquinas on the vice of Acedia. *The Thomist* 68 (2):173-204

Guiding Question(s): Define mental health. Describe the relationship between a happy life and good mental health. Define the vice of acedia. How might this vice impact mental health, and what can we do to avoid it? Why are Americans restless? Is this a particularly American problem, or is it a human problem? Explain your answer.

**Week 16:**

- Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>
  - Final Exam Review

## GE Theme course submission worksheet: Health & Wellbeing

### Briefly describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme (Health & Wellbeing)

The Declaration of Independence names the pursuit of happiness as an unalienable right. However, in the United States, currently 42.5 million adults suffer from anxiety disorders, and 22.5 million adults and 4.8 million youth (8.8 percent and 19.5 percent of the population, respectively) suffer from major depression. If happiness is an unalienable right, we might wonder why so many people seem to be alienated from it. Happiness is a civic question. It concerns the material supports required to be mentally and physically healthy enough to thrive. It concerns opportunities for work and for education, relationships with others, public health policies, quality of food, and opportunities for leisure. If we are to believe the Founders, happiness also concerns virtues like temperance, justice, and righteous anger, and living a life fitting of one's human nature. Moreover, it is a pursuit (or activity), rather than a condition. This course investigates the critical civic and interdisciplinary question of "happiness" in a time when happiness seems to many Americans to be untenable. The Pursuit of Happiness serves the Health and Well-Being GEN Theme by investigating a range of interdisciplinary resources (**Goal 2**), using an in-depth scholarly approach (**Goal 1**), and assisting students to reflect and act on the findings from our course (**Goal 3**).

The relationships between happiness, wellbeing, and health are entangled in sometimes surprising ways. For example, the empirical literature bears out that certain prosocial tendencies, such as generosity and kindness, tend to correlate with better health outcomes. However, this is not always the case. Certain virtues, or excellences of character (e.g., compassion and justice), sometimes come at the cost of good health. For example, Rosa Parks suffered from chronic insomnia, a heart condition, and stomach ulcers—conditions made severe by her uncompromising civil rights advocacy. The good work that defined Parks also made her ill because of racism and systemic issues. My intention in this course is to discuss the sometimes uneasy relationship between goodness and wellness and how politics is often the 'middle term' in this relationship. I want students to evaluate what a happy life consists of, and how happiness is constrained by the conditions of our bodies, policies, and communities.

In this course, students will evaluate the distinctly American tradition of happiness, rooted in an unalienable right. We will ask the following questions: What does a right to happiness consist of? What protections are in place to make it feasible? What are the responsibilities of private citizens in securing the right of happiness? What does moral character have to do with a good life? Students will evaluate why depression and anxiety rates are so high in a country that articulates an interest in the happiness of its people. Students will assess whether the 'happiness' we speak of today is the same 'happiness' described by the Founders, and they will investigate the role moral character plays in supporting our wellbeing. I am excited about these questions. I think they are important at a time of great civic unrest and declining mental health. I think they can contribute a great deal to the Health and Wellbeing Theme.

**Goal 1:** Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

### 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.

**Reading and Weekly Activities:** Students will engage in critical thinking about happiness through exploring theoretical (e.g., eudaimonic, desire-satisfaction, hedonic accounts), socio-economic (e.g., relationship between reported happiness and wealth), scientific (e.g., findings from contemporary social sciences on the relationships among mental and physical health, happiness, and well-being), historical (e.g., the American Founding), cultural (e.g., Western philosophical tradition), and personal (e.g., self-report) perspectives. Students will develop critical and logical thinking skills through reading and analyzing texts by authors such as Cicero (Week 2), Frederick Douglass (Week 4), Plato (Weeks 7-8), Aristotle (Week 8), and John Stuart Mill (Week 11). In discussion and weekly quizzes, students will be asked to investigate competing visions of the good life (e.g. the difference between hedonic, eudaimonic, and desire-satisfaction accounts of happiness), learn to articulate the differences among these visions, and explore how these visions inform our public and private lives.

Students will spend considerable time grappling with Founders' definition of happiness: an 'activity of the soul,' rooted human nature and constituted, in part, by virtue. Using a scholarly and evidence-based framework, students will examine what material conditions, such as wealth, health, freedom, and leisure, must be in place to make such an account tenable. They will also critically assess the account of human nature that underpins the Founders' view of happiness. In class discussion, they will respond to questions such as: Is morality a necessary condition of happiness? What else might be required? Is wellness the same thing as happiness? Is a happy life necessarily an excellent one? Are there happy lives that involve sickness or great struggles? Do we have a significant degree of control over the quality of our lives?

**Lectures:** Lectures are Socratic. Students are invited to engage with living questions about the relationship between morality and happiness, happiness and pleasure, friendship and happiness, the good life and citizenship, etc. This manner of instruction fosters "engagement in critical thinking" by helping students to take ownership for the course content, to ask better questions, and to communicate ideas clearly with peers.

**Evaluation:** Students are regularly evaluated on course readings, which are arduous and reflect various perspectives on wellness, happiness, and health. Students are evaluated in their understanding in three ways: (1) Reading Checks in which they write 2 questions or confusing moments generated by the reading each class (a way to demonstrate they did the reading without feeling distressed if they did not understand it perfectly), (2) Weekly Open-Note Quizzes - to make sure they are tracking the important parts of the reading, and (3) an Exam that will primarily consist of document-based questions - identifying the thinker and explaining the perspective for key passages we read over the semester.

### 1.2 Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.

Students will engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of health and wellness through:

**Readings and Lectures:** The course is structured topically—e.g., Virtue and the Pursuit of Happiness (evaluating where the phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" comes from and how it informs/has informed American civic life), Temperance and the Good Life

(examining self-governance in human flourishing), Happiness and Justice (looking at ways in which social structures might undermine the flourishing of its citizens), the Psychology of Happiness (exploring contemporary social scientific accounts of happiness), etc. Each course topic engages at least two thinkers on the topic to support depth of treatment (e.g. Robert Nozick and John Stuart Mill in Week 11, “Happiness as Pleasure.”)

Students will explore philosophically where the Founders’ definition of happiness came from and which virtues they understood as integral to happiness. We will take this view seriously and read it constructively. Then we will assess the limitations of this vision. For instance, we will discuss the relationship between wealth and wellbeing, race and happiness, injustice and wellness, collective considerations of wellbeing (e.g., whether the thriving of the *few* competes with the thriving of the *many*), and how to be happy in our new digital world. The course reading schedule included evidence-based, mixed-methods literature as required texts, rather than supplementary.

