

San José State University
Department of Philosophy
PHIL 12-04 Philosophy of the Person, Fall 2018

Course and Contact Information

<i>Instructor:</i>	Rebecca Chan
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<i>Office Hours:</i>	T 3-5 pm, or by appointment
<i>Class Days/Time:</i>	T/R 1:30-2:45 pm
<i>Classroom:</i>	DMH 208
<i>Prerequisites:</i>	None

Course Description

In this course, we're going to (i) explore what philosophy has to say about us and the way we live and (ii) put some of these suggestions into action. First, we'll start by turning inward and discovering what yoga can tell us about our minds. Second, we'll consider the ways in which we respond to the world around us as we learn what Stoicism has to say about our reactive emotions. Third, we'll move beyond ourselves and reflect upon the significance of friendship according to ancient and modern thinkers. Fourth, we'll extend beyond our circle of friends and consider what effective altruism has to say about how we can have the greatest impact on others around us. Fifth, we'll look at how our everyday practices cause suffering and what we should do about it. And last, we'll end the course by asking ourselves whether we should live morally.

Fulfills GE area E.

GE Student Learning Objective

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- (1) Students will be able to recognize the physiological, social/cultural, and psychological influences on their well-being.
- (2) Students will be able to recognize the interrelation of the physiological, social/cultural, and psychological factors on their development across the lifespan.
- (3) Students will be able to use appropriate social skills to enhance learning and develop positive interpersonal relationships with diverse groups and individuals.
- (4) Students will be able to recognize themselves as individuals undergoing a particular stage of human development, how their well being is affected by the university's academic and social systems, and how they can facilitate their development within the university environment.

Readings

Please do the readings before the day for which they are assigned. 'C' is compulsory, 'R' is recommended, and 'E' is enthusiast. The categories are what they sound like. Readings are available online at the course website: on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](http://sjsu.instructure.com) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>.

Requirements and Assignments

Participation (10%)

In-class activities: Philosophy is an activity that we do, and actually doing philosophy is the best way to learn how to do philosophy. We'll do various in class activities geared towards learning how to do philosophy, and you'll credit for participating in them. (Note: You must be in class to participate.)

Discussion: It's important to note that discussion is more than just speaking up; it requires carefully thinking through issues and engaging with peers, often by listening to, supporting, clarifying, or justifying their comments. Doing philosophy well is not solely about contributing your own ideas, but cultivating the ideas of others. Our discussions should reflect both critical analysis and the creation and strengthening of ideas. Lastly, discussion is a joint venture that works best when everyone contributes. A good target for our class is to have everyone contribute 1-2 times a week.

Unit 1 Project: Design Your Own Practice (15%)

In this unit, we're going to investigate the nature of our minds through yoga. Individually or in groups, you'll come up with your own yoga practice that cultivates the mind and demonstrates the principles we've discussed in class. The grading for this project will be based on (i) engaging in your practice throughout the unit and (ii) a short individual write up of your practice. Optional points can be earned by sharing your practice with the class.

Due M 9/6 11:59 pm PST.

Unit 2 Project: Reactive Emotions Journal (15%)

Many of the things that happen in the world are out of our control. Nevertheless, these events affect us, and we have emotional responses to them. We're going to keep track of our emotional responses in a journal. This journal will have three stages. First, we'll spend a day tracking our usual emotional responses. Second, we'll attempt to live Stoically. Finally, we'll look back at those two days and critically reflect upon the appropriateness of our emotions. The grading for this project will be based on the two journals and the reflection.

Due W 9/26 11:59 pm PST.

Unit 3 Project: Modern Friendship Podcast (15%)

For this unit, you'll create a podcast (either individually or in groups). There's a lot of room to be creative with this assignment—basically anything on the theme of friendship works. The only guidelines are that the podcast must weave in the content of the unit and be between 6-10 minutes long. The grading for this project will be based on the podcast and the inclusion of required content from the unit.

Due W 10/17 11:59 pm PST.

Unit 4 Project: Charity Pitch Poster Projects (15%)

For this unit, we're donating money as a class to charity. (I'll provide \$200, and others can contribute, too, if they so desire.) Working in groups, you'll research and select a charity that you would like to see our donation go towards. On the last class day of the unit, your group will pitch your charity using a poster or ppt presentation. Your pitch should utilize the arguments for and against effective altruism that we discuss in class. At the end of the poster pitches, we'll vote on and donate to one of the proposed charities. The grading for this project will be based upon the presentation, poster (or ppt), and connection to unit content.

Due R 11/1 in class.

Unit 5 Project: Eating Blog (15%)

Our eating practices create a lot of suffering for both human and non-human animals. In this unit, we're going to confront this suffering and adopt more ethical eating practices. As you implement your practice, you'll create a "blog" that follows your practice and how it connects with views we've discussed in class. The grading for this project will be based on the blog and connection to the unit content.

Due M 11/26 11:59 PST.

Unit 6 Project: Doing Good (15%)

This unit is about how much of our lives we should dedicate to being moral. For this last project, you're going to do something (morally) good, either individually or in groups. You have a lot of freedom when it comes to picking the good you'll do. In addition to doing good, you'll do a write up and share what you did with the class. The grading for this project will be based on the doing of good, write up, and sharing in class.

Class Presentation on R 12/6. Write up due during the final exam period, R 12/13 12:15pm.

Final Evaluation

The final evaluation is your Unit 6 project, due during the final exam period, R 12/13 12:15pm.

Grading Information

- Grades are based on the requirements and assignments above in accordance to the weights specified.
- Late work is accepted but penalized if you consult with me ahead of time.
- The grading scale is as follows: 100≥A+≥97, 97>A≥93, 93>A-≥90, 90>B+≥87, etc.

