CAS/GRS New Course Proposal Form

This form is to be used when proposing a new CAS or GRS course.

This form should be submitted to Senior Academic Administrator Peter Law (617-353-7243) as a PDF file to pgl@bu.edu. For further information or assistance, contact Associate Dean Joseph Bizup (617-353-2409; jbizup@bu.edu) about CAS courses or Associate Dean Jeffrey Hughes (617-353-2690; hughes@bu.edu) about GRS courses.

DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM: CAS Classical Studies

DATE SUBMITTED: 9/7/16

COURSE NUMBER: CL121

COURSE TITLE: What is a good life? Ancient wisdom and modern psychology

INSTRUCTOR(S): Prof. Zsuzsanna Varhelyi

TO BE FIRST OFFERED: Sem./Year: _Sp___/_2017_

SHORT TITLE: The “short title” appears in the course inventory, on the Link University Class Schedule, and on student transcripts and must be 15 characters maximum including spaces. It should be as clear as possible.

G O D L I F E

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is the description that appears in the CAS and/or GRS Bulletin and The Link. It is the first guide that students have as to what the course is about. The description can contain no more than 40 words.

Close examination of literary and philosophical texts from the ancient world and modern psychology that address the question of what constitutes a good life. Themes include: selfhood and the pursuit of happiness, individualism and communities, love and health.

PREREQUISITES: Indicate “None” or list all elements of the prerequisites, clearly indicating “AND” or “OR” where appropriate. Here are three examples: “Junior standing or CAS ZN300 or consent of instructor”; “CAS ZN108 and CAS ZN203 and CAS PQ206; or consent of instructor”; “For SED students only.”

1. State the prerequisites:
   None.

2. Explain the need for these prerequisites:
The course is intended for freshmen.

CREDITS: (check one)

☐ Half course: 2 credits
☐ Variable: Please describe.
X Full course: 4 credits
☐ Other: Please describe.
Provide a rationale for this number of credits, bearing in mind that for a CAS or GRS course to carry 4 credits, 1) it must normally be scheduled to meet at least 150 minutes/week, AND 2) combined instruction and assignments, as detailed in the attached course syllabus, must anticipate at least 12 total hours/week of student effort to achieve course objectives.

Class meetings will be for 150 minutes / week and covering the assignments for the course in terms of reading and writing will require in excess of the 12 hours / week of student effort.

DIVISIONAL STUDIES CREDIT: Is this course intended to fulfill Divisional Studies requirements?
☐ No.
☒ Yes. If yes, please indicate which division __Humanities____ and explain why the course should qualify for Divisional Studies credit. Refer to criteria listed here and specify whether this course is intended for “short” or “expanded” divisional list.

It is intended for the expanded divisional list. The course will fulfill Humanities Divisional Studies requirements as it will require the acquisition and demonstration of knowledge related to the problem of a “good life” via both verbal and written discussions, from a variety of perspectives, including the reception of ancient ideas in today’s world. In addition, the course will foster familiarity with concepts, methods, terminology, and scholarly resources in Classics, help students develop their skills in argumentation, analysis and communication, and, finally, allow for discussions of how humanities can contribute to major questions of meaning and purpose.

HOW FREQUENTLY WILL THE COURSE BE OFFERED?
☐ Every semester ☐ Once a year, fall ☐ Once a year, spring ☒ Every other year

NEED FOR THE COURSE: Explain the need for the course and its intended impact. How will it strengthen your overall curriculum? Will it be required or fulfill a requirement for degrees/majors/minors offered by your department/program or for degrees in other departments/school/colleges? Which students are most likely to be served by this course? How will it contribute to program learning outcomes for those students? If you see the course as being of “possible” or “likely” interest to students in another department/program, please consult directly with colleagues in that unit. (You must attach appropriate cognate comments using cognate comment form if this course is intended to serve students in specific other programs. See FURTHER INFORMATION below about cognate comment.)

In an age when the relevance of humanities, including Classical Studies, is under attack, this course will demonstrate the enduring importance of questions proposed by the Greeks and Romans. Its primary audience will be freshmen. It won’t be a requirement for majors or minors, but it will enhance our overall curriculum by offering another gateway course for majors, minors and those interested in other humanities disciplines. The course will contribute to learning outcomes related to the content, methods and tools, argumentation and analysis, communication, and in particular to the application of Classical Studies.
ENROLLMENT: How many undergraduate and/or graduate students do you expect to enroll in the initial offering of this course?

