



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Greece Program, Summer 2027

PSY 299 Topics: The Good Life: Greek Philosophy Meets Psychology

Instructor: Dr. Cassie Whitt

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: This course will explore ancient Greek theories of virtue, happiness, and the good life (e.g., Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics) alongside psychological research on morality, wellbeing, and social connection. Additionally, students will examine how social environments, cultural norms, and relationships with others shape ethical behavior and contribute to human flourishing. Students in the course will combine classical philosophy with contemporary psychological research to try and determine the recipe for happiness and meaning. Through readings, discussions, and experiential learning, students will critically evaluate what it means to live well as both individuals and members of a larger society.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives (COs) and Specific Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

- **CO 1:** Synthesize classical Greek philosophical frameworks of virtue and happiness with contemporary psychological research on positive psychology and subjective well-being.
 - By the end of this course, students will be able to:
 - SLO 1: Contrast major classical Greek schools of thought regarding the "good life"—specifically Aristotelian virtue ethics, Epicureanism, and Stoicism.
 - SLO 2: Map modern psychological constructs of well-being, mindfulness, and meaning onto their ancient philosophical predecessors.
 - SLO 3: Evaluate contemporary psychological data and scientific methodologies used to study human happiness and life satisfaction.
 - SLO 4: Synthesize ancient philosophical ideas with empirical psychological findings to articulate a multi-dimensional definition of human flourishing.
- **CO 2: Social & Cultural Determinants of Flourishing:** Analyze how interpersonal relationships, social environments, and macro-level cultural norms actively shape individual character and collective happiness.
 - By the end of this course, students will be able to:
 - SLO 5: Explain how interpersonal relationships, cultural norms, and social environments actively shape virtues and human flourishing.
 - SLO 6: Explain the psychological tension between pursuing individual personal happiness and fulfilling civic responsibilities as a member of a larger society.
- **CO 3: Experiential Application & Ethical Reflection:** Utilize the historical and cultural landscape of Greece to critically evaluate, experience, and apply ancient wisdom and modern psychological data to personal well-being and citizenship.
 - By the end of this course, students will be able to:
 - SLO 7: Apply classical philosophical frameworks (e.g., Stoic cognitive reframing or Epicurean simplicity) alongside modern positive psychology interventions to manage real-world stressors.
 - SLO 8: Utilize immersive experiential learning and historical sites in Greece to critically reflect on personal values, character strengths, and individual definitions of a meaningful life.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course: Major topics in the course will include positive psychology, ancient Greek philosophies related to happiness and the good life, and the human search for meaning.

5. Required Readings: We will be using an open-access textbook from this website:
https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Courses/University_of_California_Irvine/Positive_Psychology

Additional readings will be provided as PDFs.

6. Graded Assignments:

Assignment & Weight	Brief Assignment Description (more details will be provided in class)
Participation & In-Class Discussions <i>(30% of final grade)</i>	Rather than passive listening, our class sessions will mirror the ancient Greek Agora—a public space for active debate and philosophy. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings, engage meaningfully during on-site lectures at historical locations, and actively contribute to our discussions.
"Eudaimonia" Field Journal: Entry 1 <i>(10% of final grade)</i>	You will submit a short written reflection documenting a 24-hour period where you intentionally practice Stoic reframing or voluntary simplicity while traveling, analyzing the psychological results using both Stoic texts and positive psychology data.
"Eudaimonia" Field Journal: Entry 2 <i>(10% of final grade)</i>	You will submit a short written reflection evaluating a mindfulness and "savoring" exercise. You will choose a local Greek spot to focus deeply on simple pleasures and close social connection, backing your observations with empirical research on subjective well-being.
"Eudaimonia" Field Journal: Entry 3 <i>(10% of final grade)</i>	Aristotle argued virtue is the "golden mean" between two extremes (deficiency and excess). You will choose one virtue (e.g., courage, temperance, patience) that you find challenging while traveling. For a few days, you will consciously practice finding the "mean" in your daily travel interactions and analyze your experience using Aristotelian ethics and concepts from psychology.
"Eudaimonia" Field Journal: Entry 4	Embracing the Greek value (social norms!) of hospitality and connection, you will engage in a positive psychology "Gratitude or Kindness Intervention" within your host community or study cohort.

Assignment & Weight	Brief Assignment Description (more details will be provided in class)
<i>(10% of final grade)</i>	You will write a short reflection on how cultivating deep social connection impacts individual and collective flourishing.
Final Personal Synthesis Paper <i>(30% of final grade)</i>	At the end of the course, you will complete a comprehensive final synthesis paper. This project requires you to critically evaluate and construct your own personal "recipe" for a meaningful, flourishing life. Your paper must integrate both sides of the course: drawing upon at least two classical Greek traditions (Aristotelian, Epicurean, or Stoic) and backing your claims with findings from psychology research.

Grade Summary:

- Participation & In-Class Discussions: 30%
- "Eudaimonia" Field Journals (4 entries x 10% each): 40%
- Final Personal Synthesis Paper: 30%
- Total: 100%

Work will be graded on this scale:

90% – 100% A

80% – 89% B

70% – 79% C

60% – 69% D

Below 60% F

This course will be graded on this basis, without regard to other scales (i.e., plus-and-minus) which may apply at your college or university. Note KUIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.

7. Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can “hallucinate” (produce false information), so students are responsible for

ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- Brainstorming: You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- Citation Assistance: AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- Grammar and Style Checking: AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- Concept Understanding: Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- Research Assistance: AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- Data Manipulation: Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- Misrepresentation of Skills: Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Confidentiality Breach: Using AI tools that might violate KUIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Metacognitive Reflection. In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

"I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]."

8. Attendance Policy:

KUIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

9. Disability Accommodation:

KUIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.