These topics are reflected in the “Guiding Questions” listed for each week and in the selection of required course readings. In week one, we will discuss the differences among related terms (happiness, wellness, prosperity, flourishing, and mental health). In the weeks that follow, we will discuss the impact of inequality on wellness and explore how Americans compare to Europeans in terms of self-reported happiness. We will evaluate socio-economic constraints on a person’s wellbeing, which is a theme we will unpack further in Week 4. We will also read an empirical article which demonstrates that people feel fulfilled when they perform the duties assigned to them. This is worrisome when the duties are bad, such as in an unjust regime (or the Milgram experiment, which was the context here). This reading will serve as a provocation to Cicero’s *On Duties*, which presupposes the importance of duty in civic happiness. Another research thread I introduced early in the term is on the interaction between wellness and digital media. Our subjective wellbeing declines when we spend too much time online as digital citizens, rather than in person. I expand this theme on the Temperance and the Good Life week to evaluate digital temperance (being ruled by our devices, losing control of our ability to self-govern in their presence). I included research on the correlation between TikTok usage and surging depression rates.

### Evaluations:

Students’ Self-Help Book Project will add greater depth of inquiry for their selected topics. Students will select a **contemporary self-help book** and critique it, in conversation with empirical, historical, and philosophical approaches to a good life. They will place it in conversation with writings from the American Founders, the ancient and modern thinkers who formed the basis of their understanding, contemporary empirical work, public policy research, etc. Students will use interdisciplinary peer-reviewed research to evaluate the feasibility of their book’s self-help approach and examine how it squares with (or departs from) the vision of American Founders on happiness. Students will also investigate whether the book provides a robust and defensible vision of happiness compatible with a flourishing citizenry. This assignment will involve mature engagement with course texts, supplementary research on the ideas contained within, and investigation with a contemporary perspective, as captured in a book of their choosing. This project involves formal writing. Students are encouraged to select their self-help book early in the term and have it approved by the professor. Examples of texts include *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, *Atomic Habits*, *Think and Grow Rich*, *The Power of Now*, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, *The Success Principles*, *The Purpose Driven Life*, and *Me, But Better*.



Students' Ben Franklin Virtue and Wellbeing Paper will require them to select two virtues to practice over the course of the semester, and provide an overview of both in a broadly Aristotelian virtue theory literature. They will be required to include a minimum of **six** scholarly sources across disciplines. For example, students cannot exclusively draw on history or philosophy. They must engage with social science research on wellness as well.

This class also has a research-based assignment, based on the work of Yale's Laurie Santos. Counted among quizzes are various **Happiness Challenges**. Students will complete four throughout the term. They involve undertaking a "happiness strategy"—a set of practices that are empirically shown to improve subjective wellbeing. Examples include mindfulness practices, gratitude lists, social time, improving sleep hygiene, and daily exercise. Students will undertake each strategy for a week and journal about how it impacted their sense of wellbeing. They will identify, reflect on, and apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing. This way, students can engage with ways to improve their mental and emotional health, in addition to the character practice that aligns more closely with the Founders' vision of happiness.

**Goal 2:** Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

**2.1** Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.

**Lectures:** In class, students will be invited to identify the differences and similarities among various approaches to wellbeing and happiness. They will compare strengths and weaknesses of these approaches (e.g., compatibility with values pluralism, obstacles to measurement, mistaken intuitions about what will make us happy). Moreover, students will evaluate the synthetic approaches of the Founders. For instance, many of the Founders were influenced by both classical and early modern thinkers on the good life. Students will also be invited to reflect on their own experiences. For example, Paul Bloom writes about constructive forms of suffering in a happy life as a challenge to purely hedonic accounts of a good life. Students may reflect on challenges or pains that enrich the human experience (e.g., raising children, running a marathon, completing arduous tasks in the workplace, etc.). They may also reflect on forms of suffering that detract from a good life. They will learn about posttraumatic growth and Eranda Jayawickreme's myth of posttraumatic growth. Students are invited to evaluate their intuitions about what will make them happy and how different forms of suffering can both contribute to, and undermine, a good life.

**Evaluations:** In Reading Checks, students are instructed to identify distinctives of various approaches. In weekly quizzes, they do the same. In their semester projects, they may recognize more than one account of the good life that bears on the self-help author's descriptions of happiness. In their final exams, students will be asked to place different approaches to happiness (e.g., eudaimonic, desire-satisfaction, hedonic) in conversation with one another. They will identify which ideas belong to which thinker, compare and critique different views, and describe met and unmet aspects of the Founders' vision of the pursuit of happiness.

**2.2** Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

**In-Class Discussions.** Students will engage in Socratic discussion on various approaches to the concept of happiness (e.g., Locke, Mill, Lyubomirsky, Bloom, Jefferson). They will assess families of ideas (e.g., Mill’s utilitarianism and certain forms of hedonism) and reflect on how well each approach captures American life and their own understandings of what it means to be happy and well. One refrain of the course is the relationship between morality and good health. For example, certain excellences of character (e.g., diligence, patience) may broadly support good health. For example, the diligent person is more likely than one absent this trait to brush their teeth consistently. However, certain excellences of character (e.g., compassion or justice) sometimes come at the cost of good health. For example, Rosa Parks suffered from chronic insomnia, a heart condition, and stomach ulcers—conditions made severe by her uncompromising civil rights advocacy. The good work that defined Parks also made her ill because of racism and systemic issues. We will discuss the sometimes-uneasy relationship between goodness and wellness and how politics is often the ‘middle term’ in this relationship. We will reflect on other cases and our own experiences with respect to these topics.

**Evaluations:** A semester-long assignment is a virtue-developmental task akin to Ben Franklin’s project quest for moral perfection. Students will select two virtues to practice over the course of the semester, journaling about the process. These papers involve both theory and reflection. Students will provide an overview of their two virtues in a broadly Aristotelian virtue theory literature, then will describe their attempts at growing in virtue throughout the term and assess any impacts on their happiness. This course intends to mature a student’s “sense of self as a learner through reflection [and] self-assessment...building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.” Having the opportunity to reflect on one’s character as pertains to happiness and develop oneself in certain ways is a means of preparing students for life beyond the classroom. An example is that students may find (as students often do), that they struggle with digital intemperance—experiencing an outsized reliance on their devices and on social media, in ways that interrupt their ability to self-govern and commit to their own good choices, such that they can flourish. Making these changes can impact one’s emotional constitution and feelings of wellness, as well as contribute to mental and emotional health. In this project, students will have the opportunity to self-evaluate in these respects.

