

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 46 (PHIL): Add new course, PHIL 103: “How Should I Live?” Philosophy and the Good Life

Effective Date: Fall 2022

1. Add: On page 259, new course, **PHIL 103, “How Should I Live?” Philosophy and the Good Life**

103 “How Should I Live?” Philosophy and the Good Life (4)

An immersive philosophical engagement in which students work out for themselves how they should answer four philosophical questions: “What are your moral obligations?” “How should you form your beliefs?” “Should you practice a religion, or follow a tradition?” “What will it take to make your life flourish?” To respond to these questions in a philosophical way, students engage with texts from the history of philosophy across the world, contemporary “op-eds,” and case studies relevant to the four philosophical questions. Students’ culminating projects include a written philosophical defense of their own answers to these questions in conversation with the assigned materials, and a creative project that expresses their answers to these questions. In addition to course lectures, students participate in weekly student-led, small dialogue groups that help them to become more comfortable with, and adept in, constructive and respectful philosophical discussion and community building. Every other Spring.

Impact Statement: This change will have no known negative impact on the Philosophy major, minor and university requirements. It will also not affect the department’s staffing needs and course offerings because it will not be offered in competition with our regular Introduction to Philosophy, but rather will be offered as an alternative in some semesters to that course, and will serve the same purposes in our curriculum. In addition to learning about how philosophy connects to, and benefits one’s own life, the course will have a positive impact by building a student culture of philosophical inquiry, openness, and dialogue. The course has a unique, stand-alone [website](#) that is public facing which helps us identify another positive impact. The purpose of the website is to engage with current students in a new way (which includes media and op-eds; and assigned materials that are password protected) and to reach out to potential students, as well as parents and the general public. This website helps to raise the public and institutional reputation of Philosophy at UNC Asheville, and to be a service to the community at large.

Student Learning Objectives:

Closely reading philosophical texts and analyzing their key arguments. By the end of this course, you should be able to identify and comprehend the main principles and arguments in major philosophical texts. You should be able to reflect on how the philosopher is attempting to persuade their reader and the virtues and/or vices of their methods. And you should be able to compare these arguments to those of other philosophers, arguments you come across in everyday life, and your own philosophical positions.

Closely reading major news sources and analyzing their key arguments. By the end of this course, you should be able to recognize and break down philosophical arguments from the news and other public venues. You should be able to identify important philosophical assumptions in these arguments, determine what evidence would be relevant to the truth of these assumptions, and be able to identify missing assumptions needed to make the arguments logically convincing. You should be able to reflect on how the writer is attempting to persuade their reader and the virtues and/or vices of their methods.

Contributing to a sustained interpersonal dialogue. By the end of this course, you should be able to ask strong questions designed to learn about another person's philosophical perspective. You should be able to actively listen and incorporate personal evidence into your philosophical insights. You should be able to sincerely articulate your views and responsibly identify and address philosophical differences with others.

Writing a persuasive philosophical apology in which you explain and defend your core beliefs. By the end of this course, you should have completed a significant, multi-section essay that draws on interesting personal narratives, original philosophical arguments, and textual commentary to defend a coherent philosophical stance on the good life. You will be responding to the four big questions, around which the course is organized. You should also be able to anticipate and respond appropriately to objections to your core assumptions. You should be willing to consider revising your beliefs if given sufficient counter-evidence or counter-arguments. And you should be able to draft this essay, revise it in response to coaching and edit smaller sections into a well-organized long-form essay.

This 4-credit lecture/discussion class will meet 3.75 hours each week and is anticipated to enroll 15-20 students. Professor Williams designed the course, [has taught it once as a PHIL 100 with the specific subtitle "How Should I Live?"](#), and will continue to teach it on an as-needed basis; we anticipate it will run at least every other year. Other interested faculty might possibly teach it in the future.

The course will not take away from regular PHIL course offerings, nor will it take away from philosophy faculty contributing to the LAC. PHIL 103 will be taught alternately with PHIL 100, with PHIL 100 taught in the Fall, and PHIL 103 taught in the Spring every other year (currently planned for Spring 2023 and 2025).

There is no equivalent course at the NC Community Colleges, so it won't be a part of the UNC Common Numbering System.

Rationale: This addition is an alternative to a more standard Introduction to Philosophy course. It uses the pedagogy recently developed through the Philosophy as a Way of Life project at the University of Notre Dame, and its creation was funded by a Mellon subgrant that Prof. Williams was awarded. This pedagogy has four principles: focus on pursuit of a good life, diverse content, immersive assignments, and weekly student-led sustained dialogue groups. This course will promote the University's core values of inclusion and diversity, and contribute to cultivating a student culture of respectful inquiry, risk-taking, and communal dialogue. This course aims to reach students in new ways, and promote student interest in Philosophy and in how it can make an everyday difference to their lives.

There is an "Original Minds" video about the course on the [homepage of the course website](#), and on youtube [here](#).