

- COURSE SYLLABUS -

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS
DIVISION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES
15946 - PHI 223 - 007
-FALL 2018-

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Location of class: Ferguson # G78
Time of class: Monday afternoons:
4pm-6:30pm
27 August 2018 – 10 December 2018
Office: Ferguson # G76
Office hours (Open door policy):
10:30am-1pm Mondays
12:30pm-4pm Tuesdays
Personal Appointment

“Philosophy begins in wonder.
And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.”
~ Alfred North Whitehead

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on moral theories and issues, drawing on ideas from a variety of disciplines. During this semester we will examine moral theories regarding what is right and wrong, good and bad and apply them to contemporary moral issues. Most of us undoubtedly have beliefs regarding such matters already, even very strong ones. Thinking philosophically about contemporary moral issues, however, allows us to see how well-supported our beliefs are by reasoned argumentation, and this is why we examine those beliefs in light of philosophical moral theory, because moral theory just is an attempt at providing a rational framework within which to view important beliefs.

II. General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes:

- A. Students will demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with various philosophical issues.
- B. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements.
- C. Students will demonstrate an ability to respond critically to works in philosophy.
- D. Students will have participated in assignments requiring them to formulate, express, and support their opinions on the philosophical issues covered in the course. Students will have acquired knowledge of the cross-cultural influence of philosophy.

III. Problem Learning Outcomes:

When presented with a specific example of a moral dilemma, a student will be able to identify and explain the moral course of action according to (a) utilitarian ethical principles and (b) deontological ethical principles.

IV. Exemplary Educational Objectives:

- A. Awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with ethical issues.
- B. Understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements in ethics.
- C. Ability to respond critically to works in philosophy.
- D. Ability to formulate, express, and support arguments on ethical issues.
- E. Knowledge of the cross-cultural influence of philosophy.

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." ~ Aristotle

V. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Assignment:

- A. PHI 223 is part of the university's Core Curriculum. As such, the work assigned in this course recognizes the general goals of the core and the specific objectives attached to those classes designated for inclusion in the Language, Philosophy, and Culture Foundational Component Area as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.
- B. Specifically, students enrolled in this course will demonstrate the general ability to:
 - 1. Think critically, which includes the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information about specific philosophical concepts.
 - 2. Communicate effectively by developing and expressing ideas through written and visual communication.
 - 3. Gain intercultural competence, a knowledge of civic responsibility, and an awareness of how humans in the past have engaged effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
 - 4. Understand the role that personal responsibility has played throughout history and gain the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to making ethical decisions.

"There is scarcely any passion without struggle." ~ Albert Camus

C. *Assessment Assignment*

1. To measure the success of student acquisition of these mandated skills, during the course of the semester, students will be assigned an Ethical Theory Essay. Generally speaking, the project will consist of students completing a written assignment that will compare and contrast two competing ethical theories introduced by the professor. Specifically, the instructor will provide the students with an ethical scenario that will allow for differing responses to flow from the use of each theory. Specific instructions of this assignment can be found in this syllabus. Completion of this assignment is required by the university and is an integral component in the successful completion of this course.

"The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me." ~ Ayn Rand

VI. **GRADE POLICIES, COURSE REQUIREMENTS, & TESTING INFORMATION:**

A. **Course Policies, Requirements, & Due Dates:**

- 20% Mid-Term Exam (Exam # 1): 1 October
- 20% Ethical Essay: 14 November
- 20% Primo Levi: Ethical Themes: 28 October
- 20% Video Analysis: 28 November
- 20% Cumulative Final Exam (Exam # 2): 10 December

"Theory can blind observation." ~ Carol Gilligan

- B. **Attendance is expected.** A complete attendance report may be filed with the student's dean and the registrar with the final course grade. *In fact, more than one absence, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of "F" for this course.*

Please do not miss class! In view of your interests, too much is at stake.

- C. All students are required to be present for announced exams. Any missed exam without a *cogent documented* excuse will be counted numerically as a zero (00). This is considerably lower than an average F.
- D. Because of the nature of these exams over assigned readings and lecture material, it is in your *best* interest to attend every class and proactively engage material, especially since each exam counts 20% towards your final grade.

E. **Required Book:**

1. Louis P. Pojman, *How Should We Live? An Introduction to Ethics* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 2004). ISBN-10: 0534556574.
2. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012). ISBN:-10: 1479125776.

