

# Course Outline: Human Happiness 幸福論 (UGED2321)

*Note: This course outline is subject to minor changes.*

Course Code/Section: UGED2321, 2023-24, Term 2

Course Title: Human Happiness 幸福論

Time/Venue: Mon 9:30-12:15 (LSK 302)

Course website: See Blackboard

Course Teacher: Dr. Franz MANG 孟繁麟

Email: [fmang@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:fmang@cuhk.edu.hk)

Office Location: Room 424, Fung King Hey Building

Teaching Assistant: TBD

## Course Overview:

(In addition to the course description approved by the Senate Committee on GE)

This course guides you through the process of answering challenging questions related to human happiness. The initial sessions focus on core topics such as the meaning of an examined life and happiness. As the course unfolds, it sheds light on various elements that are generally deemed to enhance the quality and happiness of human life. Common responses include pleasure, personal autonomy, authenticity, virtue, love, and meaningfulness. But what do these things mean, and how much value do they hold? Let us explore these issues together.

## Learning Outcomes: *(based on the learning outcomes approved by Senate Committee on GE)*

- (1) Understand and appreciate central arguments in both ancient and contemporary literature concerning human happiness and the good life.
- (2) Develop personal viewpoints on critical issues related to the course.
- (3) Comprehend different philosophical perspectives in a clear, unbiased manner.
- (4) Importantly, enhance abilities to read and think critically.

## Learning Activities: *(as per the learning activities approved by Senate Committee on GE)*

- (1) Lecture
- (2) In-class discussion
- (3) Term-end test
- (4) Final essay

## Course Schedule:

	Topic	Required readings/other requirements
1. Jan 8	Introduction: Is the unexamined life not worth living?	(See the list of readings provided below)
2. Jan 15	Is pleasure the only good thing in life? The appeal of hedonism.	(Ditto)

3. Jan 22      What is happiness?      (Ditto)

4. Jan 29      Theories of well-being: Desire  
fulfilment, objective list, and human  
flourishing.      (Ditto)

5. Feb 5      How important is personal autonomy to  
our lives?      (Ditto)

No lecture on Feb 12 (public holiday)

6. Feb 19      True to oneself: The elusive idea of  
authenticity.      (Ditto)

7. Feb 26      What is love? The different faces of  
love.      (Ditto)

No lecture on Mar 4 (reading week)

8. Mar 11      The threat of meaninglessness and  
absurdity.      (Ditto)

9. Mar 18      Can we ascribe meanings to our lives?      (Ditto)

10. Mar 25      Right and wrong      (Ditto)

No lecture on Apr 1 (public holiday)

11. Apr 8      Why be good: Is virtue good for the  
person who has it?      (Ditto)

12. Apr 15      Conclusion: Does happiness matter, and  
why?      (Ditto)

Apr 22:      Study questions will be distributed in advance. Details will be announced in due course.

Term-end test

Final essay      If you manage your time well and submit your essay any time before 11:59pm on April 29, 2023 (Monday), you will receive *two additional bonus marks* towards your final grade for the course. The ultimate deadline is May 17, 2023 (Friday), at 5:00pm HKT. Please do not miss this deadline; otherwise, your essay may receive *a failing grade or may not be graded at all*. More details will be announced in due course.

<u>Assessment scheme</u>		
Components	Description	Weight (%)
1. In-class discussion (in-class writing + participation)	See below*.	34%
2. Term-end test	Students are expected to answer 3 questions in the test. Very useful study questions will be distributed about a month ahead of the test date. Further instructions will be given in due course.	36%
3. Final essay	2000-2500 words in English. 4000-5000 words in Chinese. Details will be provided in due course.	30%

**\*In-class discussion (34%)**

a) In-class written response (only 3 sentences each time): 26%

▪ **Lectures 3 through 12 (10 times):**

- This is a good way of honing your writing skills. It also helps you share your ideas with the lecturer and your classmates.
- Each student **in class** will be asked to write a very short response—within the space of 3 sentences, in Chinese or English—to a question.