Classroom Protocol

Please arrive on time. Our class is primarily discussion and activity based, so please come prepared to participate (as specified above).

Electronic Devices Policy

Electronic devices are permitted but must be silent. Please do not distract yourself or those around you. I reserve the right to revise this policy.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

PHIL 12-04 / Philosophy of the Person, Fall 2018, Course Schedule*

*Course schedule and readings are subject to change.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	T 8/21	Introduction Syllabus (C)
1	R 8/23	Unit 1: Mind and Meditation <i>Intro to Yoga and Philosophy</i> Phillips, <i>Yoga, Karma, and Rebirth</i> , Ch. 1, p. 9-14, chart on p. 31-33 (C); p. 14-18, 27-40 (R); p. 19-27 (E)
2	T 8/28	Guest: Anand Vaidya
2	R 8/30	<i>Cartesian Dualism</i> Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , excerpt (C) Elizabeth of Bohemia and Descartes, <i>Correspondence with Princess Elizabeth</i> , excerpt (C) “I Think, Therefore I Am Getting the Goddamned Epidural” (E)
3	T 9/4	<i>Yoga and Interactionalism</i> Phillips, <i>Yoga, Karma, and Rebirth</i> , Ch. 2, p. 50-59 (C)
3	R 9/6	Yoga Practice Day Due in Class
4	T 9/11	Unit 2: Emotions and Stoicism <i>Intro to Emotions</i> What are they? When are they appropriate? Can we control them? “Emotion” , <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> , (R)
4	R 9/13	No Class Journal Stage 1: Track your emotions
5	T 9/18	<i>The Historical Stoics</i> Epictetus, <i>Handbook</i> , 5, 11, 14, 16, 17, 28 (C) (rest of the Handbook is R) Epictetus, <i>Discourses</i> , excerpts (R) Seneca, Letter 66 (R) Earp, “Against Mourning”, <i>Aeon</i> (R) Brennan, “An Overview of Stoic Ethics” (E)
5	R 9/20	<i>Silicon Valley Stoics</i> Interview with Ryan Holiday , <i>The Tim Ferriss Show Podcast</i> (C) “Silicon Valley tech workers are using an ancient philosophy...”, <i>Quartz</i> (C) Tim Ferriss reads Seneca, “The Tao of Seneca: Letters from a Stoic Master” (E) Ryan Holiday, “How to Succeed in High-Stress Situations” (E)
6	T 9/25	<i>Apt Anger</i> <i>“Pro” Anger</i> Frye, “A Note on Anger” (C) <i>“Anti” Anger</i> Nussbaum, “Beyond Anger”, <i>Aeon</i> (R) Santideva, <i>Bodhicaryavatara</i> , Ch. 6 (E) <i>More from Silicon Valley:</i> “All that’s good and bad about Silicon Valley’s Stoicism Fad” , <i>Wired</i> (E) Susan Fowler, “Reflecting on One Very, Very Strange Year at Uber” (E)
6	R 9/27	Unit 3: Friendship and Love Introduction
7	T 10/2	<i>What is friendship?</i> Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book IX (C)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
7	R 10/4	No Class Work on podcasts with groups
8	T 10/9	<i>Authenticity</i> Nozick, “The Experience Machine” (C) “How to Hire Fake Friends and Family”, <i>The Atlantic</i> (C) “Japan’s Rent-a-Family Industry”, <i>The New Yorker</i> (R)
8	R 10/11	<i>Romantic Love</i> Nozick, “Love’s Bond” (C) Jenkins, <i>What Love Is and What if Could Be</i> , Ch. 1, 2, 4 (R)
9	T 10/16	<i>Familial Love</i> Kupfer, “Can Parents and Children be Friends?” (C)
9	R 10/18	Unit 4: Effective Altruism <i>80,000 hours</i> 80000hours.org , browse the career guide tab (R) MacAskill, “Is Follow Your Passion Good Career Advice?” (R)
10	T 10/23	<i>What is effective altruism?</i> MacAskill, <i>Doing Good Better</i> , Ch. 7 (C) <i>Explore more:</i> Check out Will MacAskill’s website < http://www.williammacaskill.com/ > for popular articles and interviews on effective altruism. (E)
10	R 10/25	Guest: Caleb Ontiveros “ What are the most important moral problems of our time? ”, TED Talk (R)
11	T 10/30	<i>Why Charity? Which Charity?</i> Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”, (C) Assignment: Pick a charity and be prepared to share it in class
11	R 11/1	Poster Presentations Due in Class
12	T 11/6	Unit 5: Ethical Eating <i>Intro to Ethical Eating</i> No Reading
12	R 11/8	<i>Arguments for Eating Meat</i> Lowe, “Common Arguments for the Moral Acceptability of Eating Meat” (C) Scott
13	T 11/13	<i>Against Eating Meat</i> Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases” (C) Martin, “Factory Farming and Consumer Complicity” (R) Huemer, “Dialogues on Ethical Vegetarianism Day 1” (E)
13	R 11/15	<i>Human Suffering in the Food Industry</i> TBA
14	T 11/20	<i>Movie Day: The Game Changers</i>
14	R 11/22	Thanksgiving Break- No Class
15	T 11/27	Unit 6: Why be moral? <i>Intro</i>
15	R 11/29	Susan Wolf, “Moral Saints” (C)
16	T 12/4	Oscar Wilde, “The Happy Prince” (C)
16	R 12/6	Presentations Due In Class
Final Exam	R 12/13 12:15-2:30	Final Projects Due