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."
~ Aristotle*

F. **Exam Information:**

1. Each exam may involve multiple choice, matching, true/false questions, short discussion, and/or essay. Please bring pencil & 882 E scantron. For final exam bring 882 E scantron and number 2 pencil. I may post exam online. If I do, I will let you know two weeks in advance.
2. Each exam will cover lecture material and assigned readings as dictated on course schedule or as directed by professor.
3. I may add additional required readings as deemed appropriate. I will inform you if the additional material will be added to quizzes or exams when I distribute the material in class.
4. Take good notes. Recordings are not allowed.
5. Any student *who has* to miss the mid-semester exam must personally contact me with a cogent documented excuse to re-take the exam **within** two class days. If you miss the final exam, contact me to take the exam immediately; otherwise, you receive no credit for the exam (00).
6. We will have a required roundtable discussion of Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*. This will be a student led roundtable discussion whereby you will interact with one another about the ethical issues in this book, asking if the actions that took place at Auschwitz are morally wrong? How do we even evaluate such moral actions? Upon what basis?

"Principles without traits are impotent but traits without principles are blind." ~ William Frankena

G. **Ethical Essay Assignment:**

1. This project consists of developing a written assignment that will **compare and contrast two competing theories** introduced by the professor. Specifically, the instructor will provide the students with an ethical scenario that will allow for differing responses to flow from the use of each theory. **Essay is to be uploaded to D2L by 11:59pm on 14 November.**

2. Student Directions:

Toward the latter half of the semester you will have been already introduced to a number of different ethical theories. As a result, it will be time to demonstrate your critical engagement with these theories through a written document. You will be given directions of an ethical scenario that I will devise, and you will need to read this scenario in order to complete the assignment.

3. Overall, the assignment will be a four to five page essay that is stylistically clean, displays correct internal citation of information, and include a works cited page.

4. In terms of purpose, your essay will accomplish the following:

- a. After reading the scenario, you are to provide a critical discussion in which you identify and explain each of the ethical theories you have been assigned to apply to this scenario, recognize how each of these theories would require you to act in this context, and what the result would be from such actions. (This will tie to the Written Communication and Critical Thinking rubrics)
- b. Then, you are to decide FIRST which of the two theories you find to be more personally reasonable (thus highlighting such issues as ethical self-awareness) and SECOND which of the theories do you find more inter-culturally reasonable (thus highlighting cultural self-awareness as it may or may not be tied to civic responsibility). (This will tie to the Written Communication, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility rubrics).
- c. Finally, as the conclusion to the essay, you are required to provide a photograph that depicts someone acting in accordance with each of the specific ethical theories. Under each picture, you will provide a written paragraph in which you analyze the image and explain how the action in the photo is an embodiment of the theory. (This will tie to the Written Communication rubric and includes the visual element which has been integrated into the written communication submission)
- d. As you can see from the description, this assignment interconnects with the Core Curriculum Objectives and will be used as part of the core assessment process. Therefore, you need to make yourself familiar with and work towards accomplishing those goals found on the rubrics for Critical Thinking, Written Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility; these rubrics can be found at:

<http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/114.asp>. These rubrics will be used to assess your essay.

- e. *Ethical scenarios that are used as part of this instrument will be developed by individual instructors and thus no single scenario exists. In fact, scenarios may shift from semester to semester to help deter plagiarism.

H. **Ethical Themes Paper:** In this 5-7 page paper you will examine and explain the ethical issues Primo Levi experienced during his time in Auschwitz. Here you will study what those moral decisions were, how he and others faced them, and consider what ways they impact your own worldview. This paper is due on **28 October by 11:59pm**. Paper is to be uploaded to D2L.

Size font 12; cover sheet; works cited; one inch margins. Double space.

"People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof but on the basis of what they find attractive." ~ Blaise Pascal

I. **Video Analysis Paper:**

In this 5 to 7 page paper (excluding cover sheet and bibliography-if needed) you will have of one of three video debates to watch and critique (in your own words):

- The first debate is between noted theist William Lane Craig vs. famed atheist Paul Kurtz: *Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?* This debate took place at Franklin & Marshall College. This debate is 1:39 long. This paper is to be uploaded to D2L by **28 November** by midnight. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sr_RzS-579o&t=13s.
- The second debate is Oxford scholar and theist John Lennox vs. attorney and professor Michael Shermer: "The Nature of Evil and Suffering at Pepperdine University" (November 2013). The debate is 1:32 long. The Paper is to be uploaded by D2L by **28 November** by midnight. <https://youtu.be/A3TAiZRKr50>
- The third debate is, "Is There Meaning in Evil and Suffering." at Faith and Science Lecture Forum that took place in Atlanta, Georgia. After Dr. Ravi Zacharias, a theist, offers a presentation affirming meaning, God, and evil, it follows with a panel response by a Hindu philosopher, an atheist physicist, and a theist. https://youtu.be/O0_phFDPPx8. This debate is 2.44 hours long and is to be uploaded to D2L by **28 November** by 11:59pm.
- Choose one of these three debates to critique; no need to critique more than one debate.
- Do not plagiarize or zero will result in analysis paper.