- **Grading:** Your response slips will be read by the lecturer carefully but will not be returned. Each written response will receive either B+ or A.

- **Note:** Do not help any other student to write her or his response.

b) Interactions with classmates and the teacher: 8%

c) **\*About arriving late (關於遲到):**

Please do not be late for class. If you arrive later than 10:15am, please wait to join us next time. The classroom isn't a café where people can come in at any time. :-) However, if you must be late or absent for a justifiable reason, please email me ([flmang@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:flmang@cuhk.edu.hk)) **the day before the lecture.**

**General references (highly recommended for students):**

Hurka, Thomas. *The Best Things in Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Haybron, Daniel. *Happiness: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Kraut, Richard. *What is Good and Why: The Ethics of Well-being*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007.

**\*Key readings for students (particularly useful for essay writing):**

<p><b>Is pleasure the only good thing in life? The appeal of hedonism:</b></p> <p>Hurka, Thomas. <i>The Best Things in Life</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, Chapters 1-2.</p>
<p><b>What is happiness?</b></p> <p>Haybron, Daniel. <i>Happiness: A Very Short Introduction</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, Chapters 2-3.</p>
<p><b>Theories of well-being</b></p> <p>Parfit, Derek. <i>Reason and Persons</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, Appendix I, 493-502.</p> <p>Kraut, Richard. <i>What is Good and Why: The Ethics of Well-being</i>. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007, 131-145.</p>
<p><b>How important is personal autonomy to our lives?</b></p> <p>Kraut, Richard. <i>What is Good and Why: The Ethics of Well-being</i>. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007, "The Good of Autonomy," 196-201.</p> <p>Conly, Sarah. <i>Against Autonomy</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, Chapter 1.</p>
<p><b>True to oneself: the elusive idea of authenticity</b></p> <p>Guignon, Charles. <i>On Being Authentic</i>. London: Routledge, 2004, Chapters 1 and 8.</p>
<p><b>What is love? The different faces of love</b></p> <p>Hurka, Thomas. <i>The Best Things in Life</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, Chapter 7.</p>
<p><b>The threat of meaninglessness and absurdity</b></p> <p>Nagel, Thomas. <i>What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, Chapter 10.</p> <p>Jeffrey Gordon, "The Triumph of Sisyphus," <i>Philosophy and Literature</i>, 32, 1 (2008): 183-190.</p>
<p><b>Can we ascribe meanings to our lives?</b></p>

Wolf, Susan. "The Meanings of Lives." In *Exploring the Meaning of Life: An Anthology and Guide*, edited by Joshua W. Seachris, 304-18. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2013.

Wolf, Susan. *Meaning in Life and Why It Matters*. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010, Chapter 1.

### **Right and wrong**

Pojman, Louis P. and James Fieser (2012) *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*. Wadsworth. Chaps. 1 and 2, pp. 1-29.

Enoch, David. (2014) 'Why I am an objectivist about ethics (And why you are, too)'. In R. Shafer-Landau (Ed.), *The ethical life* (3rd ed., pp. 208-221). Oxford University Press.

### **Why be good: is virtue good for the person who has it?**

Hurka, Thomas. *The Best Things in Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, Chapter 6.

Kraut, Richard. *What is Good and Why: The Ethics of Well-being*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007, 191-96.

## **References for the 12 lectures:**

### **Lecture 1. Is the unexamined life not worth living?**

de Botton, Alain. *The Consolations of Philosophy*. London: Pantheon Books, 2000, Chapter 1.

Kraut, Richard. "The Examined Life." In *A Companion to Socrates*, edited by S. Ahbel-Rappe and R. Kamtekar, 228-42. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2006.

Nozick, Robert. *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, Chapter 1

Dworkin, Ronald. *Justice for Hedgehogs*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011, Chapter 9, esp. pp.195-202.

