

Purpose Projects

For each Purpose Project, you will make a short and creative video (2-5 minutes) explaining the results and send this to another student who will watch it. At the very beginning of the video, **state your name and the name of the project you chose for that week.** I will also watch the short videos and play 1-2 of the best ones each week in class.

Make bullet points and practice BEFORE you record the video! These videos will be graded for quality, and if you do not make them high quality then I will make reflection statements required instead. A written reflection is always a suitable alternative to a video report if you so choose.

The First Purpose Project (Week 1) is the same for everyone:

For one day, whenever you have the choice, choose whatever will make you happy at that moment (within reason, folks). The next day, try to live in a way that contributes to the happiness of the people around you whenever you can. The final day, whenever you feel you have a choice, do what you think will make you most fulfilled; make the decisions that you think you will look back on with the most satisfaction, feeling content with what you have done. What are some examples of the differences between these days? What did you learn by reflecting on what would make you happy in the moment? How did you feel on the day you devoted to the happiness of others? Which kinds of days would you want more of in your life?

For Weeks 2-7, you will choose 1 Purpose Project each week to complete and then make a video reporting your experience and your thoughts afterward. You have MANY options for Purpose Projects, but you CANNOT repeat the same Project during the 7-week period!

Here is your list of options:

Spending Project: Make your phone background one of the pictures of a GiveDirectly recipient. As you spend money throughout the week, write a note to that person explaining why you need to make that purchase instead of giving them money. At the end of the week, make a reflection video about your moral reasons for spending or giving throughout the week. Submit the notes with the video.

Promise Project: Anytime you agree (verbally or written) to do something, write it down immediately, making a list throughout the week. As you do each item, check it off your list. At the end of the week, if there are unfinished items, explain why you did not complete them as promised or justify their incompleteness. Submit the list and explanations with the video.

Personality Project: Spend 36 hours dressing, speaking, and acting in a way that is radically at odds with your usual self-presentation. For example, try dressing differently, telling more jokes, being quiet in conversation if you are typically extroverted, striking up conversations on topics you don't usually discuss, and generally changing the way you present yourself to the world.

Dialogue Project: Choose one of the issues, questions, themes, problems, or values from any one of our readings in the course and have a 7–10-minute conversation in public with someone about your selection. You may converse with a friend, family member, acquaintance, or fellow student. If you choose to talk with strangers, *please be very careful, considerate, and charitable!* Review the passages of the reading in advance of the conversation, and do not attempt to get in a heated debate during the conversation. Report on the experience.

Hunger Project: Go to bed hungry for 5 straight days. Each morning, jot down how you feel when you wake up. Submit the notes from each morning with your video report.

Religion Project: Attend 2 religious services this week (could be the same or different religions). Why do you think people go to these events?

Free Time Project: Join a specialty gym for a week – CrossFit, pilates, barre, etc. Participate in as many classes as you can during that week – at least 5 classes total, more if you can find the time. The second week, spend the same amount of time playing video games, watching TV, or scrolling on social media. Compare the two weeks.

AI Project: Spend a week using ChatGPT whenever you have a need for family/friendship advice, relationship advice, career advice, legal advice, or financial advice. Write down any specific instances where ChatGPT actually gave you an answer that was truly helpful for your decision-making, and an answer that you had not already thought of. Submit the ChatGPT answers with your video.

Elder Project: Talk to someone who is (plausibly) older than 40 years old for at least 20 minutes. Ask them to reflect on whether they think they have achieved their goals for themselves and what has made their life most meaningful. What would they have done differently? What advice do they have for you? Then present to us about whether you think their advice was good advice and whether (in your view) they have an accurate view of their own lives.

Meditation Project: Meditate for 4 days in a row, for 30 minutes each day, focusing on detachment from self-interest. Report your experience in a creative video.

