

**Philosophy as a Way of Life: The GGL Fellow Seminar
Fall 2017, Prof. Meghan Sullivan**

Overview: In this course, we are considering what it means to pursue philosophy as a way of life. More specifically, what does it mean for a philosophical argument to convert you to a new way of life or to actively inform how you live? We will begin the course by considering what it is to undertake self-examination, whether it is psychologically healthy, how to do it well, and how to help others do it too. Then we will look at two specific case studies of individuals who were “converted” by philosophy. First we will look at extreme altruists and the arguments that moved them to action. And we will look at people who have chosen contemplative religious lives and the arguments that moved them. We will discuss how and why these individuals have been converted, whether they are being reasonable, heroic, fanatical... In the final part of the course, we will break into small groups, each of which will prepare a dialogue and an immersion experience about other ways philosophy might permeate a life--i.e pacifism, feminism, anarchism, or religious traditions we have yet to consider.

Meetings: Our seminar generally meets on Mondays and Wednesdays (2-3:15pm) in DeBartolo 202. No daytime meeting on the following dates: 2/15, 3/8, 3/27, 4/10, 4/12, 5/1, and 5/3. Those meetings will be made up with our team retreats, trainings, class dinners, and film nights. Those schedules are TBD.

Books: Please get a copy of Socrates’ *Apology* (any edition is fine but I recommend Hackett), Peter Singer’s *The Most Good You Can Do*, Larisa MacFarquar’s *Strangers Drowning*, and Shusako Endo’s *Silence*. All other readings will be in the Google Drive folder for the course.

Assignments:

Reading Questions/Comments (20%): The night before each seminar you should submit a question or two about the readings to our class Google Doc. We will use these to structure our group discussion. You will get two points for an excellent question(s) submission on a given day, one point for reasonably good question(s) and no points for not submitting question(s) or submitting question(s) not particularly relevant to the topic of the day. I will count your ten highest submissions.

Op-Eds/“Stone” Essays(10% Each): For each of the first three units you will write an op-ed style essay translating the philosophy we have been studying in the unit to a solution for a contemporary life problem. These essays will be in the genre of a longer op-ed, NY Times “Stone” style philosophy essay. The final version will be published to your dialogue group and the Way of Life Seminar. [Directions and rubric here.](#)

Way of Life Immersion Project (30%): You will form groups of 3-4 and design an “idea immersion” for the rest of us. This will be an experience involving readings, discussions, and a hands-on element that takes an important philosophical idea and teaches us how to incorporate

it in our lives. Half of the assignment will involve selecting and leading a discussion of the idea. The other half will involve finding a way to immerse us in it for a class session. [Directions and rubric here.](#)

Effective Dialogue Facilitating (20%): You will be graded on how well you discharge your duties as a GGL Dialogue leader. This will include regular reports at our team meetings about the progress of groups, review of your self/group assessments, punctuality and accuracy with keeping track of short student writing assignments, and the creativity and care you give to lesson-planning with your partners. Lesson plans should be filed every week.

Letter Grade Cutoffs:

- A: 93-100 (Update: Because of assignment modifications, adjusted to 90 as cutoff)
- A-: 89-92 (Update: Because of assignment modifications, adjusted to 86 as cutoff)
- B+: 85-88
- B: 81-84
- B-: 78-80
- C+: 74-77
- C: 70-73
- D: 60-69
- F: Otherwise

Individual private gradebooks will be shared with you on Google Drive.

Tentative Schedule:

Depending on our pace, interests, and project timing we may shift the schedule around a bit.

Our class dinners and film nights will be added. (February: Hacksaw Ridge, March: Silence)
Teaching Team meetings will be scheduled on demand.

Date	Topic	Theme
1/16	GGL Sustained Dialogue Training (9am-5pm)	Self Examination
1/18	This is Water (Wallace) and My Philosophy of Life (Ashbery)	Self-Examination
1/23	The Apology of Socrates	Self-Examination
1/25	On the Shortness of Life (Seneca)	Self-Examination
1/30	On Bullshit with Guest Steve Stromberg	Self-Examination

2/1	The Most Good You Can Do Pt 1 (Chaps 1, 3-6)	Pursuing Morality FIRST OP-EDS DUE (Saturday 11:30pm)
2/6	The Most Good You Can Do Pt 2 (Chaps 7-12, 15)	Pursuing Morality
2/8	Selections from Strangers Drowning: LM1-LM4 in Folder	Pursuing Morality
2/9	Poverty Inc Screening	Pursuing Morality
2/13	More on Strangers Drowning: Parenthood, Family Life, and Moral Commitment	Pursuing Morality OP-ED REWRITES?
2/15	NO CLASS	SECOND OP-EDS DUE ON 2/22 (11pm)
2/20	Moral Saints and Preserving Sainthood: Read Susan Wolf's "Moral Saints" and Robert Adams's "Saints"	Pursuing Contemplation
2/22	Selections from Dedicated to God--An Oral History of Cloistered Nuns--Read Four Reese Articles in Folder (and Citation Info)	Pursuing Contemplation
2/27	Narveson-Pacifism A Philosophical Analysis and FILM NIGHT TONIGHT at 6PM	Pursuing Contemplation
3/1	Continuing our Discussion of Hacksaw Ridge and Pacifism as a Moral Code	Pursuing Contemplation
3/6	Silence, Pt. 1 (First 4 Chapters)	Pursuing Contemplation
3/8	NO CLASS	
3/13	SPRING BREAK	WORK ON YOUR IMMERSION PROJECTS
3/15	SPRING BREAK	THIRD OP-EDS DUE 3/19
3/20	Silence Part 2 (Rest of it)	Self-Examination (Redux)
3/22	Good Man is Hard to Find, Selections from John of Cross: Dark Night Book 2: 8-10	Self-Examination (Redux)
3/27	Meet for Immersion Projects!	
3/29	Immersion Discussions: Group 1	
4/3	Immersion Excursions: Group 1	
4/5	Immersion Discussions: Group 2	

4/10	SILENCE FILM-SCHEDULE	
4/12	No Class	
4/17	Easter Holiday	
4/19	Immersion Excursions: Group 2	
4/24	Immersion Discussions: Group 3	
4/26	Immersion Excursions: Group 3	
5/1	NO CLASS--STUDENT APOLOGY COMMENTS--CAMPAIGN HELP	
5/3	NO CLASS--STUDENT APOLOGY COMMENTS--CAMPAIGN HELP	