**Readings and Lectures:** A Socratic distinctive is self-examination. I have already said that, in class, students will reflect on suffering and happiness. They will also be invited to self-examine on the role of friendship in sustaining happiness, whether the good of the *many* competes with their *individual* good, what it might mean for a government to preserve a right to happiness (and whether our government is succeeding in doing so, and their perceptions of the relationship between moral and happiness. Because the readings and conversations concern a good life—a topic relevant to everyone—encouraging reflection and self-assessment will come naturally in this course.

**Reading Checks:** These are basic open-ended questions concerning key themes and perspectives of course readings. These are assigned to encourage students to engage well with the reading. These are worth **3 points each** (1 for attending, 2 for meaningfully “reflecting and self-assessing” on the course content). Students will complete 10-12 of these per term at the start of classes.

**Goal 3:** Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing through attention to at least two dimensions of wellbeing. (Ex: physical, mental, emotional, career, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, creative, financial, etc.).

**3.1** Explore and analyze health and wellbeing from theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, cultural, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives.

**Readings and Lectures:** Students will read (and subsequently discuss in class) an interdisciplinary set of readings on happiness and wellbeing. These include the following:

**Historical** (assessing the words and lives of critical American founding voices—Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Hamilton, Tocqueville, DeYoung (on monastic traditions), Madison, Lincoln, and Douglass).

**Normative** (examining whether there are any 'oughts' or virtuous elements of a good life—Franklin, Plato, Aristotle, Mill, Annas, Frey, Haidt),

**Political** (exploring what role, if any, a government should play in supporting the happiness of its citizens—Cicero, Hamilton, Madison, Murray, Rosen, Lincoln, Douglass).

**Theoretical** (evaluating hedonic, eudaimonic, and desire-satisfaction accounts of happiness—Nozick, Little, Bloom, Tocqueville, Lyubomirsky).

**Evaluations:** This learning objective is evaluated as follows:

**Quizzes** – On two of the weekly quizzes, students will be asked to place perspectives fruitfully in common. (Week 5) Place Callicles' view on temperance and self-rule from Plato's *Gorgias* in conversation with Twenge and Lamb on digital temperance. Is Callicles correct that having free access to whatever one wants is the key to a happy life? (Week 6) Is good health a moral achievement? Answer this question placing Aristotle in conversation with Little and the clinical research we explored on compassion.

Both semester projects also engage ELO 3.1. The contemporary self-help book paper encourages students to apply historical and theoretical lenses to contemporary treatments of health and happiness. It asks them to examine whether the book provides a robust and defensible vision of happiness compatible with a flourishing citizenry, according to the Adams or Hamilton, for example. The Adams paper invites students to participate in Adams' normative (and historical) plan of virtue development, to live a better life. This invites a **personal perspective** on an account engaged in our course.

**3.2** Identify, reflect on, or apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing.

**Readings and Lectures:** This course aims to help students take happiness seriously by increasing their self-awareness concerning their intuitions about what will make them happy. For example, wealth improves self-reported happiness but only to a point, after which it does little to improve the quality of one's life. The course also aims to help students ask better questions about suffering in a good life, moral responsibility, social dimensions of wellness, and where physical

health fits in. For students making big decisions about career, family, and friendships— and at a decisive moment in their lives for building habits and forming character—these conversations.

### Example Activities:

***Happiness Challenges.*** Throughout the term, students will choose among several social science-backed practices (e.g., meditation) and journal about impact on wellness. For context, see this [link](#) for Laurie Santos' happiness course at Yale.

***Ben Franklin Project.*** This assignment is a **virtue-developmental task** akin to Ben Franklin's project quest for moral perfection. Students will select two virtues to practice over the course of the semester, journaling about the process. These papers involve both theory and reflection. They will provide an overview of their two virtues in a broadly Aristotelian virtue theory literature, then will describe their attempts at growing in virtue throughout the term and assess any impacts on their health, wellbeing, and happiness. For example, does growing in virtue impact one's subjective sense of wellbeing? Did the health status of the student change, or was it changed by, participation in virtue practices? Did the project contribute to a sense of meaning or purpose in any way? Since this paper concerns growth in virtue, students should explore both virtue theory literature and empirical resources on character development.

**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 2:19:43 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Snyder, Anastasia  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy  
**CC:** Schoen, Brian  
**Attachments:** image001.png, image002.png

Hello. I've heard back from everyone in EHE and there are no concurrence concerns about the course syllabi you forwarded. Best of luck with your new academic programs.

Sincerely,  
Tasha



Anastasia R. Snyder  
Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs  
College of Education and Human Ecology  
The Ohio State University  
[Snyder.893@osu.edu](mailto:Snyder.893@osu.edu)  
614-688-4169

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 14, 2025 8:20 AM  
**To:** Snyder, Anastasia <[snyder.893@osu.edu](mailto:snyder.893@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Tasha,

I wanted to reach out regarding the concurrence requests below, because while the exigencies of building a new program compel Brian Schoen I to press ahead in the concurrence process, we also had constructive discussions with several units last week, and hope to do the same with Education this week if it would be helpful. I don't want to burden your calendar, but let us know if we can answer any questions over the next few days.

All best,

Jeremy

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**From:** Snyder, Anastasia <[snyder.893@osu.edu](mailto:snyder.893@osu.edu)>

**Date:** Thursday, July 3, 2025 at 10:30 AM

**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>

**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>

**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy,

Thank you for your email. I will share these syllabi with the relevant programs to get their feedback and concurrence. I will follow up when I hear back from them. Being summer time, many faculty are slow to respond to email since they are off-duty. I will request a review as soon as possible though.

Sincerely,  
Tasha



Anastasia R. Snyder  
Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs  
College of Education and Human Ecology  
The Ohio State University  
[Snyder.893@osu.edu](mailto:Snyder.893@osu.edu)  
614-688-4169

---

**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 2, 2025 12:54 PM

**To:** Snyder, Anastasia <[snyder.893@osu.edu](mailto:snyder.893@osu.edu)>

**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>

**Subject:** Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Tasha,

This summer, I've been working with the Chase Center's incoming faculty and Associate Director Brian Schoen (copied on this e-mail) to develop a suite of courses for a Civics, Law, and Leadership degree Chase will be offering (CIVICLL). The result is the twelve syllabi attached to this e-mail. The courses cover a lot of territory in terms of subject matter and disciplinary approaches, but the course titles should give you a good sense of which syllabi may be most

relevant to the College of Education and Human Ecology for concurrence purposes.

