

PHILOSOPHY 104 / RELIGION 104: Spring 2010

Ethics CRN 20371 / 20378

F 11:35 am – 2:45 pm Room 410

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Office hours: By Appointment

Required Texts -Barbara MacKinnon. *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues*. 5th ed. Belmont: Thompson Wadsworth, 2007.

-Electronic Materials: Access at...

<http://sites.google.com/site/philosopherdavidburris/imperial-valley-courses-1/ethics>

Course Description A philosophical investigation into the moral dimension of human life. Emphasis is placed on moral theory, as well as concrete ethical problems and issues. Students will be encouraged to critically analyze their own value systems.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's):

By the completion of this course the student should be able to describe and critique major arguments in Metaethics, Normative Ethics and Applied Ethics.

Assessment Tool: Final

Institutional Outcome: ISLO1, ISLO2, ISLO4

Course Objectives:

- 1) Identify the distinguishing features of the ideas, concepts, and arguments relevant to some of the prominent discussions in moral philosophy.
- 2) Read and extract information essential to an author's position and method of argumentation.
- 3) Explain and critique different moral theories and problems using reason and logical analysis.
- 4) Present and defend a perspective on a moral issue.
- 5) Employ philosophical techniques and methodologies to provide justification to one's moral viewpoints and beliefs.
- 6) Apply moral principles in everyday moral choices.

Course Requirements Student's final grade is the percentage they earn out of 100 possible points.

Exams (45 pts): There will be three exams total in the class. Each will be worth 20 pts each. All exam questions are either multiple choice, true/false, or fill in the blank. Students must bring a scantron sheet (882 E) to all exams. No retakes or make-ups are permitted unless special arrangements are made PRIOR to the exam with the instructor. Vacations and family events are not sufficient reasons to miss these exams.

Reading Outline Sheets (25 pts): As preparation to discuss the reading in class, each student must fill out a Reading Outline Sheet (ROS) prior to the class session for all reading assignments indicated by the instructor. These sheets will be supplied to the student by the instructor. On the sheet, the student will be asked to answer a number of questions about what they have just read. These questions are designed to cause the student to look for the information appropriate in providing a concise summary of the content relevant the author's position and method of argumentation. The goal is that the student interacts with the reading independent of class and begins to learn how to read complicated college level writing and extract the essential information out of what they are reading. These sheets will also be useful study guides to use for exams and prepare the student to participate in class. Four times during the semester I will randomly collect the daily ROS. On Friday May 28, ALL ROSs that I have assigned throughout the semester will be due.

Presentation (20 pts): The student will begin this assignment by picking a topic, usually on some moral issue or problem in moral philosophy mentioned in the textbook (Note: All topics must be approved by the instructor). Next, the student must find three scholarly articles (outside the textbook) giving different viewpoints on the topic. And last, the student will do a 10-15 minute presentation in which they will summarize and critique the ethical arguments that the writers make in these articles, as well as describe what their (i.e., the student's) own viewpoint is on this topic. Students must get their topics approved by the end of the second week of class Friday 2/26. After topics are submitted, I will assign presentation dates. Copies of the articles that are presented must also be turned in the day of the presentation. A sheet giving more details on this assignment will be forthcoming.

Participation Points (10 pts): The student must demonstrate preparedness for class sessions. This includes reading the assigned materials BEFORE the start of class, contributing to class discussions, asking thoughtful questions, and performing well on in-class quizzes. Genuine desire on the part of the student to improve throughout the semester will also be considered.

Another way to improve your all around grade in this area will be to bring into class various multimedia tools (e.g., music, you tube videos, movies, poems, etc.,) that serve to illustrate the points being made in class. I'm always looking for new ways to creatively present this material and your (the student's) assistance is greatly appreciated.

-Extra Credit: Extra credit assignments are available to those students wishing improve their grades a slight incremental amount. These assignments will not be able to make up large amounts of ground, so the student should not think they have a safety net of extra credit should they get behind in this course.

Assignment #1 First, type in the following web address to your internet search navigation bar:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIwr6KFpHOk>

What should come up is a formal debate between two philosophers named William Lane Craig and Paul Kurtz on whether "goodness" can exist without God. Note: Do not be fooled by the time on this first video. You must keep clicking on succeeding videos to watch the entire debate which lasts about an hour and a half. Third, write a 1-2 page paper telling me who you think won the debate and why? The maximum amount of extra credit you can get on this assignment is 3 pts. (3%). The amount of extra credit will be determined by how well and detailed you explain WHY you think that person won.

