



RELS-180 – The Search for Meaning

University Arts and Science

Effective Term & Year: Fall 2022

Course Outline Review Date: 2023-04-01

Program Area: Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Description:

This course explores the question of meaning in life, especially in the modern setting. The disintegration of externally-provided meanings and the proposition of a universe without objective value poses specific issues and questions for individuals: Where can meaning be found? Is meaning merely subjective? What role does God, religion, spirituality, nature, science and society play? After examining the philosophical context which structures the question of modern meaning, we explore diverse solutions to it (religious, spiritual, atheistic etc.) Sources include Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Camus, Sartre, Freud, Jung, Viktor Frankl, Bertrand Russel and others.

Program Information:

This course can be used as either a required course or an elective in several University Studies Programs. Refer to the College Program online calendar for additional information

Delivery Methods: On-campus (Face-to-Face), Online

Credit Type: College of the Rockies Credits

Credits: 3

Course type/s: Humanities

Instructional Activity and Hours:

Activity	Hours
Classroom, Directed Studies or Online Instruction	45

Seminar/Tutorials	
Laboratory/Studio	
Practicum/Field Experience	
Co-op/Work Experience	
Other	
Total	45

Course Requisites:

None

Flexible Assessment: No**Course Transfer Credit:**

For information about receiving transfer credit for courses taken at other BC institutions, please see <http://www.bctransferguide.ca>. All requests for course transfer credit from institutions in BC or elsewhere should go to the College of the Rockies Enrollment Services office.

Textbook Resources:

Textbook selection varies by instructor and may change from year to year. At the Course Outline Effective Date the following textbooks were in use:

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. 1978. Penguin, United States of America

Camus, Albert. *The Outsider*. 1942; 1982. Penguin

Frankl, Victor. *Man's Search for Meaning*. 1946; 1984. Washington Square Press.

Tolstoy, Leo. *A Confession*. 1996. W.W. Norton and Company.

Course Reading Package

Please see the instructor's syllabus or check COTR's online text calculator

<https://textbook.cotr.bc.ca/> for a complete list of the currently required textbooks.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Reflect on the philosophical context that structures the modern pursuit of meaning
 - Reflect on how solutions to the question of meaning traditionally have fallen into theistic and atheistic camps
 - Explore arguments for an atheistic approach to meaning
 - Explore arguments for religious and/or spiritual approaches to meaning
 - Consider the implications of living in a world without objective values
 - Consider opposing analyses of human nature, in particular the degree to which human nature is void of, or laden with, spirituality
 - Consider specific arguments of diverse thinkers/traditions, such as Camus, Frankl, Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Buddhism, Freud, Jung, and Russell
 - Deepen one's appreciation of the question and issue of modern meaning
 - Increasingly be able to articulate personal views on the question of meaning
 - Construct thoughtful, logically consistent essays on the topic of meaning
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Course Topics:

- Introduction
- Theoretical Foundations: Pascal, Descartes, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche
- Setting the Modern Tone:
 - Franz Kafka's "*A Hunger Artist*"
 - Dostoevsky's "*Notes from Underground*"
 - Kierkegaard's "*Leap of Faith*"
 - *Satre's Existentialism*
- Case Study 1: Camus' "*Outsider*"
- Case Study 2: Frankl's "*Logotherapy*"
- Case Study 3: "*Tolstoy's Confession*"
- Case Study 4: Nietzsche's "*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*"
- The Way of Nature (Communion with Nature)
- The Way of Ecstasy (A Jungian Response)
- The Way of Inner Freedom (A Buddhist Approach)
- The Way of Myth: "Follow Your Bliss" (Joseph Campbell)
- The Way of Science I: Freud's Psychotherapy
- The Way of Science II: Russell's Scientific Materialism
- Conclusions

OPTIONAL COURSE TOPICS:

- Eastern Insights: Interpretations of Meanings from Hinduism and Buddhism
- Indigenous Views of Meaning

See instructor's syllabus for the detailed outline of weekly readings, activities and assignments.

Evaluation and Assessments

Assessment Type: On-Campus (face-to-face) and Online, or Hybrid

Assessment Type	% of Total Grade
Essays (one short [10%]; one long [30%])	40%
Midterms	30%
Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

Grade Scheme

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
>=90	89-85	84-80	79-76	75-72	71-68	67-64	63-60	59-55	54-50	<50

Pass requirements: None

Evaluation Notes: A grade of "D" grants credit, but may not be sufficient as a prerequisite for sequential courses.

Evaluation Notes Comments:

Please see the instructor's syllabus for specific classroom policies related to this course, such as details of evaluation, penalties for late assignments, and use of electronic aids.

Exam Attendance:

Students must attend all scheduled exams at the appointed time and place. Instructors may approve an alternate exam to accommodate an illness or personal crisis. Department heads will consider other written requests. Any student who misses a scheduled exam without prior approval will receive a "0" on the exam.

Academic Policies:

College of the Rockies policies related to courses can be found at <https://cotr.bc.ca/about-us/college-policies/> and include the following:

- Policy 2.4.3 Students with Documented Disabilities
 - Policy 2.4.4 Student Conduct (plagiarism, other cheating, behavioral misconduct)
 - Policy 2.5.8 Academic Performance
 - Policy 2.5.3 Grade Appeal
 - Policy 2.4.9 Student Concerns Re Faculty
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Equivalent Course(s) and Course Code Changes

Equivalent Course: Students who have received COTR credit for RELS 180 may not receive additional credit for PHIL 180.

Course Changes:

The College of the Rockies updates course outlines regularly to meet changing educational, employment and marketing needs. The instructor will notify students in writing of any updates to this outline during the semester. The instructor reserves the right to revise, add or delete material while meeting the learning outcomes of this course outline.