Kupperman, Joel J. *Six Myths about the Good Life: Thinking about What Has Value*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2006, Chapter 7.

#### **Advanced reading:**

Haybron, Daniel M. *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, Chapter 1.

### **Lecture 2. Is pleasure the only good thing in life? The appeal of hedonism**

\*Hurka, Thomas. *The Best Things in Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, Chapters 1-3.

\*Kupperman, Joel J. *Six Myths about the Good Life: Thinking about What Has Value*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2006, Chapter 1.

Shafer-Landau, Russ. *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, Chapters 1-2.

Advanced readings:

Moore, Andrew. "Hedonism." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hedonism/>

May, Joshua. "Psychological Egoism." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.  
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/psychegeo/>

Kawall, Jason. "The Experience Machine and Mental State Theories of Well-being." *Journal of Value Inquiry* 33, no. 3 (Sep 1999): 381-387.

De Brigard, Felipe. "If You Don't Like It, Does It Matter If It's Real?" *Philosophical Psychology*, 23, no.1 (Feb 2010): 43-57.

Crisp, Roger. *Reasons and the Good*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006. Chapter 4, "Well-Being."

**Lecture 3. What is happiness?**

\*Haybron, Daniel. *Happiness: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, Chapters 2-3, and 5.

Haybron, Daniel. "Happiness." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/happiness/>

Haidt, Johnathan. *The Happiness Hypothesis*. New York: Basic Books, 2006, Chapter 5.

Brülde, Bengt. "Happiness Theories of the Good Life." *Journal of Happiness Studies* 8, no. 1 (2007): 15-49.

Kupperman, Joel J. *Six Myths about the Good Life: Thinking about What Has Value*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2006, Chapter 2.

Martin, Mike W. *Happiness and the Good Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, Chapters 1-2 and 7.

Advanced readings:

Nozick, Robert. *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, Chapter 10.

Haybron, Daniel M. *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, Chapters 5-6.

Delle Fave, Antonella. "Past, Present, and Future of Flow." In *The Oxford Handbook of Happiness*, edited by Susan David, Ilona Boniwell and Amanda Conley Ayers, 60-73. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

**Lecture 4. Theories of well-being: desire fulfilment, objective list, human flourishing**

\*Parfit, Derek. *Reason and Persons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, Appendix I, 493-502.

\*Kraut, Richard. *What is Good and Why: The Ethics of Well-being*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007, 131-145.

Kazez, Jean. *The Weight of Things: Philosophy and the Good Life*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007, Chapters 4-5.

Kekes, John. *Moral Wisdom and Good Lives*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995, Chapter 1.

Advanced readings:

Haybron, Daniel M. *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, Chapters 2, 4, 8 and 9.

Nozick, Robert. *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, Chapter 10.

Tiberius, Valerie. *Moral Psychology: A Contemporary Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2014, Chapter 10.

### **Lecture 5. How important is personal autonomy to our lives?**

\*Kraut, Richard. *What is Good and Why: The Ethics of Well-being*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007, "The Good of Autonomy," 196-201.

\*Thomas Hurka, "Why Value Autonomy?" *Social Theory and Practice* 13, 3 (1987): 361-382.

#### **Advanced Readings:**

Dworkin, Gerald "The Concept of Autonomy." In John Christman ed. *The Inner Citadel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, Ch.3

Frankfurt, Harry. "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person." *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 68 No.1 (1971): 5-20. (Free internet pdf available)

Raz, Joseph. *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, Ch.14.

Benson, Paul "Autonomy and Oppressive Socialization." *Social Theory and Practice* Vol.17, No.3 (Fall 1991): 385-408.

Killmister, Suzy "Autonomy and the Problem of Socialization." *Social Theory and Practice* Vol. 39, No.1 (2013): 95-119.

Oshana, Marina. "How Should We Value Autonomy?" *Social Philosophy and Policy* 20, no. 2 (2003): 99-126.