Assignment #2: This assignment is just like assignment #1 except that you will be watching a different debate. In fact, you may actually choose between two different debate videos. The first video is a debate on affirmative action:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= ZTMaAmvBWA>

The second video is a debate on abortion:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDJBMkneJc&feature=Playlist&p=DFA57E3FAA65CAD4&index=0>

The maximum amount of extra credit you can get on this assignment is 3 pts. (3%). These are the only two extra credit assignments I will offer.

-Grading Scale:

90% - 100% = A 80% - 89.9% = B 70% - 79.9% = C 60% - 69.9% = D <60% = F

NOTE: If the student has a discrepancy or issue about a grade, they must write up a written statement that includes: 1) Their name, course title, time, and the assignment in question, 2) In what way do they believe they have been graded unfairly or incorrectly, and 3) What do they expect the instructor to do to fix it. I will not discuss the graded work with the student until this statement has been written, been given to me, and I have had some time to investigate the problem. Do not try to confront me during or after class until I have looked into it. After my review, I will arrange a time to meet the student to discuss it.

Attendance Policy Given that this class only meets once a week, there is one unexcused absence allowed during the semester. Unexcused absences which exceed this number will result in a deduction to the student's grade at a rate of 3% per absence. After three absences (excused included), the student will be automatically dropped from the class. Note: Vacations and family events are not sufficient reasons to miss class. Additionally, if the student is not present for more than twenty minutes at any time during the class meeting, it will go down as an unexcused absence.

Classroom Conduct Most days, each class session will contain a lecture on the content of the assigned readings, some group work, a chance for questions, an introduction to the next topic, and maybe a quiz. Due to the fact each class session goes for three hours, even on test days we shall follow a similar format. In other words, students are not advised to leave after the test is over, as we will use the remaining time to cover more material.

While in this classroom, students will show respect for the instructor and their fellow classmates. Students must show up to class on time, or if they are late, come in the least disruptive way possible. Constant tardiness will go down as an unexcused absence. Students are expected to stay awake and alert throughout the class. Distracting other students by

talking during lectures or presentations may result in the student being asked to leave the class. Negative cultural, ethnic, political, racial, sexist, or religious comments are strictly prohibited, and will result in strong disciplinary measures.

Due to the sensitive nature of a number of issues we will discuss in this class, it is imperative that if the student cannot participate without getting angry, rude, disruptive, hateful, or intolerant, that they simply do not participate. All issues must be discussed with an air of academic and scholarly open-mindedness and objectivity in order to foster a learning environment of mutual respect where students can ask honest questions and present their ideas and opinions without fear of being judged and ridiculed. After all, we are all essentially after the same thing, the truth. And *the truth is rarely found in the person with the loudest voice*. Part of what makes a good critical thinker is the ability to assess an issue, idea, or proposition without getting emotionally attached or outraged by it. The idea is evaluated on its own merits and not merely assumed to be true or false based on some prejudice we may already have.

Cheating: Cheating is strictly forbidden. By cheating, I mean any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes or tests. All personal belongings must be kept off your desk and tucked away in a backpack or knapsack. If you are talking during the exam, your eyes begin to wander to another student's exam, or you take out a cell phone, ipod, itouch, etc. during the test, I will automatically assume that you are cheating. If you are caught cheating you will receive a 0 on the exam as well as become in danger of incurring stronger disciplinary measures.

Plagiarizing: Plagiarism is defined as stealing and passing off the ideas or words of another as one's own. However, if due credit is given or acknowledged, usually by using quotations, works cited pages, and bibliographies, then using the ideas of others to supplement your own is permitted. Any student caught plagiarizing on any homework assignment, quiz, paper, or exam will receive an automatic 0 on the assignment.

Student Services Students with special needs due to a learning or physical disability are encouraged to avail themselves of the resources in the Disabled Student Programs and Services office in the 2100 Bldg. (760-355-6312). If you think something might prevent you from doing well in this course, you should discuss this with the instructor so that proper arrangements may be made to accommodate your needs.

Tutoring is available to all IVC students on a walk-in basis in the Spencer Library Media Center. The center also provides study skills workshops which may prove to be invaluable to those just beginning their college experience.