Let me know if we can answer any questions as the concurrence process moves forward. I know there's a lot to dig into here, but we're eager to move forward with some exciting courses as we build a new program.

All best,

Jeremy

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**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

CHASE CENTER FOR CIVICS, CULTURE,  
AND SOCIETY

Jeremy Fortier

Assistant Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society

The Ohio State University

*Latest Article:* "[Why to be a Civic Constitutionalist](#)"

**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 15, 2025 at 11:07:58 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Ralph, Anne  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy  
**CC:** Schoen, Brian  
**Attachments:** image001.png, image003.png

Jeremy and Brian,

We have had the chance to review the syllabi you sent. Law is pleased to grant concurrence.

As you may know, Law is hoping to have an undergraduate course that fulfills the new American Civic Literacy requirement. I hope we can count on your partnership and support in that endeavor going forward.

Thanks,  
Anne



**Anne E. Ralph**  
Morgan E. Shipman Professor in Law  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives  
**Michael E. Moritz College of Law**  
55 West 12th Avenue | Columbus, OH 43210  
614-247-4797 Office | [ralph.52@osu.edu](mailto:ralph.52@osu.edu)  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

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**From:** Ralph, Anne <[ralph.52@osu.edu](mailto:ralph.52@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Monday, July 14, 2025 at 3:08 PM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi, Jeremy and Brian,  
Thanks for your email. We are partway through reviewing these, and I will get our concurrence note to you as soon as I can.  
AER



**Anne E. Ralph**

Morgan E. Shipman Professor in Law

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives

Michael E. Moritz College of Law

55 West 12th Avenue | Columbus, OH 43210

614-247-4797 Office | [ralph.52@osu.edu](mailto:ralph.52@osu.edu)

Pronouns: she/her/hers

---

**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Monday, July 14, 2025 at 8:18 AM  
**To:** Ralph, Anne <[ralph.52@osu.edu](mailto:ralph.52@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Anne,

I wanted to reach out regarding the concurrence requests below, because while the exigencies of building a new program compel Brian Schoen I to press ahead in the concurrence process, we also had constructive discussions with several units last week, and hope to do the same with Moritz this week if it would be helpful. I don't want to burden your calendar, but let us know if we can answer any questions over the next few days.

All best,

Jeremy

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 2, 2025 at 11:59 AM  
**To:** Ralph, Anne <[ralph.52@osu.edu](mailto:ralph.52@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Anne,

This summer, I've been working with the Chase Center's incoming faculty and Associate Director Brian Schoen (copied on this e-mail) to develop a suite of courses for a Civics, Law, and Leadership degree Chase will be offering (CIVICLL). The result is the twelve syllabi attached to this e-mail (more to follow down the road).

The courses cover a lot of territory in terms of subject matter and disciplinary approaches, but the course titles should give you a good sense of which syllabi may be most relevant to the Moritz College of Law for concurrence purposes.

Let me know if we can answer any questions as the concurrence process moves forward. I know there's a lot to dig into here, but we're eager to move forward with some exciting courses as we build a new program.

All best,

Jeremy

--



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

CHASE CENTER FOR CIVICS, CULTURE,  
AND SOCIETY

Jeremy Fortier

Assistant Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society

The Ohio State University

*Latest Article:* "[Why to be a Civic Constitutionalist](#)"

**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Friday, July 18, 2025 at 12:16:50 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Greenbaum, Rob  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy  
**CC:** Schoen, Brian, Clark, Jill  
**Attachments:** image001.png, image002.png

Hi Jeremy,

The Glenn College is pleased to provide concurrence for the following eight classes:

American Religions  
American Witch-Hunts  
Freedom and Equality in American Literature  
God and Science  
Historical Political Economy  
Love and Friendship  
Shakespear's Lessons in Leadership  
Pursuit of Happiness

While we do not necessarily have concerns about the remaining four,  
Civic Friendship and Dialogue in American Democracy  
How Politics Breaks your Brain  
Presidential Crises in War and Peace  
Evolution of Citizenship

we would prefer to have the relevant faculty in the college review the syllabi when they are back from summer break. Those are all proposed new GE classes, but I don't think our waiting until August does anything now to slow their getting into the queue for GE review.

I've also copied my colleague Jill Clark, who chairs our undergraduate studies committee.

Sincerely,

Rob



**Robert T. Greenbaum**

Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs

Office of Academic Affairs

Professor, Associate Dean for Curriculum

John Glenn College of Public Affairs

350E Page Hall, 1810 College Road, Columbus, OH 43210

614-292-9578 Office / 614-292-2548 Fax

<https://glenn.osu.edu/rob-greenbaum>

Pronouns: he/him/his

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 2, 2025 1:03 PM  
**To:** Greenbaum, Rob <[greenbaum.3@osu.edu](mailto:greenbaum.3@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Rob,

This summer, I've been working with the Chase Center's incoming faculty and Associate Director Brian Schoen (copied on this e-mail) to develop a suite of courses for a Civics, Law, and Leadership degree Chase will be offering (CIVICLL). The result is the twelve syllabi attached to this e-mail (more to follow down the road).

The courses cover a lot of territory in terms of subject matter and disciplinary approaches, but the course titles should give you a good sense of which syllabi may be most relevant to the Glenn College for concurrence purposes.

Let me know if we can answer any questions as the concurrence process moves forward. I know there's a lot to dig into here, but we're eager to move forward with some exciting courses as we build a new program.

All best,

Jeremy

--



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

CHASE CENTER FOR CIVICS, CULTURE,  
AND SOCIETY

Jeremy Fortier

Assistant Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society

The Ohio State University

*Latest Article:* "[Why to be a Civic Constitutionalist](#)"

**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Friday, August 15, 2025 at 2:52:08 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Schoen, Brian  
**To:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette, Martin, Andrew, Fortier, Jeremy  
**Attachments:** image001.png, image002.png, image003.png, image001.png

Thank you Bernadette.



Brian Schoen  
Associate Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society  
The Ohio State University  
614-247-0672 | (c) 740-517-6967  
Faculty and Associate Director for Academic Affairs  
*[Settling Ohio: First Peoples and Beyond](#)*, National Book Festival, Allen G. Noble Book Award  
*[Continent in Crisis: The Civil War in North America](#)*

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**From:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Friday, August 15, 2025 at 2:31 PM  
**To:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>, Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hello all,

I do not have any information that contradicts what we have below. So to the best of my knowledge, it's all accurate to me.

Thanks,  
Bernadette

---

**From:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 15, 2025 9:57 AM  
**To:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>; Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Sure, I think we are on the same page, but do take a look.