Pointless Project: Spend 90 minutes counting blades of grass on campus. Use your phone to record the entire 90 minutes of counting. Reflect about what this taught you about the meaning of life. Submit the counting video with your report video.

Perspective Project: Every time you have a discussion on religion/ethics/science/politics with a person throughout the day, listen to what they say and respond only after thinking *specifically* about their perspective and considering their position/ideas/claims from that perspective. You can tell them that you are required to do this so that they don't think you are being awkwardly silent. Do this for the entire week and report on what you take their perspectives to be like.

Attention Project: Set at least 5 alarms at random times throughout the day/night (have a peer set the time so you don't know when it is coming). When the timer goes off, stop everything and

write down exactly what you were doing with your four limbs at the moment of the timer. The next day, do that for your eyes (what were you looking at?). The next day, do that for your ears (what were you listening to/hearing?). The next day, do that for your nose (what were you smelling?). The next day, do that for your sense of touch (what were you feeling physically, with your fingers or other parts of your body?). The last day, do that for your mind (what were you thinking?). Submit the notes you took with your report video.

Clarity Project: Spend one week writing down any instances in which you notice yourself or someone else making use of vague, imprecise, or unclear language. This includes words like the following: objective, subjective, valid, totally, literally, feel, opinion/theory, bias, truth, etc. It also includes clichés like the following: Everything happens for a reason, Right side of history, It is what it is, That's just your opinion, There are two sides to every story, That's true for you but not for me, Find your passion, etc. Spend the second week asking people to clarify their thoughts whenever they use such language (kindly and gently!) or clarifying your own when you find yourself using such language. Report your experience in a creative video.

Privacy Project: Spend one day with no privacy. Switch phones with your roommate (you can let your friends and family know that you won't have your normal number). If you really want to test your ability to live without your phone and without privacy, do this for three days. Report the experience in a video.

Forgiveness Project: Forgive someone who has wronged you. What does this mean to you? How does forgiving that person change your relationship? How does it feel to forgive? How did forgiving someone change how you felt about yourself? Report this experience of forgiving (you don't need to go into detail if the wrongdoing is private to you) in a video.

Atonement Project: Talk to someone you've wronged, or write a letter, apologizing and taking accountability. You don't need to send the letter. How did the process of identifying the ways that you acted wrongly and taking accountability change how you felt about your actions? What does it mean to ask for forgiveness? Report the experience (being as private as you want).

Role Model Project: Talk to someone who you view as a moral exemplar or role model, in some aspect of how they live their life. Do they view themselves in this way? What sets them apart, in your view, as a moral exemplar? Are they especially morally motivated or do they have other reasons for their actions? Report the conversation and your beliefs about the person.

Media Project: Spend the week using social media ONLY to post things about this course – Flagler College, St. Augustine, education, philosophy, etc. Use all your social media accounts to do this and make at least 6 posts during the week. Respond to all comments on your posts. Make a video documenting these posts and comments and reporting on the experience.

Disrespect Project: What would happen if you treated yourself with disrespect? Spend one day making as many bad decisions for yourself as you can muster. This might include making lots of sacrifices for others, or it may include merely treating yourself poorly. Report on the actions you took and how you think about those actions and their connection to your life as a whole.

Honesty Project: Go a day where you try to avoid lying or using any strategic speech. If you do use strategic speech, make a note of it and explain why it was justified. Submit notes along with report video.

Paternalism Project: Choose a trusted friend or family member who cares about your wellbeing. Tell them your goals for yourself and identify the ways that you are falling short. Ask them to plan a day for you that they think will help you make progress on some of your goals. Follow their plan for the day and reflect about whether it actually did bring you closer to your goals. If so, why was your friend helpful here? If not, what information did they lack?

Friendship Project: Reach out to someone you haven't talked to in at least 4 months. You can tell them that it's for an assignment. Check in with how they are doing and catch up with them for at least 20 minutes. Report on the experience and your connection to this person, including what you've missed out on since last speaking with them.