### **Lecture 6. True to oneself: the elusive idea of authenticity**

\*Guignon, Charles. *On Being Authentic*. London: Routledge, 2004, Chapters 1 and 8.

Dworkin, Ronald. *Justice for Hedgehogs*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011, Chapter 9.

Feldman, Simon. *Against Authenticity: Why You Shouldn't Be Yourself*. Lexington Books, 2014.

Martin, Mike W. *Happiness and the Good Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, Chapter 4.

#### **Advanced readings:**

Blackburn, Simon. *Mirror, Mirror: The Uses and Abuses of Self-Love*. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014, Chapter 8.

Haybron, Daniel M. *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, Chapter 9.

Oshana, Marina. "Autonomy and the Question of Authenticity." *Social Theory and Practice* 33, no. 3 (July 2007): 441-29.

Oshana, Marina. "How Should We Value Autonomy?" *Social Philosophy and Policy* 20, no. 2 (2003): 99-126.

## **Lecture 7. What is love? The different faces of love**

\*Hurka, Thomas. *The Best Things in Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, Chapter 7.

\*Fromm, Erich. *The Art of Loving*. New York: Perennial, 2000, Chapter 2.

\*Wong, David B. "The Different Faces of Love in a Good Life." In *Moral Cultivation and Confucian Character*, edited by Chenyang Li and Peimin Ni, 97-126. New York: SUNY Press, 2014.

White, Richard. *Love's Philosophy*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001, Chapters 1-2.

Martin Mike W. *Happiness and the Good Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, Chapter 9.

### **Advanced readings:**

Haidt, Johnathan. *The Happiness Hypothesis*. New York: Basic Books, 2006, Chapter 6.

Grayling, A.C. *Friendship*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Lafollette, Hugh. *Personal Relationships: Love, Identity and Morality*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996, Chapters 1-5.

Thomas, Laurence. "Friends and Lovers." In *Person to Person*, edited by George Graham & Hugh Lafollette, 182-98. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.

Badhwar, Neera Kapur. *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003.

## **Lecture 8. The threat of meaninglessness and absurdity**

\*Nagel, Thomas. *What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, Chapter 10.

\*Jeffrey Gordon, "The Triumph of Sisyphus," *Philosophy and Literature*, 32, 1 (2008): 183-190.

Nagel, Thomas, "The Absurd." in *Exploring the Meaning of Life: An Anthology and Guide*, edited by Joshua W. Seachris, 236-244. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2013

Pritchard, Duncan. "Absurdity, Angst, and the Meaning of Life." *The Monist* 93 (January 2010): 3-16.

Seachris, Joshua. "Meaning of Life: Contemporary Analytic Perspectives." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/mean-ana/>

Craig, William Lane. "The Absurdity of Life Without God." Online paper. <http://rintintin.colorado.edu/~vancecd/phil3600/Craig.pdf>

Baggini, Julian. *What's It All About: Philosophy and the Meaning of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Metz, Thaddeus. "Could God's Purpose Be the Source of Life's Meaning?" in *Exploring the Meaning of Life: An Anthology and Guide*, edited by Joshua W. Seachris, 200-218. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2013.

Metz, Thaddeus. "The Immortality Requirement of Life's Meaning." *Ratio* 16, no.2 (2003): 161-77. Reprinted in *Exploring the Meaning of Life: An Anthology and Guide*, edited by Joshua W. Seachris, 416-27. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2013.



## **Lecture 9. Can we ascribe meanings to our lives?**

\*Wolf, Susan. "The Meanings of Lives." In *Exploring the Meaning of Life: An Anthology and Guide*, edited by Joshua W. Seachris, 304-18. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2013.

\*Wolf, Susan. *Meaning in Life and Why It Matters*. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010, Chapter 1.

### **Advanced readings:**

Seachris, Joshua. "The Meaning of Life as Narrative: A New Proposal for Interpreting Philosophy's 'Primary' Question." *Philo 12* (Spring-Summer 2009): 5-23. Draft available online: <http://www.ou.edu/ouphil/grad/seachris/MeaningOfLifeAsNarrative.pdf>

Wong, Wai-hung. "Meaningfulness and Identities." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* (2008) 11:123-148.