**Andrew W. Martin**

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education  
Professor of Sociology  
114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210  
614-247-6641 Office  
[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)

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**From:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 15, 2025 9:57 AM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>; Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew and all,

Would you like me to look over all this to make sure it syncs with what I have? Or if you feel comfortable that you already have the necessary information, please let me know. I am happy to do whatever. But if you want me to double-check, please give me a bit of time this morning since it is, as everyone has noted, a bit messy and complex.

Many thanks,  
Bernadette



**Bernadette Vankeerbergen, Ph.D.**

Assistant Dean, Curriculum  
College of Arts and Sciences  
114F University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall.  
Columbus, OH 43210  
Phone: 614-688-5679  
<http://asccas.osu.edu>

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 15, 2025 9:34 AM  
**To:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Brian should follow up with you shortly (I know that he's always happy to engage departments but hasn't heard anything direct from PSYCH over the past month, including in the two weeks since we received the specific claim regarding overlap with PSYCH 2303 – which looks like a great course!).

Thanks for bearing with us. The system we've established for the second round of courses should be easier to manage...

---

**From:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Friday, August 15, 2025 at 8:17 AM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette  
<[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Ok, this is helpful. Brian, would you mind pinging psychology one more time, say early next week, and cc me? I can then ask them to respond more substantively.

Best  
Andrew



**Andrew W. Martin**  
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education  
Professor of Sociology  
114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210  
614-247-6641 Office  
[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 15, 2025 9:15 AM  
**To:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette  
<[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew –

Thanks for this. Responses regarding three outstanding issues below (I should emphasize I don't mean to litigate the substance of these issues here, just clarifying the state of play for everyone's sake).

Let me know if I can add anything further.

All best,

Jeremy

---

**From:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Friday, August 15, 2025 at 7:21 AM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette  
<[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>

**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy

Below are my responses in red, Berandette may have additional feedback. Broadly (with a couple of minor exceptions) I think we are in agreement where things are at.

We'll continue to update you on the most recent round of courses. I agree that this new process is working well.

Best

Andrew



**Andrew W. Martin**

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education

Professor of Sociology

114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall

Columbus, OH 43210

614-247-6641 Office

[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>

**Sent:** Thursday, August 14, 2025 2:47 PM

**To:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>

**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>

**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Here are my notes on where each course we submitted on 6/2 currently stands within ASC. Correct or clarify as appropriate:

- “American Religion(s).” Initial non-concurrence from SOCIOL and HISTORY. We have worked with SOCIOL to address their concerns (Cynthia Colen approved a revised syllabus this week, not sure if she’s been in touch with you). HISTORY continues to deny concurrence (Brian Schoen and Scott Levi have been in extensive and even productive discussions about these matters, but some deadlock appears inevitable).

ASC understood this course was delayed. Could you send Sociology’s concurrence?

Cynthia Colen emailed Brian Schoen and I on 8/12 to note that changes to the course satisfied SOCIOL’s concerns. You may want to follow up with her to confirm that this results in formally withdrawing non-concurrence.

- “American Witch-Hunts.” Non-concurrence from COMPSTD. This seems like a deadlock (Brian Schoen reached out to Hugh Urban, but hasn’t heard back in a while).

This is ASC’s understanding too. Feel free to cc me if you reach out to Hugh again.

- “Civic Friendship and Dialogue in American Democracy.” Initial concerns from CEHV have been addressed to everyone’s satisfaction.

Agreed, seems ok to move forward



- “Freedom and Equality in American Literature.” ENGLISH’s initial non-concurrence on our courses dealing with American literature has moved to “neither concurrence nor non-concurrence” (which we gather will remain their policy for our courses dealing with American literature, at least in the near future).

Agreed, seems ok to move forward

- “God and Science.” COMPSTD and PHILOS both provided non-concurrence. We have withdrawn the course.

This was ASC’s understanding too

- “Shakespeare’s Lessons in Leadership.” ENGLISH provided non-concurrence. We are reworking the proposal, which if it proceeds will not include Shakespeare in the title, and the course content will also be reconceived. So right now, this one is on the shelf but will come back in terms that ENGLISH should find more acceptable.

Also understood that Theatre had concerns regarding overlap with THEATRE 5771.10

Right, I should have noted this, but since we’re reworking the course, it’s not a pressing matter.

- “Presidential Crises in War and Peace.” We have reworked this syllabus substantially, and gather that the revision have satisfied POLITSC. They have also made progress with HISTORY, but full concurrence seems to require revising the syllabus further to a degree that we think constitutes “micro-management” of our curriculum (changing specific readings and case studies). We can’t agree to this (particularly since the course instructor has already gone a long way towards making the course material more inter-disciplinary, in the service of his initial learning objectives). So here as elsewhere, we’re deadlocked with HISTORY.

Thanks for the update on this, ASC knew about concerns from History and PS, thanks for letting us know about the latter

- “Love and Friendship.” This course appears broadly acceptable.

Agreed, seems ok to move forward

- “How Politics Breaks Your Brain.” This course appears broadly acceptable.

Agreed, seems ok to move forward

- “Historical Political Economy.” GEOG’s initial non-concurrence has shifted to “neither concurrence nor non-concurrence” (as communicated to Brian Schoen via email).

Understood that Political Science saw this as overlapping some with their POLITSC 3280 course, The Politics of Markets. If PS has concurred, please let us know

- “The Evolution of Citizenship.” HISTORY does not concur.

This was ASC’s understanding too

- “The Pursuits of Happiness.” We addressed initial concerns from CLASSICS, PSYCH has dropped its initial non-concurrence, and HISTORY does not concur.  
Can you send us Psychology’s concurrence (last we saw was non-concurrence from them)

I may have over-stated here. We submitted the course on 7/2; on 7/17 PSYCH requested extension until 9/15 to review Pursuits of Happiness; on 7/31 PSYCH denied concurrence based on claim of overlap with PSYCH 2303, with syllabus for that course attached; later that same day Brian Schoen sent detailed response regarding overlap between those courses to Sarah Schoppe-Sullivan and Lisa Cravens-Brown, but did not receive a response then; Brian followed up on 8/12 with no response. So it seems that PSYCH is denying concurrence based on a particular point of claimed overlap, but is not responsive regarding the details of that claim.

In short: there are points of deadlock with HISTORY and COMPSTD. Other initial concerns have been allayed (albeit to varying degrees). Am I missing anything key?

Thanks again for your time with this (I think the system we’ve established for courses moving forward will be more efficient...)