Community Project: Join a new community or club that you've always considered joining or learning about. Go to their meeting or post on their forums. Submit a picture of you at the meeting or screenshots of your contributions to their online forum. What obligations do members have in virtue of their participation in this community? Why do you think people joined this community and why do they stay? Video your report.

Stranger Project: For at least 2 meals this week, sit with people in a public place (e.g. the dining hall) who you don't know at all. (Try not to just interrupt people's lunches, ask if you can join them beforehand!) Then reflect on the experience. Were people receptive to you joining your table or did most people discourage you from sitting with them? Why do you think they had this response? Did you learn anything new about other students? Did the experience of trying to meet new people change how you view the social dynamics of our campus?

Debate Project: Talk to someone for 15 minutes about a political topic. You must disagree with the person you're talking to. Record the conversation (with your interlocuter's permission). Then summarize the conversation and show it to your interlocuter to get their feedback on your summary. Submit the original conversation and your video report to me.

Vegan Project: Go vegan for a week and reflect on the experience. What were the costs? Any benefits?

Career Project: Spend the week looking up jobs that you can get with 5 or more different degrees across different schools at Flagler. Evaluate the tradeoffs between the career opportunities. Submit a report comparing these jobs, degrees, and opportunities.

Criminal Project: Pay attention to others throughout the week and write down any violations of the law (including your own). Were any clearly justifiable violations? How did it feel to scrutinize the behavior of other community members? Submit your notes along with a video.

Free Rider Project: Spend the week trying NOT to be a free rider – pick up trash when you see it, tidy your dorm room while your roommate is gone, return grocery carts that are misplaced, hold the door for others, etc. Evaluate how it feels to contribute when you do not directly benefit.

Democracy Project: Think of a decision that you need to make in the next week. Gather at least 7 people to vote on the decision (you can use social media to do this with a poll) The more people voting the better! Let the crowd choose for you and follow the wisdom of the crowd. Report on the experience and include the details of the voting procedure and voting outcome.

Judgment Project: Spend the week calling out close friends and family when you think they are acting badly, as Euthyphro does to his father. Evaluate whether this is a good strategy in life.

Quiet Project: Give your phone and laptop to someone you know. Then spend 12 waking hours without engaging with your computer, TV, movie screen, or phone at all. Try to talk as little as possible, avoid televisions, and minimize the amount that you read. Then reflect on what you did and what you learned from a day of quiet introspection. To receive credit, someone else must email me to verify that you went 12 waking hours without screens or devices. Report on the experience.

Product Project: Research where something you own comes from, how it is shipped, and how it is sold. Evaluate the ethical issues at stake for each part of the process. How should we compare labor issues for international and domestic workers? Is there a moral difference? What (if anything) should consumers do in light of the ethical issues at stake with their purchasing decisions? Submit the research you did along with a report video.

Countries Project: For one week, choose one country to do extensive research about. Write a small report about the culture of the country, the history, cities you would want to visit in the country, and if you really want to go crazy, learn a couple of sentences in the language. Then eat at a restaurant that's based on that nationality, at least one meal unique to that culture/country. E.g., you're researching Italy, go to an Italian restaurant and eat a popular Italian dish that isn't common in the United States.

Policy Project: Three times throughout the week, research a policy that's been made in Florida and/or the state you're from. Write down the policy, what it means for you, and how it may affect the communities around us. Dig deep into how it affects the state and world around us.

Hobby Project: Ask a friend or family member about 2 hobbies they enjoy that you have never tried/enjoyed a whole lot. Then, try doing at least one of them as much as your friend might for the week. How does it feel? Have you learned to enjoy it the way your friend/family member does? E.g., scrapbooking, playing volleyball, writing poetry, etc.

Club Project: As often as they offer meetings each week for two weeks, attend a club meeting of anything you have an interest in. Write a small report about what you did in the club, any acquaintances you made, and if you would want to go again.