



Values, Meaning and Spirituality 4670-01 Fall 2019
MW 9:30-1045, Biology Building 03
Psychology Department
University of West Georgia

Instructor: Dr. Richard E. La Fleur
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Office Hours: By appointment only

Course Description

A study of the human need to structure living around sets of meanings and values and a consideration of the spiritual nature and implications of this need. Many argue that the human condition is governed by the mind or the spiritual make-up of the being. With that said, understanding how values are set and determined, makes for a deeper conversation of how we live meaningful lives. This course questions these complex yet very human components of being and seeks to better understand how values, meaning and spirituality brings us closer to a meaningful life.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will come to demonstrate the following:

1. Apply critical thinking to concepts and ideas presented in class regarding the given topic.
2. Articulate and write based on the APA 6th edition format, papers to reflect their thoughts about said topic.
3. Have a clear understanding of the theoretical approaches that underpin the topics in this course.

Approaches to instruction

Instruction in this course is delivered face-to-face and online asynchronously through Course Den, D2L learning system. Approaches can include online teaching format, online class discussions, discussion groups and postings, readings, videos and podcasts, guest lecturers as well as student developmental research. Additionally, students will work independently to cover the material outlined in the syllabus to ensure understanding of concepts in the course.

Required Materials

All readings will be posted in Course Den.

Grades

One final paper 15-20 pages, APA format (6th edition) will culminate the readings, discussions and materials presented in this course. Students will be asked to submit reflection papers depending on the topics presented, as a way to begin building content for the final paper (50%).

Journaling is a major component of this course. Journaling is used to process thoughts and explicate ideas deeply rooted within our psyche. For this course, students are required to keep a personal journal, writing about your personal spiritual journey. The spiritual journey of a person is also a foundational aspect in how we form values as well as live meaningful lives. Students will journal at least 3 times per week in order to receive a grade for journaling (25%).

An Exit Interview will be scheduled at the end of the semester so students can share their experience of journaling throughout the semester as well as the impact this course and materials has on their lives (25%).



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Grading Scale

Course grade is determined entirely by the total points a student earns:

90-100% →	A
80-89% →	B
70-79% →	C
60-69% →	D
Below 60% →	F

Policies

Communication & Engagement:

The best way to communicate with me is through email. On weekdays, I will attempt to respond to you within 24 hours and 48 hours on the weekends. If I am out of town or attending a conference, responding may take longer than normal. I would strongly suggest that you use the email system within Course Den to communicate with me. All course related communication will be done within Course Den. It is important that you log into Course Den regularly for any updates or additional information related to the course. It is also important to maintain a strong professional manner in communicating with me. Your emails should be structured as follows:

Subject: "Your Name" and "4670-Section #"
Body of email: (Dear/Hello) Professor/Dr. La Fleur
"The reason for your email" - Well constructed and professionally written!
"End with Thank you or an appropriate ending".

If this format is not followed, this can/will affect your final grade!

One of the goals of this course is to get you ready for life 'post grad' and the way we communicate is an important of your transition. I urge you to me mindful of your email messages. I will not accept poor grammar and texting language in your emails to me. Being professional and having appropriate boundaries are critical to your engagement with the 'real world'.

Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism, and all other forms of academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. All incidents of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance to university regulations (please see your student handbook). Students caught engaged in any form of academic dishonesty will minimally be given a failing grade on the assignment or exam in question.

Accommodations

Students with special needs as determined by the [Counseling and Career Development Center](#) must submit a letter to the instructor within the first two weeks of class (or as soon as the needs have been determined) specifying the accommodations they require.

Equal Opportunity Statement

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by UWG.

Affirmative Action Statement



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University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.

UWG Copyright Statement

[See statement](#)

Support

If you need technical assistance, please see [ITS](#). For UWG ONLINE please seek help at the following link <https://www.westga.edu/uwgonline/index.php> If you are having academic difficulties, please seek assistance through [Center for Academic Success](#). If you are having other difficulties, please seek assistance through [UWG Cares](#) or <https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>

Plagiarism

[See UWG policy](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities

[See UWG policy](#)

Work Due Policy

All assignments are due at the times specified. There is a 3-day window where assignments will be accepted with a 10pt penalty per 24 hours that they are late. After 3 days, if your assignment is still not turned in, you will receive an automatic zero.

Network Usage Policy

[See policy](#)

Important Dates

<https://www.westga.edu/uwgonline/important-dates.php>

Important Information

Please carefully review the following link:

https://www.westga.edu/academics/assets/docs/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. These statements are updated as federal, state, university and accreditation standards change, and you should review these standards every semester.

Technology

Mobile devices are part of our culture and society today. While I am a huge fan of technology, during class time please abstain from using your devices to 'stay connected' to the rest of the world. The time we have together is part of an invitation to share dialogue and connect with one another that is different from the connection brought about by mobile devices. Please respect the classroom environment as a space to think and interact with each other.



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Stress and Well-Being

Taking a college course “should” be difficult, in the sense that it ought to challenge you to expand your way of thinking. However, stress can overwhelm students and reach an unhealthy level. For that reason, it is important to note that students’ ‘well-being’ has priority. This is not a convenient excuse for laziness or a lack of commitment to the difficult work involved in the course. Nevertheless, if you begin to feel overwhelmed, I ask that you please come see me as soon as possible. I can help connect you to resources that will aid you in establishing a healthy balance.

Proposed Course Outline

Week	Topic	Assignments
Week 1: 8/14	Syllabus. <i>Commentary on Definitions and Traditions</i> by Christopher Kaczor & <i>Development of Doctrine</i> by Thomas Aquinas.	Review syllabus and course overview.
Week 2: 8/19	<i>Commentary on Definitions and Traditions</i> by Christopher Kaczor & <i>Development of Doctrine</i> by Thomas Aquinas.	Readings posted in Course Den and in class lecture
Week 3: 8/26	Values	Readings (in Course Den) and in class lecture
Week 4: 9/2	Meaning	Readings (in Course Den) and in class lecture
Week 5: 9/9	Spirituality I (Wednesday 9/11)	Guest Lecture (Dr. David Cooper)
Week 6: 9/17	Politics of Value	Readings (in Course Den) and in class lecture
Week 7: 9/23	Spirituality II (Wednesday 9/25)	Guest Lecture (Angela Kurle)



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Week 8:9/30 (Fall Break 10 3&4)	Social Media	Readings (in Course Den) and in class lecture
Week 9: 10/7	Midterm Exam	Paper draft/Journal check-in
Week 10: 10/14	Life Review	Readings (in Course Den) and in class lecture
Week 11: 10/21	Influence of Values and Morality	Readings (in Course Den) and in class lecture
Week 12: 10/28	Morality	Readings (in Course Den) and in class lecture
Week 13: 11/4	Loyalty	Readings (in Course Den) and in class lecture
Week 14:11/11	Special Topic	Guest Lecture
Week 15: 11/18	Life Review	In class Discussion
Week 16:11/25	Thanksgiving Break	Thanksgiving Break
Week 17:12/2	Societal outlook of Values, Meaning and Spirituality	Readings (in Course Den) and in class lecture
Week 18: 12/9	Your perspective	Final paper (12/9) and Exit Interview

This syllabus is an evolutionary document; therefore, the dates of exams, projects, etc. may be revised as the semester progresses. Thus, the dates contained in this syllabus are NOT binding. Syllabus subject to change at professor's discretion.