25

CROSS-LISTING: Is this course to be cross-listed or taught with another course? If so, specify. Chairs/directors of all cross-listing units must co-sign this proposal on the signature line below.

No.

OVERLAP:

1. Are there courses in the UIS Course Inventory (CC00) with the same number and/or title as this course?
   X No.
   □ Yes. If yes, any active course(s) with the same number or title as the proposed course will be phased out upon approval of this proposal.
   NOTE: A course number cannot be reused if a different course by that number has been offered in the past five years.

2. Relationship to other courses in your program or others: Is there any significant overlap between this course and others offered by your department/program or by others? (You must attach appropriate cognate comments using cognate comment form if this course might be perceived as overlapping with courses in another department/program. See FURTHER INFORMATION below.)

There are no significant overlaps between this course and any others offered in Classical Studies or elsewhere in CAS.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: What, if any, are the new or special facilities or equipment needs of the course (e.g., laboratory, library, instructional technology, consumables)? Are currently available facilities, equipment, and other resources adequate for the proposed course? (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

No special facilities or equipment needed.

STAFFING: How will the staffing of this course, in terms of faculty and, where relevant, teaching fellows, affect staffing support for other courses? For example, are there other courses that will not be taught as often as now? Is the staffing of this course the result of recent or expected expansion of faculty? (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

It will enhance the variety of courses offered by the department, which will mean slightly less frequent offering of other courses which are not required for our majors.
BUDGET AND COST: What, if any, are the other new budgetary needs or implications related to the start-up or continued offering of this course? If start-up or continuation of the course will entail costs not already discussed, identify them and how you expect to cover them. (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

There are no additional costs associated with the start-up or continued offering of this course.

EXTERNAL PROGRAMS: If this course is being offered at an external program/campus, please provide a brief description of that program and attach a CV for the proposed instructor.

FURTHER INFORMATION THAT MUST BE ATTACHED IN ORDER FOR THIS PROPOSAL TO BE CONSIDERED:

- A complete week-by-week SYLLABUS with student learning objectives, readings, and assignments that reflects the specifications of the course described in this proposal; that is, appropriate level, credits, etc. (See guidelines on "Writing a Syllabus" on the Center for Teaching & Learning website.) Be sure that syllabus includes your expectations for academic honesty, with URL for pertinent undergraduate or GRS academic conduct code(s).

- Cognate comment from chairs or directors of relevant departments and/or programs. Use the form here under "Curriculum Review & Modification." You can consult with Joseph Bizup (CAS) or Jeffrey Hughes (GRS) to determine which departments or programs inside and outside of CAS would be appropriate.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT NAME AND POSITION:

DEPARTMENT CONTACT EMAIL AND PHONE:

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL: [Signature]

Department Chair

Date: 9/7/16

Other Department Chair(s) (for cross-listed courses)
DEAN'S OFFICE CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATOR USE ONLY

CAS/GRS CURRICULUM COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

☐ Approved  Date: ____________________
☐ Tabled    Date: ____________________
☐ Not Approved  Date: ____________________

Divisional Studies Credit:

☐ Endorsed
  ☐ HU
  ☐ MCS
  ☐ NS
  ☐ SS

☐ Not endorsed

__________________________________________
Curriculum Committee Chair Signature and Date

Comments:

PROVISIONAL APPROVAL REQUESTED for Semester/Year ____________________

__________________________________________
Dean of Arts & Sciences Signature and Date

Comments:

CAS FACULTY: Faculty Meeting Date: ____________________  ☐ Approved  ☐ Not Approved

__________________________________________
Curriculum Administrator Signature and Date

Comments:
Course Description and Goals:
This course takes its inspiration from the recent interest on the part of psychologists in the Graeco-Roman origins of insights concerning happiness and the good life. At the intersections of psychology, philosophy, religion and political science in the ancient world we will explore the socio-cultural context in which these ideas first emerged and discuss how they are re-conceived today. In the meantime, the course also offers an opportunity for students to engage with their own ideas and ideals of what constitutes a good life.

