**HUM-101: INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMANITIES I: PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT**

**Final Paper**

# Description

There is no midterm or final examination in this course. A paper of 2,000 to 2,500 words, described below, acts as your final assessment and is worth 30 percent of your grade. You may begin work on this paper at any time during the course, but you must submit it by the last day of the semester.

This course has explored the meaning of life in terms of central themes and personages in the history of philosophy and religion. Dr. Ambrosio's lectures have emphasized two genetic lines, that of the hero and that of the saint, concluding along the way that these are both incommensurable and yet complementary. The ideal of the secular saint has arisen as a person who lives the question of meaning in human existence fully open to its mystery and fully committed to searching for meaning along the paths of both hero and saint. The secular saint does not live human questions in terms of their truth or falsehood, but in terms of the way his or her participation in the dialogue shapes that one human identity for which he or she alone is responsible. Does that describe you? Do you see yourself in the image of the secular saint? Whether you do or do not, how do you move forward from here? How do you view a meaningful life, and how do you come to understand that meaning?

This final paper gives you the opportunity to interact with at least one figure mentioned in each module en route to coming to your own conclusions regarding the question: How does a person live a meaningful life? You should consider what each figure's key teachings were as they contribute, whether positively or negatively, to your own understanding of a meaningful life. Do not feel you must just recite what was said in the lectures or found in the reading; this is your opportunity to interact with the material, to accept or challenge certain ideas or assumptions. The purpose is to participate responsibly in the dialogue! Begin by summarizing your own understanding of what it means to live a meaningful life in your opening paragraph, and then proceed to flesh out this introductory statement through interaction with and analysis of at least one key figure discussed in each module.

Your paper will be evaluated both in terms of the mastery of concepts you demonstrate as you discuss the figures you have chosen and the coherence of your own explanation of your personal point of view. Your paper will also be evaluated, of course, in terms of its conformity to grammatical form and style.

In your paper, you should:

* Use as the paper's thesis your personal understandings about life's meaning and purpose and what it means to live a meaningful life
* Discuss a central figure *from each module* (not each lecture) in terms of key contributions, whether positively or negatively, to your understanding
* Demonstrate comprehension of leading ideas and themes presented in the lectures and readings through discussion of the figures chosen
* Analyze the pros and cons of the ideas discussed
* Demonstrate the relevance of these ideas to your stated thesis
* Conclude with a summary of your main points and a final statement and validation of your thesis.

The list just given provides content criteria; the following list provides additional requirements for your paper :

* Your paper should be 2,000 to 2,500 words (with a typical font and spacing, this will be approximately 8 to 10 pages),
* All sources should be properly cited and referenced, using either APA or MLA formatting consistently.
* Your paper should be well developed and convey your understanding of the readings and concepts studied in this course.
* Your paper should tie together and synthesize concepts from the course and the contributions of at least one key figure mentioned in each of the modules. You should be able to recognize pertinent issues and analyze them adequately.
* Your paper should have a clear thesis and controlling idea.
* Your paper should be organized, coherent, and unified; it should also be free of spelling and grammatical errors.  If you need help in writing such a paper, take a look at [The Writing Center: University of Wisconsin-Madison.](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/index.html)

When quoting or paraphrasing from the text or other sources, be sure to cite the source of information properly according to [MLA](https://www.mla.org/MLA-Style) or [APA](http://www.apastyle.org/) guidelines.

### Grading Rubric

If you are interested in knowing how your paper will be graded, examine the final paper rubric found in the Evaluation Rubrics folder on this course site. The rubric shows the standards for grading, telling you what would constitute an "A" paper, a "B" paper, and so on**.**