Success My primary goal as an instructor is to help you, the student, succeed in this class. Throughout the semester, if there is anything that I can better do to help you succeed and flourish in this class, feel free to talk to me about it. An A for every student is a very reachable goal and I greatly desire to help each of you achieve it. Here are some tips to help you succeed:

-In the past, students who succeeded in this class typically are the ones who...

- 1) come to class regularly prepared to talk about the material
- 2) ask a lot of questions
- 3) take good notes during the lecture
- 4) come to my office hours for extra help
- 5) look for examples in their everyday lives of the things we discuss in class
- 6) join a study group with classmates for the exams
- 7) do the assigned reading
- 8) get the help they know they need through student services or through myself
- 9) are able to think through an issue calmly and objectively instead of emotionally or through their personal prejudices.

It will take some hard work, but the skills you will gain as a result of your efforts in this class will benefit you the rest of your lives.

Course Calendar

All reading assignments on this schedule are mandatory and must be done BEFORE each class session. The student should not think that the contents of the readings not explicitly covered or emphasized in class will not be included on the exam. Exam dates may be flexible; however, the date of the paper and the date of ROS turn in are not. Readings come from either the Course Reader by Mackinnon or from my website.

- 2/19 Introduction; What is Ethics; Why Study Ethics; and Divine Command Theory
- Ethics and Ethical Reasoning (C.R. 1-11)
- Plato, *Euthyphro* (C.R. 12-16)
- 2/26 PRESENTATION TOPICS DUE; Divine Command Theory and Relativism
- J.P. Moreland and Kai Nielson, *Does Ethics Depend on God? A Debate* (Website)
- Francis Beckwith, *A Critique of Moral Relativism* (Website)
- 3/5 Egoism and Social Contract Theory
- Plato, *The Ring of Gyges* (C.R. 37-43)
- Thomas Hobbs, *Self Love* (C.R. 43-47)
- 3/12 Utilitarianism
- Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (C.R. 60-65)
- John Stewart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (C.R. 65-70)
- 3/19 Kant and Deontology
- Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals* (C.R. 82-92)
- 3/26 EXAM ONE; Natural Law, and Virtue Ethics
- Thomas Aquinas, *On Natural Law* (C.R. 102-104)
- Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (C.R. 115-121)
- 4/2 Euthanasia
- J. Gay-Williams, *The Wrongfulness of Euthanasia* (C.R. 151-154)
- James Rachels, *Active and Passive Euthanasia* (C.R. 154-158)
- 4/9 SPRING BREAK
- 4/16 Abortion
- Judith Jarvis Thompson, *A Defense of Abortion* (C.R. 175-185)
- Francis Beckwith, *Arguments from Bodily Rights* (Website)
- 4/23 Stem-Cell Research, Cloning, and Genetic Engineering
- Leon Kass, *The Wisdom of Repugnance* (C.R. 403-408)
- Kerry Lynn Macintosh, *Illegal Beings: Human Clones and the Law* (C.R. 409-414)
- 4/30 EXAM 2; Sexual Ethics, Pornography, and Censorship
- Richard Mohr, *Prejudice and Homosexuality* (C.R. 212-218)
- John Stewart Mill, *On Liberty* (C.R. 228-230)
- Fred Berger, *Pornography, Sex, Censorship* (Website)
- 5/7 Equality, Discrimination, and Social Justice
- Robert Fullinwider, *Affirmative Action and Fairness* (C.R. 260-263)
- John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness* (C.R. 282-288)
- Robert Nozick, *Distributive Justice* (C.R. 289-295)
- 5/14 Capital Punishment
- Hugo Adam Bedau, *A World Without Punishment* (C.R. 312-320)
- Ernest Van Den Haag, *The Ultimate Punishment: A Defense* (C.R. 321-324)
- 5/21 Environmental Ethics and Animal Rights
- William Baxter, *People or Penguins: The Case for Optimal Pollution* (C.R. 343-347)
- Peter Singer, *All Animals are Equal* (C.R. 370-377)
- 5/28 ROS SHEETS DUE; Violence, Terrorism, and War
- Jean Bethke Elshtain, *What is a Terrorist?* (C.R. 432-435)
- Michael Walzer, *The Triumph of Just War Theory and the Dangers of Success* (C.R. 436-441)
- 6/4 Flex Week
- 6/11 FINAL EXAM