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Thursday 3:40-5:30
Classroom LB301
Fall 2000

PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

In one of his poems, the twentieth century American poet Wallace Stevens says, "The greatest poverty is not to live in the physical world." In this short statement Stevens implies a whole philosophy of life, a philosophy that asserts the importance of the physical and the sensual. Other poets and philosophers have proposed opposing points of view: the life of the mind and the soul is more important than the external world. In this class we will present and explore numerous and diverse points of view about self, personal goals, relationships, society, and life. This course attempts to make you aware of and question each of those perspectives and the values they embody. This course is not, however, an attempt to support one particular ideological, philosophical, or religious point of view. Instead each of you are asked to think about and question the various perspectives we present in class, so that you can determine your own philosophy of life and the values that are most important for you. We will often raise more questions than you may be willing or able to answer, but half of the delight of a class like this is that it allows you the challenge of experiencing those questions head-on and considering them in light of your own life. To do this, you have to be willing to read carefully, listen carefully to each other, think carefully about the issues we explore, and then carefully formulate your own views. In an effort to help you with this, I will expect you to join in our classroom discussions and offer your own opinions. Also, I firmly believe that students working together in pairs or small groups have wonderful opportunities for exploring multiple perspectives of issues, so throughout the semester you can expect a variety of small group and whole class discussions. Though we will explore many serious and important topics, I want you to enjoy the discussions, relate them to your own first-hand experiences and allow them to enrich and improve your life.

As you will soon discover, this class will be your class: it will be run as democratically as possible, with you and your classmates making many of the pedagogical decisions. I see my role in this course as that of an informed facilitator: I will offer a general format for the course but will allow you liberties in choosing the directions we will go. I cannot stress fervently enough the importance of active discussion and participation for this class. You must commit yourself from the onset to actively discussing the various issues that we will address. Your reactions—both emotional and rational, both immediate and those that follow your reflection—will be the basis for our classroom discussions. You must share your unique approaches, understandings, and questions with your classmates. Because the issues we discuss are open to many possible interpretations, the more viewpoints you and your classmates hear and express, the more options we as a class can explore. Therefore, your constant and active discussion and participation are **required** throughout the term. The success of this class will ultimately depend upon you. To aid our classroom discussions I will ask each of you to join a small group, with about four of your classmates.

As you may already have guessed, because you are both a teacher and a student in this class, your attendance is required for all class sessions. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each period; if you are not present at that time but come late, it is your responsibility to make sure that you receive partial credit for your attendance. The final course grade will be significantly lowered for those students who miss more than two classes or come late to classes. To encourage you to come to class prepared and on time, quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class period only; individuals who come late will not receive additional time or alternate quizzes. You can expect quizzes about the reading assignments.

Rather than being confined to the perspective offered by a single text or person, this course will not have a textbook. Instead, I will provide handouts about the issues that we will read. Expect to pay photocopying expenses. Also, I may at times direct you to other writings available in our library. You will be expected to read the handouts and come prepared to discuss them. Most of our class time will be spent in discussion.

Short Writing Assignments

I will ask you throughout the term to complete some short writing assignments, including four short papers in which you record your responses to the assigned readings and the topics we discuss in class. The papers are an opportunity for you to begin exploring and articulating your own views, as well as to raise (and start answering) questions you may have. We will talk more specifically in the near future about the journal entries. Please note that all written assignments must be handed in at the beginning of the class period on the day they are due. Late papers will not be accepted.

Grades

Quizzes, group work, presentations, and participation 30%

Papers and short writing assignments 40%

Midterm and Final exams 30%

Plagiarism

I would like to remind you of the importance of doing your own work throughout the semester. Presenting other people's writing and ideas as though they are your own is a serious error. Intentional and unintentional plagiarism are not acceptable and will jeopardize specific paper or journal grades, as well as the final grade for the course.

Tentative Calendar

Sep.	21	Introductions; Fundamental Questions of Philosophy; Self
	28	No Class: Confucius' Birthday
Oct.	5	Paper #1 due: your philosophy of life today (submit <u>two</u> copies)
	12	Getting in touch with yourself
	19	Your inner world
	26	Psychological types and temperament

Nov.	2	Psychological types and temperament
	9	Paper #2: your self-profile
	16	Mid-term Exam
	23	Your type
	30	Your type
Dec.	7	Paper #3: Your type
	14	Having versus being
	21	Having versus being
	28	Values
Jan.	4	Paper #4
	11	Final Exam