All best,

Jeremy

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**From:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 12:47 PM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Good idea! Can you send me what you have? I’ve been keeping a record of where I think we are at. We could then compare notes,

The Ohio State University  
Andrew W. Martin  
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education  
Professor of Sociology  
614-247-6641 Office  
[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 14, 2025 1:14:01 PM

**To:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew and Bernadette,

Would it be possible to send us an updated statement of where concurrence stands in Arts & Sciences for our initial set of course submissions?

I know the original submission procedure was a bit unwieldy (and I'm pleased we've settled on a more efficient procedure for courses moving forward), but there have been updates regarding the first set of courses, so it would be helpful to summarize where things stand with the various units (e.g., I know that we've worked with SOCIOL to navigate their initial concerns re: "American Religion(s)", but HISTORY's non-concurrence is probably still standing, etc).

If it's helpful, I could send you a summary of my understanding of where things stand on each course, and you could confirm or clarify.

I apologize for the burden! Thanks for your time with this. - Jeremy

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**From:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Monday, August 4, 2025 at 6:58 AM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy and Brian

Do you mind if I share this with the units that have denied concurrence, such as History and comparative studies (You may already have done so, but I wanted to make sure they were aware of your perspective on the courses). Again, if units continue to consider the course to be overlapping to a substantial degree to their existing offering, then that will be a matter for OAA to adjudicate.

Thanks  
Andrew



**Andrew W. Martin**

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114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall  
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614-247-6641 Office  
[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>

**Sent:** Saturday, August 2, 2025 2:58 PM  
**To:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Thanks, Andrew. I've responded to your questions in bold font below – just let me know if I can clarify further.

Let me add that although we've reached certain points of deadlock, this has been a learning process, and we will continue to work to engage everyone constructively moving forward.

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**From:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Friday, August 1, 2025 at 4:01 PM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy

Thanks for sharing this detailed response, this is very helpful. Couple of quick questions/updates for you:

1. It sounds like Chase has had some conversations with units like History and Comp Studies, but that you disagree about the concerns they've raised with potential overlap. That is of course your right. My question is, do you foresee any additional conversation with those units? Typically when there is disagreement and a solution cannot be found Randy Smith will get involved to adjudicate the matter.

**Our engagement with these units will be ongoing (and, in fact, we've already been in touch with them about courses in the pipeline). However, we don't expect to reach agreement about our first slate of courses. Among the courses at issue, we have made some modifications to several syllabi and even removed one from consideration. If these changes are not satisfactory, we're at a deadlock.**

2. As you know, a number of units have asked for more time to review courses. Fortunately, many of the larger units with more courses have already provided feedback. That being said, we do have a few remaining departments (many that are smaller with faculty performing multiple service roles) that have asked for more time. I will reach out to them and ask if, from the existing set of courses, are there any that raise immediate concerns about potential overlap and to share that feedback.

**Our position is unchanged. We can't delay until the Fall. We recognize that we're making some big asks, but It's not feasible to build a new academic program by taking summers off. We also didn't anticipate that circulating courses over the summer would pose an insuperable obstacle since the College of Arts & Science's Concurrence Request [Form](#), and ASC's Curriculum and Assessment Operations [Manual](#), refer only to a two-week timeline (not qualified by time of year). OAA's Academic Organization, Curriculum, and Assessment [Handbook](#) also indicates no restrictions about sending courses for concurrence**

over the summer. Brian Schoen's diligent research of previous program proposals indicated that constructive work can happen over the summer and that concurrence has been assumed when the two week limit has passed. I also received repeated requests for extra time during the concurrence process in the spring semester. So at some point we're just obligated to press ahead, and we're at that point.

I would add: we have been generous already and in effect gone well over two weeks beyond the original deadline and in another instance, we're going yet further where a unit has presented clear, constructive claims to us. Cases where we are pressing ahead involve syllabi where we believe the prima facie case against overlap is overwhelming, so that the burden of explanation reasonably falls on the units requesting more time. We are not trying to foreclose conversation, but we are balancing competing imperatives.

3. The Civic Friendship and How Politics Breaks Your Brain courses have indeed drawn little comment. We are asking Political Science and Philosophy to alert us quickly to any possible reservations. I'm hoping that will happen quite soon

**We have been in touch with both departments, and have not received objections, and so we think concurrence should be assumed (as we take to be standard practice when details are not provided within the official two-week timeline).**

4. On the political science front, they were a unit that did ask for more time, but have been providing some initial feedback (it looks like Marcus highlighted potential areas of overlap). Have you had a chance to engage with Marcus about these courses? A more definitive response from Political Science would be helpful, and I've nudged Marcus (as in the case of the two courses above).

**We met with Marcus and our assessments of the courses did not seem far apart, but we have not had a more official statement from Political Science beyond that. The memo I provided on Friday gives a detailed account of how our courses are distinct from offerings in POLITSC, if that helps to produce a definitive statement from the department.**

Best  
Andrew



**Andrew W. Martin**

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[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>

**Sent:** Friday, August 1, 2025 3:43 PM

**To:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>

**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>

**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew and Bernadette,

The Chase Center has spent the past several weeks consulting with individual departments in the College of Arts and Sciences about our first slate of course proposals. Those consultations have led to constructive adjustments in several courses, withdrawal of select proposals, and deadlock on several others which we are obligated to press ahead with.

Here is the state of play for each course submitted, followed by some remarks about the general principles that have guided our work in this process. Moreover, attached to this email you will find Word and PDF versions of a file which includes the information provided below, plus detailed, individualized responses regarding each ASC unit that provided a statement of non-concurrence.

- **“American Religion(s)”**. We are holding off on this course for another week, in order to revise in response to constructive discussions with SOCIOL. COMPSTD’s initial non-concurrence has been tempered if not rescinded after email exchanges, as detailed in the attached file; HISTORY’s objections are not germane, for reasons explained at length in the attached file.
- **“American Witch-Hunts.”** COMPSTD objects, on grounds we cannot agree to, for reasons detailed in the attached file.
- **“Civic Friendship and Dialogue in American Democracy.”** Initial concerns from CEHV have been resolved following consultations with that unit.
- **“Freedom and Equality in American Literature.”** Following extensive engagement between our units, the ENGLISH department has settled on providing neither concurrence nor non-concurrence for this course. We will proceed with the course, and will continue to engage with ENGLISH’s concerns moving forward.
- **“God and Science.”** COMPSTD objects, and we have decided to withdraw this course from the submission process, in order to study Ohio State’s full slate of course offerings more extensively. We may revisit this course in the future.
- **“Shakespeare’s Lessons in Leadership.”** ENGLISH and THEATRE both object. We do not fully assent to the rationales provided by these units, but we found our engagement with ENGLISH constructive and have opted to withdraw this course from our current round of submissions, and will subsequently submit a related but substantially revised course with a new title, that will survey culturally significant depictions of leadership. We gather that this procedure should at least partly allay ENGLISH’s concerns.
- **“Presidential Crises in War and Peace.”** HISTORY objects and POLITSC has tentative reservations. We have made some modifications to the syllabus in response, but do not find either unit’s claims compelling enough to prevent proceeding with the course proposal, for reasons detailed in the attached file.

