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About

- **PhD title:** Prisoners and happiness
- **Supervisors:** [Jussi Suikkanen \(/staff/profiles/philosophy/suikkanen-jussi.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/philosophy/suikkanen-jussi.aspx) and [Iain Law \(/staff/profiles/philosophy/law-ian.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/philosophy/law-ian.aspx)

Research

The topic of my PhD research is the relationship between imprisonment and happiness. I am examining whether one can be happy in prison, especially if one has been sentenced to life. Therefore, the main idea of my project is to evaluate philosophical views of happiness in the light of prison life.

In particular, I am considering three popular contemporary theories of happiness: hedonism, whole life satisfaction theories, and Daniel Haybron's theory of happiness. I will attempt to argue that all these theories have implausible implications with respect to the happiness of prisoners. I will argue instead that we should return to an ancient Aristotelian conception of happiness based on the Greek concepts of Eudaimonia and Phronesis. This idea requires constructing a careful interpretation of Aristotle's theory of happiness. I will attempt to argue that Aristotle's view of happiness correctly entails that some fundamental sources of happiness are accessible for prisoners too. I will attempt to demonstrate that, if we correctly understand Aristotle's views on intellectual virtues, we must conclude that happiness in prison is related to a contemplative life in a broad sense. This entails that there are ways in which it is possible to be happy even when one is imprisoned.

This project is an extension of my Master thesis at the University of Bologna (Italy, 2010), the last chapter of which was entitled Contemplation and Life Imprisonment. I am mainly interested in Greek Philosophy, Political and Moral Philosophy, Applied Ethics and Bioethics. I hope to develop these interests further.

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