

Humanistic Psychology
(PSY 371 Sec. 02)

Fall 2007

Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 – 1:50

AB4 301

Instructor: Drew Curtis, MA

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Office Hours: MWF 11-12; T 2-3

Text: Baumeister, R.F. (1991). *Meanings of Life*. New York: Guilford Press.

Course Description: This course is designed to examine the major themes of humanistic/existential psychology/philosophy and their impact on contemporary society.

Course Objectives:

- Obtain a broad knowledge base in humanistic/existential psychology, demonstrate acquisition of relative broad concepts, and apply this knowledge to everyday life events.
- To examine and articulate personal values across the various domains of one's own life.
- Explore a variety of current events/issues from a humanistic/existential perspective and demonstrate an understanding of the various humanistic/existential psychology perspectives.
- To develop an awareness of alternate systems of meanings

Instructional Format: The class format will mostly consist of discussion. In addition, there will be some lecture and cinematic example.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is expected and will be recorded. Attending class is important to pass the course and to keep up with the course material. Attendance will be considered in cases of borderline grades and **students with perfect attendance will also have the option of waiving the final exam if they choose to do so**. The university's full attendance policy can be found at the following website:

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#attend>

Exams: There will be four exams worth 100 points each. Exams will be comprised of multiple choice and essay/short answer questions. The exams will be based on class lectures and material from the textbook. **No make up exams will be given**; alternatively, the student will be required to prepare an essay on the material. The final exam will be comprehensive and must be taken at the time designated by the University or prior arrangements must be made with the instructor.

Theorist Presentation: Students will be expected to research the life circumstances and major contributions to the field of humanistic/existential psychology, create a handout with information front/back for each classmate, and orally discuss the theorist with the class. (50 points)

Religious Presentation: You will be randomly assigned a religion or religious denomination to research, provide a handout containing the basic beliefs associated with the faith, and orally present the material in class. (50 points)

Meaning(s) of Life Paper: This assignment consists of two components: (a) a preliminary draft and (b) a final draft. (100 points)

Preliminary Draft: You are expected to turn in 2-4 pages that discuss meaning in your life. You DO NOT have to disclose any information that would make you uncomfortable. However, you are expected to put forth substantial effort and thought into this task.

Final Draft: You are expected to write a 7-10 page, typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font paper about meaning in your life. You are expected to use personal experiences, information from your text, and other scholarly resources to illustrate meaning in your life. You are expected to cite (at least 5) references according to APA guidelines. Also, be sure to evaluate and elaborate any changes, whether it is further support for preexisting material or modifications, from the preliminary draft.

Grading:

Theorist Presentation	50
Religious Presentation	50
Meaning of Life Paper	100
Exam 1	100
Exam 2	100
Exam 3	100
Final Exam	100

Your grade will be based upon the following schema:

With Final	Final Waived (perfect attendance)
A = 540-600	A = 450-500
B = 480-539	B = 400-449
C = 420-479	C = 350-399
D = 360-419	D = 300-349
F ≤ 359	F ≤ 299

Syllabus Guidelines: You may find online a more detailed of the following policies. These guidelines will also provide you with a link to the specific university policy or procedure: <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>

Academic Dishonesty: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary

proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Classroom rules of conduct: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Please do not talk, send, or receive messages on cell phones or other electronic devices when in the classroom. Respect your classmates by muting your cell phone. It is inappropriate to speak while others are speaking. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

Disabilities: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

Religious holidays: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Visitors in the classroom: Generally visitors are not allowed in the classroom. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis.

Disclaimer: This class examines a variety of cultural and personal issues and subjects students to ideas and material that they may find disagreeable. If students are unable or unwilling to tolerate other perspectives or their own value systems of meaning in the context of the class, then they are encouraged to speak with the instructor regarding their concerns and may wish to reconsider their enrollment in the course.

Tentative Schedule:

8/21: Introduction/Syllabus
8/23: Ch. 1–Who Says Life has No Meaning?
Ch. 2–Coming to Terms with Meaning
8/28: Ch. 3–The Four Needs for Meaning: An Existential Shopping List
Meaning of Life Preliminary Paper: Preliminary Draft Due
8/30: Ch. 4–The Myth of Higher Meaning
9/4: **Theorist Presentations**
9/6: **Theorist Presentations**
9/11: **Exam 1: Baumeister Part I and Theorists**
9/13: Ch. 5–Self-Identity and the Value Gap
9/18: Ch. 5–Self-Identity and the Value Gap
9/20: Ch. 6–Work, Work, Work, Work (Fight Club)
9/25: Fight Club cont’d
9/27: Ch. 7–Passionate Love, Domestic Bliss
10/2: Ch. 7–Passionate Love, Domestic Bliss (American Beauty)
10/4: Ch. 8–Religion (What Dreams May Come)
10/9: What Dreams May Come cont’d
10/11: **Religious Presentations**
10/16: **Religious Presentations**
10/18: **Exam 2: Baumeister Part II**
10/23: Ch. 9–Happiness
10/25: Ch. 9–Happiness
10/30: Ch. 10–Suffering and Unhappiness
11/1: Ch. 10–Suffering and Unhappiness
11/6: Ch. 11–Meanings of Death
11/8: Ch. 11–Meanings of Death
11/13: Ch. 11–Meanings of Death (Tentative Film)
11/15: Ch. 12–Life Change: Adding and Subtracting Meanings
11/20: Chp. 13 - Why Women Once Disliked Sex
11/22: **Thanksgiving Holiday**
11/27: Baumeister - Epilogue
11/29: Meaning and Humor
12/4: **Exam 3: Baumeister Part III & IV**
12/6: **Meaning of Life Paper: Final Draft Due/Review Session**
12/13: **Final Exam (11:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.)**