May, Todd. *A Significant Life: Human Meaning in a Silent Universe*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

## **Lecture 10. Right and wrong**

\*Pojman, Louis P. and James Fieser. *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*. Wadsworth, 2012. Chaps. 1 and 2, pp. 1-29.

\*Enoch, David "Why I am an objectivist about ethics (And why you are, too)." In R. Shafer-Landau (Ed.), *The Ethical Life* (3rd ed., pp. 208-221). Oxford University Press, 2014.

Rachels, James and Stuart Rachels. *Problems from Philosophy: An Introductory Text* (4th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 125-150, 2021.

Rachels, James. "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism." In *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. McGraw-Hill, 1993.

### **Advanced readings:**

Wong, David B. *Natural Moralities*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Mackie, J. L. "The Subjectivity of Values." In *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*. Penguin, 1977.

Harman, Gilbert. "Moral Relativism Defended." *The Philosophical Review* (1975) 84(1), 3-22.

Dworkin, Ronald. "Objectivity and Truth: You'd Better Believe It." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1996), 25(2), 87-139.

## **Lecture 11. Why be good: is virtue good for the person who has it?**

\*Hurka, Thomas. *The Best Things in Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, Chapter 6.

\*Kraut, Richard. *What is Good and Why: The Ethics of Well-being*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007, 191-96.

Martin, Mike W. *Happiness and the Good Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, Chapter 3.

Kazeez, Jean. *The Weight of Things: Philosophy and the Good Life*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007, Chapter 8.

Kupperman, Joel J. *Six Myths about the Good Life: Thinking about What Has Value*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2006, Chapters 5-6.

Advanced readings:

Haidt, Johnathan. *The Happiness Hypothesis*. New York: Basic Books, 2006, Chapter 8.

Tiberius, Valerie. *Moral Psychology: A Contemporary Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2014, Chapters 7 and 10.

Bloomfield, Paul. *The Virtues of Happiness: A Theory of the Good Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, Chapter 3.

**Lecture 12. Conclusion: Does happiness matter, and why?**

\*Haybron, Daniel. *Happiness: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, Chapter 8, "A Good Life."

Dworkin, Ronald. *Justice for Hedgehogs*. Harvard University Press, 2011, Chapter 9, esp. pp.195-202.

Grade Descriptors:

[http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade\\_descriptors.pdf](http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf)) in you course outline.

Academic honesty and plagiarism:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> .

With each assignment, students are required to submit a [signed declaration](#) (attachment 1) that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via **VeriGuide**, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

Feedback for evaluation

- a. Course and teaching evaluation survey will be conducted in the second last week of the course. Students are reminded of their responsibility and right to give feedback to facilitate enhancement of the course.
- b. Students are welcome to give feedbacks to the course teacher at any time in person or through emails.

Attachment 1

Declaration for written assignment

I am/we are submitting the assignment for:

- an individual project or
- a group project on behalf of all members of the group. It is hereby confirmed that the submission is authorized by all members of the group, and all members of the group are required to sign this declaration.

I/We declare that the assignment here submitted is original except for source material explicitly acknowledged, the piece of work, or a part of the piece of work has not been submitted for more than one purpose (i.e. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration, and that the submitted soft copy with details listed in the <Submission Details> is identical to the hard copy(ies), if any, which has(have) been / is(are) going to be submitted. I/We also acknowledge that I am/we are aware of University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and of the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations, as contained in the University website <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. In the case of a group project, we are aware that each student is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions should there be any plagiarized contents in the group project, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed directly or indirectly to the plagiarized contents.

It is also understood that assignments without a properly signed declaration by the student concerned and in the case of a group project, by all members of the group concerned, will not be graded by the teacher(s).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student ID(s)

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Course code

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Course title