Learning objectives:
1. Students will develop familiarity with ancient wisdom concerning what constitutes a good life and with modern psychological notions addressing the same.
2. Students will acquire a general knowledge of the field of Classical Studies especially as it is relevant to major thinkers and writers who addressed our main question.
3. Students will be able to critically engage arguments related to what constitutes a good life, based on both ancient writings and modern psychological research.
4. Students will reflect on this material both verbally and in writing, and respond to critical feedback on their work.
5. Students will connect the course material to their own lives and to wider societal questions.

Grading:
1. Basic individual activities (35%)
   Attendance, class participation both in body and soul, including written in-class feedback on others’ presentations and significant contributions to the workshop classes 15%
   Course journal (due twice during the term) 20%
2. Major presentations (30%)
   First, group project/presentation 15%
   Second, individual project/presentation 15%
3. Written assignments (35%)
   First Paper (1500 words) 10%
   Second paper draft 5%
   Second paper (2000 words) 20%

Discussions with the instructor:
You should plan on seeing me once, and in general discuss any questions about the course with me during my office hours or at any other time by appointment.

Attendance/Incomplete policy:
You need to attend class to be able to complete this course. Note also the CAS policy on incompletes: this is an extreme option available only in special cases.
Late work:
In general, handing in your work late results in a 1/3 lower grade per day, unless you can provide written proof of exceptional circumstances that prevented you from completing your work on time.

Plagiarism and cheating:
Please read the Academic Conduct Code (online: http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/ ) and review what qualifies as cheating and plagiarism. Cases of suspected misconduct are automatically referred to the Dean's Office. We shall discuss in class how you can avoid plagiarism and develop a professional writing style of your own.

Textbooks: (To be purchased as soon as possible at Barnes and Noble on Kenmore Sq.)
Required:
Recommended:

Readings:
Warning! : All readings are DUE ON THE DAY THEY ARE LISTED BELOW. Numbers refer to page numbers unless otherwise noted. Always bring readings to class, since we will frequently examine the text more closely during our meetings. Prepare the study questions for class. If you encounter something very unfamiliar in preparing for class, you can always turn to me and can also find a Classics-related research guide on Mugar Library’s website: http://www.bu.edu/library/guides/classics.html.

This syllabus is subject to change.
1/20 F Introduction: comparing ancient and modern
Assignment: familiarize yourself with the syllabus

1/23 M Why does a good life matter?
Journal question: Is a good life a happy life? Think about what seems to constitute each for you.

1/25 W The first Greek questioner: Socrates
Journal question: Write down adjectives that you associate with Socrates based on the reading. Do you think questioning common ideas is a good way to figure out whether they are good?
Read: Plato, Republic (selections), IRGRP pp. 152-183.

1/27 F Plato on the good life
Journal question: Do you think an individual can be happy if others around them are not?
Read: HH pp. 1-22.

1/30 M Aristotle and “flourishing”
Journal question: Can you think of any ethical dilemmas you or someone you know ever faced? What decision did you/they make? What were the difficulties of deciding?

2/1 W Aristotle on the good life
Journal question: Can you think of any individual characteristics that are critical to having a good life? How did you come to the particular ones you named?

2/3 F Positive psychology
Journal question: Can you think of times in your life when you were very caught up in a positive experience? Include at least two examples.

2/6 M Epicurus
Journal question: Describe a life in which you had all pleasurable experiences available to you. What would you do? Who would you do it with? Would you ever run out of ideas?
Read: Epicurus, IRGRP pp. 357-369; Lucretius, pp. 396-423.

2/8 W But do we know what we want?
Journal question: Reflect on your previous entry based on Monday’s class and after you have completed the reading assignment. Any changes? Are you still sure?
Read: HH pp. 23-44.

2/10 F I will just be a Skeptic…
Journal question: What would be a benefit in not having to make decisions and choices about your daily life? Imagine a day without decisions. Would you be happy? Would you miss anything?
Read: Pyrrho, IRGRP pp. 380-383.

2/13 M The Stoics 1: Seneca
Journal question: How ambitious is Seneca’s view of a good life? Can you relate more to Plato/Aristotle or to Seneca in terms of how you think about a good life?

2/15 W The Stoics 2: Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius
Journal question: Consider the background of Epictetus, a freed slave, and Marcus Aurelius, an emperor. How likely do you think it is for someone of very high socio-economic status to agree with someone of very low socio-economic status about the good life in America today? Read: Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, IRGRP pp.

