

Phil 140, 3 credits, Fall 2015, NJCU Harborside.

The Examined Life

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Catalog Description

This course teaches students to identify and evaluate those beliefs that guide their thoughts and actions. Reflecting on different sources, students identify those philosophical beliefs that play a role in their own lives. By developing their critical thinking skills, they learn how to clarify, systematize, and assess these beliefs.

Course Description

Does God exist? Are you free? Why live? What should you do with your life? In this course, we'll be asking some of these deep philosophical questions. We will begin by examining two classic arguments for the existence of God as well as concerns that God's existence is incompatible with the existence of evil. In the second part of the course, we will ask what determines the moral character of our actions. Do the ends justify the means? From there, we will discuss whether we are in control of our own destinies or whether our actions are completely pre-determined by causal factors outside of our control. In the final part of the course, we will discuss the meaning of life, especially why some philosophers have connected a meaningful life with God's existence.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to (i) read philosophical texts, (ii) clearly and charitably explain viewpoints that are not their own, (iii) think critically and philosophically, (iv) write well-structured prose in which they clearly state a thesis and persuasively defend it, (v) demonstrate an understanding of several core philosophical topics.

Required Textbook

By 09/08/2015, the following textbook must be purchased or rented:

- [Philosophy Here and Now: Powerful Ideas in Everyday Life](#), by Lewis Vaughn
(Available in the campus book store and online retailers)

Requirements

- *Workload*: Successfully completing this course requires a minimum commitment of 6 hours per week.
- *Attendance*: Roll call will be taken from Week 2. 1 point per class up to a maximum of 10 points. Excludes Week 1 and Week in which you present.
- *8 Reading Quizzes* administered through Blackboard on weeks when no other written assignment is due. Once you open a quiz, you will have 30 minutes to complete it. This is an automatic function performed by Blackboard.
- *2 Short Writing Assignments* submitted through Blackboard.

- *2 Essays* submitted through Blackboard. 1000 and 1500 words respectively.
- *Final Presentation*: One group oral presentation and written submission. Each member must present at least one slide. Groups will grade their member's participation.
- *Grade Distribution*: Attendance—1 point per class (10 total), Quizzes—2 points each (16 total); Short Writing Assignments—7 points each (14 total); Essays—20 points each (40 total); Presentation—10 oral, 10 points written, 10 points peer evaluation (30 points total).
- *Grade Breakdown*:

96–110	A		77–79	C+
90–95	A-		73–76	C
87–89	B+		70–72	C-
83–86	B		60–69	D
80–82	B -		0–59	F

Policies

- *Student Responsibility*: This syllabus outlines the required text, assignments, requirements, and policies for this course. By taking this course, you agree to read this syllabus and be bound by those requirements and policies.
- *Late work & Make-up Policy*:
 - All assignments must be submitted through Blackboard by 1:00 pm on the due date (see assignment schedule below).
 - No make-ups or late work accepted under any circumstances. No exceptions.
 - Blackboard difficulties are rare and automatically reported to instructors. Under no circumstance will a student's report of a Blackboard difficulty be reason for an extension. It is your responsibility to contact blackboard support for help: dlsupport@njcu.edu.
- *Attendance*: You are considered absent if you are (i) not present during roll call, or (ii) leave early, or (iii) leave without permission, or (iv) leave for an extended period of time.
- *Electronic devices*: Use of electronic device, including, but not limited, to smartphones, dictaphones, tablets, laptops, is prohibited. Recording a lecture is in