



Happiness, goodness, eudaimonia and flourishing HON 201 A: Prompts for writing response #1

Due Thursday, Jan. 31:

First response paper, choosing from the first three readings, and choose from among these questions (you can answer as many or as few as you like):

☞ To what extent do you think happiness (or the good life as we have stipulated it in class) is something we “create” (McMahon’s term), or “do” or “achieve.”

☞ Maria wrote in her blog post that we should seek “true happiness” and not “temporary pleasure.” What, then, is “true happiness”? What makes it “true”? She also wrote that a good life will be one “centered on being morally and ethically good.” What’s the difference between those two kinds of good-ness? Does it matter?

☞ Emily (Melchior) wrote that a good life is possible “when a person has the drive to engage in something worthwhile,” and that this drive or determination can produce “a kind of euphoria” (or affective happiness). What is “worthwhile” in this context, and why? What, then, is not worthwhile? How do we know or determine the difference? Who decides?

☞ Unpack this quote from Henry David Thoreau, and provide a response to it: *“It is something to be able to paint a picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and to paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.”*

☞ Finally, discuss the role of contemplation in your life. How important are contemplation, intimacy and solitude in the pursuit of a good life? (By **intimacy**, I mean the special intimacy that exists among family or friends, one that fosters and reflects mutual understanding, loving friendship and kinship. By **solitude**, I mean “the pristine state of privacy, aloneness, disconnectedness, to use a smartphone-era term, where a person consciously withdraws from others.)

**2-page, 12-point type, double line-spaced, 1-inch margins
No emailed submissions**