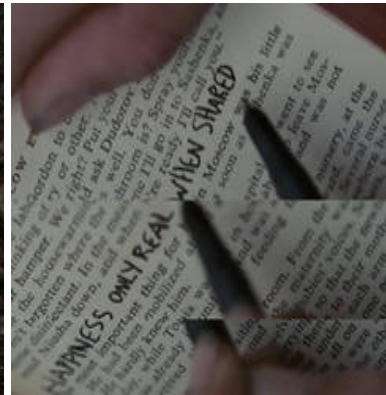
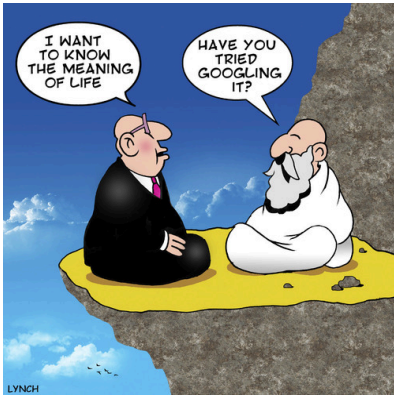


Your Life on Earth: Philosophizing Purpose and Place in the #21C

“Tiger got to hunt, bird got to fly;/ Man got to sit and wonder ‘why, why, why?’/Tiger got to sleep, bird got to land;/Man got to tell himself he understand.” -Kurt Vonnegut, Cat’s Cradle

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is the purpose of (your/human) existence?
- What does it mean to live a meaningful life? AND What gives *your* life meaning?
- How do you characterize your relationship with Earth and your place on it?
- How does your “intertextual” experience impact your personal philosophy?
- How can literature and the arts give deeper meaning to human life?



The “Existential Crisis”

It is quite normal at your age (and mine) to question the purpose of your existence and the meaning of human life on Earth. Sometimes, these “existential questions” can cause deep angst in the human mind, an interesting phenomenon often referred to as an “existential crisis.” I prefer to spin the experience not as a crisis, but rather as an existential opportunity. The purpose of this project is to explore meaning and existence through the Humanities lenses of philosophy and literary studies in the hopes of arriving at some personal answers about our lives here on planet Earth. Although we may not arrive at certain answers, asking the questions in the first place just might be part of what it means to be human.

The (Possible) Content: Topics to Explore

- Happiness and Meaning
- Existentialism (and the “existential crisis”)
- Aristotle’s Eudaimonia
- Transcendentalism
- Religion/Spirituality vs. Scientific Worldview
- Humanism
- Success and ambition
- Alone v. Lonely: The role of social media in our lives
- Gratitude
- Interconnectedness and Community
- Sense of Place
- Environmental Ethics
- INTERTEXTUALITY!!!

Texts (subject to change!)

- **Books:** *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer
(Plus Honors: *A Tale for the Time Being* by Ruth Ozeki)
- **Films:** *Harold and Maude*, *Stranger than Fiction*, et al.
- **Other texts:** Stories, TED talks, Non-fiction readings, Poetry, Videos, and MORE!
- **And of course, the texts we create as we go...**

Major Assignments/Grades:

- “Your Life on Earth” Journal (digital or a physical journal)
- Participation/Intellectual Presence
- Socratic Seminar: *Harold and Maude*
- Literature Circle: *Into the Wild*
- Personal Philosophy Statement
- Creative Expression Project
- DP update



Learning/Skills Goals

- Analyze and interpret philosophical and literary texts and other records of the human experience.
- Make sophisticated claims about literature and film and support them with textual evidence.
- Develop creative writing techniques, including the “Grand Style” of rhetoric.
- Internalize the concept of *intertextuality* and contribute to the tapestry of human thought.
- Think deeply about your life on Earth in a way that helps you understand your authentic self better as well as orient yourself in place and time.

The Project: Creative Expression and Personal Philosophy Statement

- Self-designed and personalized
- Words and images that together form a cohesive message
- Inspired by intertextual influences from our project AND your own life
- Prose or verse (or a combo?)
- Uses images cleverly (your art? Photos? Video collage? Other types of collage?)
- Images and words can work together as one project (children’s book? inspirational video? multimedia story? kinetic text?)
- Answers one or more of the essential questions
- Employs the “[Grand Style](#)” of rhetoric
- **Exhibition:** The thinking and learning that you do during this project will be integrated into the fabric of your life on Earth. The exhibition will hopefully be flowing within you for years to come. I would also like to do a collaborative “collaged” art installation that expresses the intertextuality of our own philosophizing. We will plan this together!

“Your Life on Earth” Journal Guidelines

1. Procure or create a “Your Life on Earth” project journal or composition book. If you are creating an electronic document for this assignment, please give it a title that captures your name and the essence of the project. Example: “Jessica McCallum: My Life on Earth Journal.” Write something similar if you are using a physical journal.
2. Please number/label each entry clearly.
3. The prompts are designed to help you think about the bigger questions we will answer in the project. The writing that you do for these prompts could potentially feed your project work directly, so put your deep thoughts into it!
4. This journal will never be part of any collaborative sharing with peers unless you personally want to share something from it. Express your truth and/or confusion freely.
5. Feel free to respond to the prompts in out-of-the-box ways. Use figurative language at will. Write poetry or prose. Add images if you are so inspired.
6. Stay caught up with the entries. Make them up if you miss class.
7. This journal will be graded on **HEART***, without attention to conventions or “correctness.”
 - ***Holistic Evaluation of Authentic Reflective Thinking**