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Office Hours: M: 1-3.30p; W: 1-3.30p; R: 4-5p

HON102, sec. 2
Fall 2009, T/R, 10-1120p
The Great Room (Fowler 4)
Templeton Honors College
Eastern University

The Good Life (Honors 101)

Course Description:

In the Templeton Honors College we emphasize both the life of the mind and the development of Christian character. This course is designed to expose students to some of the classic quests and dilemmas humans have faced, and to develop with the wisest minds (Christian and pagan) some of the classic responses to them. With the help of great texts and some contemporary literature, students will study and reflect on topics such as: What is a Christian world-view? What characterizes a life well lived? Or what makes a good life “good”? How does Christianity define “good”? What is the nature of vice and virtue, and how do we cultivate in ourselves the latter? How can we live a life that is good for us, as well as for our neighbor, and the creation which hosts us all?

Course Objectives:

- 1) To articulate carefully the various aspects of a Christian world-view
- 2) To study thoroughly the character of virtue and vice
- 3) To understand the nature and goal of spiritual formation
- 4) To examine the question of “the good life”

Assessment and Grading:

Assessment will be based on and four short essays outlined below; the final grade will be a reflection of performance on each of these academic exercises

Format:

This is very much a discussion, and not a lecture, course. Your job is to talk about some texts and the issues they raise, in preparation for a specific kind of thinking which is vocalized as you write about them. My role will be (1) to foster, facilitate, and manage discussions, so that everyone gets to talk if they want, (2) to inject new questions or perspectives when discussion stalls or becomes generally unproductive, and (3) to provide context and background information, occasionally offering “mini-lectures” for five or ten minutes to clarify especially difficult or unfamiliar topics.

Required Texts:

Aristophanes, *Aristophanes 1: Clouds, Wasps, Birds*, Peter Meineck, trans. (Hackett Publishing: 1998) 9780872203600
Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Joel C. Relihan, trans. (Hackett Publishing: 2001) 9780872205833
Roberta C. Bondi, *To Love as God Loves* (Fortress Press: 1987) 9780800620417
Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, Roger Ariew, trans. (Hackett Publishing: 2005) 9780872207172
Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Engaging God’s World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* (Eerdmans Publishing: 2002) 9780802839817
Plato, *Symposium*, Paul Woodruff and Alexander Nehamas, trans. (Hackett Publishing: 1989) 9780872200760

Course Requirements:

Weekly Reflection Journals: To be turned in to instructor at the beginning of each class period. See Appendix for the list of journal prompts for each reading. (20% of your final grade).

Two Focused Papers on two topics and perspectives treated in the readings and discussed in class (5p). Format for this paper will be provided during the semester. (40% of your final grade; 20% each):

Paper 1: *Symposium* Paper. Write a 5-page defense of the philosophy expressed in the *Symposium*, aimed at a contemporary audience. This is a formal essay and therefore it needs to be well-written and polished, but you’ll also need to demonstrate a good deal of creativity in capturing accurately

the points Plato is making in a way that would be transparently clear today. This essay is an exercise in comprehension and translation.

Paper 2: Wisdom Paper. Explain the relationship of wisdom to the life well lived in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. This essay is an exercise in comprehension, synthesis, and selection.

Final Paper: Integrating the readings from this semester offer a clear presentation of your Christian ethics (understanding of the good life). Address the preliminary notions of divine intention, nature, culture, and relativism; situate your understanding of virtue and vice, humility, wisdom, and love; and in particular address the place of education in the good life. (10p). (40% of your final grade)

Student Disability Policy:

If you have any documented special educational needs, please advise the professor at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made for you.

University Policies:

Please note that all university policies pertaining to academic dishonesty, drop/add procedures, and grade appeal should be followed by students enrolled in this class. Consult the undergraduate catalog or ask the professor if you have questions about any of these university policies.

Academic Dishonesty:

Deliberate plagiarism is a kind of lie that fundamentally undermines the relationship between teacher and student. If you have any questions about what plagiarism is, do not hesitate to ask me. The standard penalty for deliberate plagiarism in my classes is an F for the course. This may be followed by a letter to the dean urging that the plagiarist be expelled from Eastern University. Please do not make me even think of having to do this.

The Writing Center:

The Writing Center (Walton 205) provides special assistance to students with learning challenges and students whose first language is not English. The Writing Center recommends that students sign up for an appointment 2 to 3 days prior to the day desired. The Writing Center has about 15 40-minute appointment slots available per day.

Course Schedule

Week	Class by Date	Topic	Readings by Due Date	Assignments by Due Date
1				
	R-8-27	Introduction		
2				
	T-9-1	The Good Life as Course Objective?		
	W-9-2	Last Day to Add/Drop		
	R-9-3	Paideia or Training: What's all <i>this</i> about?	Bondi, 9-19 Plantinga, ix-xix	
3				
	T-9-8	Training	Aristophanes, <i>Clouds</i>	
	R-9-10	Training	Aristophanes, <i>Birds</i>	
4				
	T-9-15	Eros	Plato, <i>Symposium</i> , 1-19	
	R-9-17	Eros	Plato, <i>Symposium</i> , 20-44	
5				
	T-9-22	Eros	Plato, <i>Symposium</i> , 45-75	
	R-9-24	Eros and Caritas	Plantinga, 1-16 Bondi, 20-40	Symposium Paper
6				
	T-9-29	Time	Seneca, "On the Shortness of Life"	
	R-10-1	Body and Soul	Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> , I:1, II:4	

7				
	T-10-6	Eros and Praxis	Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> , III	
	R-10-8	Goodness	Adler, "Nature of Goodness" Steinbeck, Cannery Row	
8				
	T-10-13	Creation and Fall	Plantinga, 17-68	
	R-10-15	No-Class: Fall Free Days		
9				
	T-10-20	Wisdom	Boethius, <i>Consolation</i> , Bk I	
	R-10-22	Fortune and Folly	Boethius, <i>Consolation</i> , Bk II	
10				
	T-10-27	Happiness	Boethius, <i>Consolation</i> , Bk III	
	R-10-29	Continenence	Boethius, <i>Conso.</i> , Bk IV, 1-5	
11				
	T-11-3	Humility, Passions, and Prayer	Bondi, 41-100	Wisdom Paper
		Last Day to Withdraw without Academic Penalty		
	R-11-5	The Church	Ambrose, Selected Letters	
12				
	T-11-10	God as the Good	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , 10	
	R-11-12	Nature	Augustine, <i>Conf</i> , 12: xxx-xxxviii Lewis, "Men without Chests"	
13				
	T-11-17	Vanity, Wretchedness, and Boredom	Pascal, <i>Pensées</i> , selections TBA	
	R-11-19	Submission	Pascal, <i>Pensées</i> , selections TBA	
13				
	T-11-24	Knowledge of God	Pascal, <i>Pensées</i> , selections TBA	
	R-11-26	No Class: Thanksgiving		
14				
	T-12-1	From Knowledge to Love of God	Pascal, <i>Pensées</i> , selections TBA	
	R-12-3	Called to Love God	Plantinga, 69-144 Bondi, 101-09	
15				
	R-12-10	12-10, 5:00pm, Final Paper Due		