

UME007G Life worth living – practical use in education and pedagogy

Long Course ID: 4043UME007G20260

Credits: 5 ECTS

Undergraduate – Attendance is required in face-to-face sessions at the beginning and end of the semester, as well as in weekly student group meetings.

Mode of study: Face-to-face learning or distance learning with on-site sessions.

Course Description:

This course is the second of a pair of two courses based on the same essential questions: “What makes life worth living?” and “How can we live a life worth living?”. The purpose of this set of courses is to give the opportunity to be a part of a learning community and embark on a personal journey.

This second course builds upon the first and explores practical applications in various educational and pedagogical settings. Throughout the course, a critical attitude will be adopted towards diverse philosophies of life through dialogues about the ideas discussed and the methods proposed. The teaching methods used in these courses will emphasize students’ autonomy.

This course is a hands-on course that incorporates various activity-based instruction and instructional methods, supporting both individual and group reflection, compassion, sharing of ideas and values, active listening, and dialogue. Methods will be drawn from coaching, mindfulness, compassion, philosophy with children, and character education.

The semester begins and ends with mandatory in-person sessions. Between these sessions, students work in small groups that meet weekly over five weeks. During this time, each student conducts a personal life experiment, maintaining a diary to document their chosen weekly theme, daily activities, and personal reflections.

Groups are responsible for scheduling their own weekly meetings and will have access to instructor support once a week through an open online session.

Each of the five weeks is centered around a specific focus area:

Week 1: Self-awareness

Week 2: Relationships with people we know

Week 3: Interactions with strangers

Week 4: Connection to the earth and nature

Week 5: Engagement with children and teenagers

Every week, students choose one of four themes to guide their exploration: Mindfulness, compassion, virtue ethics, positive psychology (e.g., gratitude and kindness).

This structure supports both individual reflection and collaborative learning, emphasizing personal development and practical application.

Please note that only individuals who have already completed the foundational course, The Life Worth Living – Theoretical Views and Personal Values (or a similar one), will be eligible to attend the practical course.

Learning outcomes:

Students will ...

- Be aware of their own values and able to express them in words and actions
- Be able to listen to others values and see in the context of different culture
- Have a good understanding of certain influential ideas about the good and meaningful life
- Have practical knowledge of how to implement their ideas of the good and meaningful life in their own life
- Have practical knowledge of how to engage children and young people in shaping their own lives and to flourish

Optional meetings with the teachers are on Thursdays from 2 to 3 PM while the life experiment is ongoing.

Assessment

(1) Participation in On-Site Sessions (20%): Attendance is mandatory for two on-site sessions—one at the beginning of the course and one at the end, around mid-March. In the first session, students will engage in a community of inquiry to shape ideas that will be developed further throughout the course. In the final session, the results of the work will be presented and further discussed.

(2) Activity Journal (20%): An individual assignment in which students record their course-related activities five days a week for the five weeks of the life experiment. The activity journal is submitted at the end of the course.

(3) Participation in Group Work (20%): Groups are required to submit four short meeting reports (100–200 words) to the course discussion thread, along with a photo of the group in action each time. Students take turns being the note-taker and submitting the report on Canvas.

(4) Reflection Paper Based on Activity Journal (40%): An individual assignment submitted at the end of the course, offering students an opportunity to summarize what they have reflected on and learned during their life experiment, refine their worldview, values, and future plans that may contribute to well-being and the life they want to live, as well as explore how this may relate to their current or future profession.

Bonus Assignment: The Music – a shared playlist linked to the theme of each week, to which each of you can contribute on the discussion thread provided here.