

Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology

Institute of Salesian Studies

Meaningful Living, Introducing Viktor Frankl

A Pastoral Psychological Study

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Course Description

This course intends to cultivate the awareness and capacities to be able to take responsibility for oneself, by developing a sense of meaning and purpose around life, the greatest and gratuitous gift from the creator. Though there is much interest today in the question of meaning in life, this course focuses on Viktor Frankl who is considered by many to be one of the earliest to introduce the question of meaning in psychological discourse. Frankl tried to show that the recognition of the human spirit is central to good psychology, and that such recognition makes the interdisciplinary space between the psychological and the spiritual valuable and interesting. The course is designed to help the participant to develop facility with the basic concepts and language, and then, to explore its application in areas that are proper of pastoral ministry like, Education and formation, Leadership, and a lifestyle of prayerfulness.

Goals and Objectives

1. To introduce Franklian thinking with its emphasis on the human spirit as a resource for a healthy life.
2. To learn the basic concepts of the meaning-centered approach to life and health, which Dr. Frankl terms as logotherapy
3. To demonstrate understanding of these concepts through discussion, application and written instruments.

Expectations

In this introductory course focusing more on the basics, lectures, PowerPoint and textual material will be used in the presentations.

The three books below, are presented as readers, from where sections will be suggested for required reading for each class.

1. Frankl, Viktor E., *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* Part One, translated by Ilse Lasch. Touchstone Edition. New York: Simon & Schuster,

1984 [or, if this edition is not available, Frankl, Viktor E., *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy Part One*, translated by Ilse Lasch. Foreword by Harold S. Kushner; Afterword by William J. Winslade. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006. ISBN: 978-080701-4271].

2. Graber, Ann V. *Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy, Method of Choice in Ecumenical Pastoral Psychology*. Reprint ed. Levering, MI: Windham Hall Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-155605-3641.
3. Thannickal, Joseph. *Gifted Journey*. Mumbai: Pauline Publications, 2013. ISBN: 978-817176-7595.

Other participatory methods like group work and class discussions will be inserted wherever suitable.

As a student, your participation in the class activities and the completion of assignments is expected. The Instructor will be available to listen to how you can participate better. He would like you also to let him know your thoughts on better participation, should they occur.

Course Instructions approach

This course will be taught in person and the lecture notes and powerpoint presentations will be posted online after the classes.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will have an understanding of what Frankl proposes about the question of a meaningful life, with a strong focus on the role and function of the spirit in human Living. This course can get you started in exploring those pathways of human motivation that can truly embellish and enliven your pastoral practices as well as your self development. An added benefit can also be that the course will equip you to use psychology in pastoral ministry with greater discernment and efficacy.

Tools for Assessment

1. A single page personal response to the week's class and readings, to be handed in by Friday evening of the Week.
2. A Class presentation in front of the whole group on a single theme related to the question of meaning in life, to be evaluated by the rest of the group during the presentation.
3. A final paper of 10 pages, double spaced, summarizing the main learnings, including experiences, your appreciation of Frankl's thought, criticism of Frankl's thought and, your own bibliography of interest. You can also refer to material from your weekly assignment.

The modalities of conducting these tasks will be discussed at an early opportunity after classes begin.

Weekly Sessions

WEEK 1

Frankl and Meaning, Assumptions, Terminology

Readings:

- (a) Graber, *Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy* (2004), pp.14-31.
- (b) Thannickal, "Meaning According to Viktor Frankl," pp.1-7 (Manuscript)

WEEK 2

Basic Tenets in Frankl's Thought

Readings:

- (a) Graber, *Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy* (2004), pp. 65-75

WEEK 3

Techniques used in Logotherapy

Readings:

- (a) Graber, *Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy* (2004), pp.104-117.

WEEK 4

How to Discover Meaning

Readings:

- (a) Graber, *Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy* (2004), pp.90-100
- (b) Thannickal, *Gifted Journey* (2012), chapters 1-4, pp. 21-73

WEEK 5

Meaning in Suffering

Readings

- (a) Thannickal, *Logotherapy on the Challenge of Human Suffering - Part 1 & Part 2, Psychological Foundations, The Journal*. New Delhi. (2008)

WEEK 6

Reading Frankl

Reading the first 100 pages of Man's Search for meaning.

Reading:

- (a) Frankl, Experiences in a concentration Camp, *Man's Search for Meaning*, pp.15-100

WEEK 7: Reading Week

WEEK 8

Meaningful Education, (and Formation)

Readings

- (a) Thannickal, *Educating to Responsibility*. All India Association of Catholic Schools.
- (b) Thannickal, *Don Bosco 's Preventive System and Franklian Meaning* (Manuscript)

WEEK 9

Leading with Meaning, Examples from Contemporary Saints

Reading

- (a) Thannickal, *Introducing Meaning Centered Leadership*. (Manuscript).

WEEK 10

Comparing the concepts of Meaning in Viktor Frankl and Carl Jung

Reading

- (a) Graber, *Viktor Frankl 's Logotherapy* (2004), pp.159-173

WEEK 11

Meaningful Prayer

Readings

- (a) Thannickal, *Gifted Journey*, (2012)
 - Chapter Six: The Lord's prayer, Answer to the Human Quest for Meaning;
 - Chapter Seven: Finding Meaning through Prayer. Pp: 95-126, pp.

WEEK 12

Guideposts to Meaningful Living, A summary

WEEK 13: Class Presentations

WEEK 14: Final Paper