- **“Love and Friendship.”** This course appears to be broadly acceptable, so we will proceed with it as is.
- **“How Politics Breaks Your Brain.”** This course appears to be broadly acceptable, so we will proceed with it as is.
- **“Historical Political Economy.”** GEOG initially objected, and then revised its position to neither concurrence nor non-concurrence. POLITSC expressed more tentative reservations. We respond to both units in detail in the attached file and will be proceeding with the course.
- **“The Evolution of Citizenship.”** HISTORY has declined to provide concurrence. We have made some modifications to the syllabus in response, but do not find HISTORY’s claims compelling enough to prevent proceeding with the course proposal, for reasons detailed in the attached file
- **“The Pursuit of Happiness.”** Initial concerns from CLASSICS were addressed via revisions to the syllabus. HISTORY objects more strongly, and PSYCH more tentatively. We have made some modifications to the syllabus in response, but do not find either unit’s claims compelling enough to prevent proceeding with the course proposal, for reasons detailed in the attached file.

As this summary indicates, we have made several substantive changes to our courses during this process. No less importantly, the concurrence process has driven our development of programmatic learning goals and outcomes for the Chase Center (listed on p. 10 of the attached file). These principles – which will be included with all our syllabi moving forward – should help to clarify, for students and faculty, what is distinct about the Chase Center’s curriculum.

Our development of programmatic learning goals and outcomes is partly a response to the inevitable conundrum that while the Chase Center is an intentionally interdisciplinary unit, “interdisciplinarity” is often more of a generally agreeable slogan than well-defined curricular approach. The Chase Center’s work is exciting and necessary because it promises to approach and define multi-disciplinarity in a more precise way, which does not replicate the distinct expertise of the disciplines housed in the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, but rather gives students and faculty incentives to engage with disciplines they might have otherwise not engaged. Our engagement with individual units in Arts & Sciences has sharpened our thinking about how to address this challenge most constructively.

That said, precisely because our work is interdisciplinary, we take it as axiomatic that particular topics, texts, or analytical tools cannot be claimed as the sole or even primary preserve of any one unit. Such a position would be inconsistent with standard curricular practices (particularly in the Arts & Sciences), at odds with the standards for concurrence we gather to be controlling from the Office of Academic Affairs (which emphasizes distinctness of learning outcomes and the overall objectives of a course, rather than the intricacies of day-to-day lectures and reading assignments), and fail to fulfill the Chase Center’s legislative mission (which directs us towards inter-disciplinarity).

It would be impossible to fulfill our mandate – and nor do we think it is in the general curricular interest of Ohio State – if particular topics, texts, or analytical tools are treated as the presumptive property of any unit. And notwithstanding the explicit or implicit premise of



comments we received from a few units, standard practices support our position. For instance: at Ohio State, students are regularly offered HISTART 2007, “Buddha to Bollywood: The Arts of India” and SASIA 3625 “Understanding Bollywood, Knowing India” – courses in different units that draw on shared artifacts in the service of distinct curricular objectives. Similarly, in the upcoming Autumn semester, students will be able to enroll in both POLITSCI 4553, “Game Theory for Political Scientists” and ECON 5001, “Game Theory in Economics” – courses which explore how shared analytical tools are used to address the interests of different disciplines. Moreover, in the past OSU’s Department of Political Science has offered a course in urban politics using as its primary text HBO’s *The Wire*. This was a common practice in Political Science departments during the first two decades of the twenty-first century. But *The Wire* certainly could be (and at many institutions has been) used as a primary “text” for courses in Sociology, Film & Television Studies, American Studies, or English, since there is a substantial body of scholarship on *The Wire* emerging from each of these disciplines. As this example indicates, building an inter-disciplinary curriculum which respects the distinctive expertise of different departments is a challenge for all of us, and reflects the reality that disciplinary boundaries are always being contested (both within disciplines and between them), while knowledge production and dissemination is an inherently interdisciplinary process. The Chase Center’s aim is to develop a well-defined and mutually beneficial approach to this curricular challenge (which certainly will not preclude alternative approaches to interdisciplinarity).

This is a learning process that we hope will continue, but we cannot make further progress without moving forward with our curriculum. We believe that the changes we have made so far provide a reasonable basis for moving forward with our curriculum.

The attached file provides more detailed responses to statements of non-concurrence from individual units, organized alphabetically.

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**From:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>

**Date:** Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 11:12 AM

**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>

**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>

**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy and Brian

Attached please find ASC’s response to the Chase request for concurrence for 12 courses. As indicated, a number of units did either grant concurrence or did not respond. However, there are also a number of units that either indicated non-concurrence due to course overlap, or requested an extension until early Autumn semester when faculty are back on duty. So, given this, ASC cannot provide concurrence for the proposed courses.

I will note that the units that raised concerns about course overlap indicated a desire to engage with Chase to ensure that the proposed courses do not duplicate ASC offerings.

Note that we asked for a deadline of tomorrow for feedback, so it is possible that additional comments will be sent our way by then. We will be sure to forward them to you.



Best  
Andrew



**Andrew W. Martin**

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 14, 2025 7:52 AM  
**To:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>; Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Bernadette and Andrew (who I think is back on the grid this week),

Over the last week Brian Schoen and I have benefited from the opportunity to discuss our concurrence requests with some departmental representatives, leading us to see more clearly paths forward for both the courses in question and for our larger curricular initiatives. It's genuinely rewarding to think through these issues with people who've done so much brilliant work on related matters, and our own work is better off for it.

This constructive work confirms the importance of the timeline considerations detailed in my earlier email. We can't position ourselves to build a new academic program by taking summers off (so to speak). Everything from the practical exigencies of offering courses to the principled substance of designing those courses within the context of a coherent curricular vision requires making tangible progress on matters large and small. To that end we're bound to forge ahead but hope to engage constructively with others along the way.

