

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **The Meaning of Life**

Course Number and Section

GGB

1003F 550

Instructor Name(s): Hanji Lee

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

What is the meaning of life? This course explores this fundamental question alongside several related inquiries: Where does meaning originate? Can it exist in a relativistic world? Is meaning an objective reality or a subjective creation? And what kind of person must one become to pursue a truly meaningful life? To address these questions, the course alternates between ancient foundational texts and C.S. Lewis's modern essays. By juxtaposing ancient wisdom with Lewis's critique of modern society's loss of faith in objective meaning, we will examine his concept of the Tao—the universal value system from which humanity derives order and purpose. Throughout the semester, we will analyze how each text either exemplifies, enriches, and/ or challenges Lewis's framework.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

This course aims to help students to: - Practice close reading and literary analysis in examining the main ideas of primary texts

- Construct and defend philosophical arguments in speech and writing

- Compare and contrast core thematic threads across various historical and modern texts.

- Connect ancient insights to their own lived experience through critical personal reflection

- Creatively engage with the primary texts to explore and express their personal philosophy on the meaning of life

Textbooks and Course Materials:

1. The Epic of Gilgamesh, translated by Adrew George, Penguin Classics (\$22.98)
2. The Abolition of Man, C.S. Lewis, Harper Collins (\$21.99)
3. Genesis: Translation and Commentary, translated by Robert Alter, Norton (\$25.95)
4. Phaedo, Plato, translated by David Gallop, Oxford (\$13.50)
5. Bhagavad Gita, translated by Stephen Mitchell, Harmony (\$24.95)
6. Bacchae and Other Plays, edited by Edith Hall and James Morwood, Oxford (\$12.50)

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Presentation		5
Reflection	10/23/26	15
Midterm Exam	11/02/26	20
Final Assignment	12/09/26	20
Final Exam		25
Attendance and Participation		15

Wednesday, August 12, 2026

Huron Brief Course Outline 2026/27

In-course Costs \$120.00

For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook’s publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.