2/17 F Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

2/21 T Ancient vengeance
Journal question: Can you speculate why ancient Greeks may have regularly told stories of vengeance that ended terribly for all involved? Read: The story of Medea, Aesop, *The fox and the crane* (on Blackboard)

2/22 W Modern reciprocity research
Journal question: What is the most striking finding in modern reciprocity research? In what ways are we wired to help or to compete with each other? Read: HH pp. 45-58.

2/24 F Did the ancients ever consider human rights? **First paper due.**

2/27 M Anarchists in the ancient world? The Cynics
Journal question: What is your emotional reaction to the Cynics? Would you like to be their friend? Why/why not? Read: Zeno in IRGRP pp. 370-373, Epictetus on Cynics (Blackboard)

3/1 W **Group presentations 1**
3/3 F **Group presentations 2**
3/4-3/12 BU on spring break

3/13 M How to pursue happiness?
Journal: How do you feel about your chances to become happier in life upon having done the reading for the day? Read: HH pp. 81-106: the pursuit of happiness

3/15 W Epictetus on the hard path to happiness
Journal: How do you feel about the possibility that the good or happy life might require giving up some things you enjoy? Discuss with a concrete example of something Epictetus would be particularly critical of. Read: Epictetus, *Discourses* (selections, Blackboard)

3/17 F Love: good or bad?
Journal: Can you try to classify, à la Socrates, different kinds of love in your or in a complex fictional character’s (such as from a book or movie) life? Read: Socrates, *Symposium*, IRGRP pp. 143-151.
3/20 M Love and attachments: what the psychologists say
Journal: What is Haidt’s main insight into why ancient philosophers might not have “liked” love?
Read: HH pp. 107-134.

3/22 W Trauma in the ancient world
Journal: how does it mesh with your sense of ancient heroes that they may have suffered trauma in their famous wars?
Read: J. Shay, Achilles in Vietnam (selections, Blackboard)

3/24 F What trauma research has taught us about adversity
Journal: Try to think about different people from your life (or from famous works of art) and consider the amount of adversity they experiences. Do you think they were traumatized? Why/why not?
Read: HH pp. 135-154.

3/27 M Stress and coping
Journal: What have your learnt about dealing with stress from the assigned reading? Do you think ancient Greeks and Romans were ever “stressed out”?

3/29 W Defining and governing the good life in Athens
Journal: Try to visualize a large-scale public funeral in ancient Athens. What would be the mood? How does Pericles’ speech fit in? Why would he give such a speech?
Read: Thucydides: Pericles’ Funeral Oration (Thucydides 2.34-46).
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/pericles-funeralspeech.asp

3/31 F Virtues and the good life
Journal: Can you think of your own growing up as moral development? Do you think it is necessary for a good life today?
Read: HH pp. 155-180.

4/3 M Does the US government want you to have a good life? Some critiques of positive psychology
Journal: Consider who is to tell you what kind of good life you should lead. Does the reading make you more skeptical about some of the claims of positive psychology?

4/5 W The role of the divine in the good life in ancient Greece
Journal: Consider the sense of the divine that Socrates honors. Is it inside or outside? Does it help him fit in society?
Read: Plato, Apology, IRGRP pp. 62-77.
4/7 F The role of the divine in the good life in ancient Rome
Journal: How is Seneca’s sense of the divine different from Socrates’? Which one do you prefer and why?

4/10 M The role of the divine in the good life among early Christians
Journal: How does Perpetua fit into her own contemporary world? How is the good life positioned in comparison to Socrates’ and Seneca’s views?
Read: The martyrdom of Perpetua (Blackboard)

4/12 W The divine and the good life today
Journal: After you have done the assigned reading, consider how the American culture wars relate to the ancient views on the divine’s role in shaping the good life. Any similarities/differences?
Read: HH pp. 181-212.

4/14 F So… what is the meaning of a good life?
Journal: Does the question about the meaning of life seem important to you? How have the readings (both the most recent and earlier ones) shaped your answer?
Read: HH pp. 213-241.

4/17 M: No class. School holiday.

4/19 W Timeless values?
Journal: In what ways is life better today than it was in the ancient world? How can the ancients help us in any way to think about what would make a good life?

4/21 F Workshop class 1: A better world

4/24 M Workshop class 2: Action plan

4/26 W Individual presentations.
4/28 F Individual presentations.
5/1 M Individual presentations.