I mention all this because Brian will be occupied with conference travel on Thursday and Friday, and although I'm happy to field any queries as might be helpful, discussion with Brian earlier in the week promises to be most productive.

Andrew – I apologize for welcoming you back with this fresh stack of requests, but that's the state of the work ahead of us...

All best,

Jeremy

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**From:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Monday, July 7, 2025 at 1:53 PM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>, Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Dear Jeremy,

I am afraid that it is routine practice to grant extensions & this is especially not uncommon during the Summer months. For example, we are currently waiting for a concurrence from the Dept of Computer Information Science (in Engineering) and they have told us that they cannot provide a response until the beginning of the Fall semester. About the concurrences for the Chase Center courses, we have already heard from 3 ASC departments who have indicated that they cannot fully respond until their faculty are back after August 15. (On the other hand, we have received full concurrences from three other depts.)

As an aside, I do know that Beth Hewitt (Chair of English) has a meeting planned with Brian Schoen this week & will share some of her concerns then.

Best,  
Bernadette



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114F University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall.  
Columbus, OH 43210  
Phone: 614-688-5679  
<http://asccas.osu.edu>

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 7, 2025 1:33 PM  
**To:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>; Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Thanks, Bernadette.

I am afraid that a Fall concurrence deadline is not feasible for us, given the deadlines for getting on the spring course schedule and proceeding with General Education submissions, as well as our interests in working with new faculty and thinking through possibilities for degree design.

I am obliged to note that, as a procedural matter, we didn't anticipate circulating courses over the summer to pose a problem since the College of Arts & Science's Concurrence Request [Form](#), and ASC's Curriculum and Assessment Operations [Manual](#), refer only to

two-week timeline (not qualified by time of year). OAA's Academic Organization, Curriculum, and Assessment [Handbook](#) also indicates no restrictions about sending courses for concurrence over the summer. It may be worth adding that when circulating concurrence requests in the spring I was asked by one department to delay until after the final exam period – so it seems like some calendar conflicts are unavoidable one way or another.

In short: the Chase Center can't accede to a Fall term concurrence deadline, though I expect that Brian Schoen I would both be happy to use this time to confer with department chairs who have 12-month appointments.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Jeremy

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**From:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Monday, July 7, 2025 at 9:33 AM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>, Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request  
Dear Jeremy,

At least one of our departments (I suspect more will have the same request) has requested a deadline of early Fall term for the concurrences. Our regular 9-month faculty are off duty until August 15, and thus robust departmental conversations about possible overlap with their own courses cannot happen until those faculty are back on campus. This is especially important given the number of syllabi that need to be reviewed.

My best,  
Bernadette



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**From:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 2, 2025 2:51 PM  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>; Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Dear Jeremy,

I will send out the request for concurrences now (Andrew is taking some time off). Please know that I will start by giving our units a due date of Friday, July 18. It is possible/likely that this being the middle of the summer some units will ask for more time. I will keep you posted.

My best,  
Bernadette



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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 2, 2025 1:06 PM  
**To:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <[vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu](mailto:vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew and Bernadette,

This summer, I've been working with the Chase Center's incoming faculty and Associate Director Brian Schoen (copied on this e-mail) to develop a suite of courses for a Civics, Law, and Leadership degree Chase will be offering (CIVICLL). The result is the twelve syllabi attached to this e-mail (more to follow down the road).

The courses cover a lot of territory in terms of subject matter and disciplinary approaches, but the course titles should give you a good sense of which syllabi may be most relevant to the College of Arts and Sciences for concurrence purposes.

Let me know if we can answer any questions as the concurrence process moves forward. I know there's a lot to dig into here, but we're eager to move forward with some exciting courses as we build a new program.

All best,

Jeremy

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Jeremy Fortier

Assistant Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society

The Ohio State University

*Latest Article:* "[Why to be a Civic Constitutionalist](#)"

**Subject:** Concurrence  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 20, 2025 at 4:24:21 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Martin, Andrew  
**To:** Schoen, Brian, Fortier, Jeremy  
**CC:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette  
**Attachments:** image001.png

Hi Brian and Jeremy

I spoke with Scott Levi and he is granting concurrence from History on the courses they had previously raised concerns about. I believe those were:

Presidential Crises in War and Peace  
The Evolution of Citizenship in America  
The Pursuit of Happiness

He will provide a response shortly for the courses in the most recent round of concurrence.

Best  
Andrew



**Andrew W. Martin**

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**Subject:** RE: Concurrence on Pursuits of Happiness  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 5:20:40 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Schoppe-Sullivan, Sarah  
**To:** Fortier, Jeremy, Schoen, Brian, Cravens-Brown, Lisa  
**CC:** Martin, Andrew  
**Attachments:** image001.png

Thanks, Jeremy!

With these revisions, Psychology concurs with "Pursuit of Happiness".

Thanks for working with us through this process.

Best,

Sarah

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**From:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 4:19 PM  
**To:** Schoppe-Sullivan, Sarah <[schoppe-sullivan.1@osu.edu](mailto:schoppe-sullivan.1@osu.edu)>; Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>; Cravens-Brown, Lisa <[cravens-brown.1@osu.edu](mailto:cravens-brown.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Re: Concurrence on Pursuits of Happiness

Dear Prof. Schoppe-Sullivan,

In the interests of expediency, I'm attaching to this email a copy of the "Pursuits of Happiness" syllabus with the revisions Brian referred to.

All best - Jeremy

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**From:** Schoppe-Sullivan, Sarah <[schoppe-sullivan.1@osu.edu](mailto:schoppe-sullivan.1@osu.edu)>  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 4:13 PM  
**To:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>, Cravens-Brown, Lisa <[cravens-brown.1@osu.edu](mailto:cravens-brown.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>, Martin, Andrew <[martin.1026@osu.edu](mailto:martin.1026@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Concurrence on Pursuits of Happiness

Hi Brian,

Thanks for the update – it would be helpful to see the revised syllabus with the changes highlighted. (I cc-ed Andrew Martin on this reply because he expressed a desire to be kept in the loop.)

Sarah

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**From:** Schoen, Brian <[schoen.110@osu.edu](mailto:schoen.110@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 12:21 PM  
**To:** Schoppe-Sullivan, Sarah <[schoppe-sullivan.1@osu.edu](mailto:schoppe-sullivan.1@osu.edu)>; Cravens-Brown, Lisa <[cravens-brown.1@osu.edu](mailto:cravens-brown.1@osu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Fortier, Jeremy <[fortier.28@osu.edu](mailto:fortier.28@osu.edu)>