

## Brief Course Outline

**Course Title:** **The Meaning of Life**

**Course Number and Section:**

GGB

1003F 550

**Instructor Name(s):** Peter Sabo

**Instructor Email(s):** psabo2@uwo.ca

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

### Course Description:

What is the meaning of life? Is this the type of question to which there is only one answer or no answer at all? Or are there many, perhaps an infinite, number of answers? If there is a meaning to life, then is this meaning provided by something external to humans—a divinity, an underlying order to the universe, and so on? Or is finding meaning something that each human can determine for themselves? Is the question of the meaning of life to be answered in individual terms or collective terms, or both? What raises the question of the meaning of life in the first place? Is it even important to ponder the meaning of life?

In this course we will explore these questions (and more) through reading important and thought-provoking literary works that come from very different times and places. Each work has its own unique perspective on the meaning of life, and thus we will compare and contrast these perspectives throughout the course. Our underlying purpose, then, is not to arrive at an answer to the meaning of life but to appreciate and understand some of the most influential perspectives and answers to the question.

### Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will learn to read and think critically.
2. Students will gain the ability to analyze ideas and situations, make considered decisions and form coherent, reasoned and fact-based judgements.
3. Students will become familiar with a selection of the writings of the world's influential writers and acquire an understanding of key components of various cultural traditions.
4. Students will learn to be clear and concise writers.
5. This course will prepare students for further courses in Global Great Books.

### Textbooks and Course Materials:

Students must purchase exact copies of all the books below.. Used books of the exact editions of these books will work as well.

1. Genesis: Translation and Commentary (translated by Robert Alter, Norton) [\$25.95]
2. Phaedo, Plato (translated by David Gallop, Oxford) [\$13.80]

- 3. Bacchae, Euripides (translated by Robin Robertson, Ecco) [24.99]
- 4. Bhagavad Gita (translated by Stephen Mitchell, Three Rivers Press) [21.99]

**Methods Of Evaluation:**

| Assignment            | Due Date mm/dd/yy | Weight - % |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Participation         |                   | 10         |
| Homework              |                   | 10         |
| Quizzes               |                   | 15         |
| 2 Writing Assignments |                   | 40         |
| Final Exam            |                   | 25         |

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

Friday, August 8, 2025