VII. GENERAL RULES:

- A. No use of cell-phones, text-messaging, games, I-Pods (or equivalent), social utilities, or internet in class. **No use** of any technological device (unless ADA) that may be a distraction to the learning process. Laptops used exclusively for class-notes are acceptable. Please silence cell-phones before class. **If you use the computer for other purposes than taking notes, then you will be asked to leave class. No texting in class (only at breaks).**
- B. No smoking or use of tobacco will be permitted in the classroom.
- C. All university rules governing academic dishonesty will apply.
- D. Lectures may not be taped, recorded, or video transcribed.
- E. No reading of newspapers, magazine, kindle books, and other materials for other classes.
- F. Respect your classmates and professor.
- G. If you have to step out to the restroom be sure to do so quietly.
- H. Do not bring attention to yourself.
 - 1. Attendance is expected. *In fact, more than one absent, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of "F" for this course.*
 - 2. I will be taking attendance at beginning of class. It is imperative that you be present and on-time.
 - 3. If you are late to class you must inform me at end of class or you will be counted as absent.
 - 4. If you are more than fifteen minutes late to my class, then you will be counted as absent.
 - 5. If you are gone more than 15 minutes from class, then you will be counted as absent.
 - 6. For every three times you are tardy to class (under 15 minutes), your excessive tardiness will be counted as one absence.
 - 7. Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This

prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate / inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

VIII. HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE:

- A. Carefully read assigned work. Proactively bombard your assigned readings with the following questions: why, where, what, when, who, and so what?
- B. Consider making an outline of the major units of thought in your readings. As you formulate your outline from the reading, ask yourself the following question: “*What do I see?*” The more observations you make, the better your interpretation of the author’s position or claim may be. Afterwards ask, “*What does it mean?*”
- C. After you outline the author’s position/claim go back and see what arguments are being provided to support that position or claim. Keep asking yourself, “*What is the issue?*” Then consider what objections can be raised against that issue, position, or claim. Lastly, what replies can be given to defend the position or claim?
- D. You should consult with me as often as possible to make sure you are understanding the material. Do not wait until the day before a test to begin studying. This is not the kind of course for which you can cram and expect to do well. Take advantage of the office hours.
- E. Consider forming study groups to prepare for quizzes and exams.
- F. Those who sit front and central statistically do better on their exams.
- G. Try to read when you are at your best (e.g., if you are a “morning person”, then make a way to study philosophy in the morning and not late at night).
- H. Make sure you are able to contact another student for lecture material in case you happen to miss a class (es).
- I. Eight Strategies for First-Rate Studying:
 - Read Thoughtfully
 - Read Repeatedly
 - Read Patiently
 - Read Selectively
 - Read Imaginatively
 - Read Purposefully
 - Read Acquisitively

Read Telescopically

If you want to improve your reading comprehension skills I would encourage you to purchase Mortimer J. Adler's informative work, *How to Read a Book*.

- J. 10 maxims I encourage you to inculcate into your life in order to achieve academic success:
1. Be focused! Your energy, time, and discipline need to be bent on becoming the very best. Focus on what really counts. Do not allow yourself to become diverted by the trivial and unimportant.
 2. Be holistic! Pro-actively make decisions and pursue interests in your daily life that will assist you in obtaining success. Your resources must always be redirected to your goal.
 3. Be undivided! Do not separate one are of your life from another. Pursuing opposing interests may marginalize your success because it divides up your energy, time, resources, and attention.
 4. Be determined! Academic progress is rough, ever so time-consuming, and ever so demanding. Meet every demand with a determination for excellence. Learn from your mistakes. Pick yourself up when you fail and press on!
 5. Be resilient! Do not give up. You will perhaps fail some time or another during your program. You may even become depress from the critical feedback you receive from your professors and peers. When those times come, and they do for most if not all, you must pick yourself up again-for accomplishing the goal is worth facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles.
 6. Be sacrificial! Purposefully let go of those things that will hinder your success. Willfully discard every hindrance and degenerative influence that will keep you from achieving your goal with a passion for excellence. Routinely examine your life and see what is encouraging or discouraging you from reaching excellence.
 7. Be healthy! Realize, as Aristotle states, that one area of your life impacts all other areas, whether intellectual, physical, or moral. Take very tender care of your mind, soul, and body. You need to strive to be holistically healthy-for if you are not mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy, then you may easily become fatigued, develop inner angst, regret, disappointment, and waiver in the completion of your goals. Remember, a good night sleep is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

8. Be supported! Cultivate a network of people who will exhort you to succeed! Develop relationships with peers who are also bent on achieving success.
9. Be excellent! Successful students realize the importance of cultivating a disposition, i.e., an inner character, which desires intellectual and moral excellence. Seek to desire excellence. Aristotle encourages us to do deeds of excellence until excellence becomes habitual in our personhood.
10. Be balanced! Learn how to balance “having fun” with “hard work.” Don’t ignore those opportunities to relax or play hard. In fact, pursue them! But do not allow those opportunities to displace your study opportunities. Remember, learning is pleasurable!

One of the dangers for those who do achieve success is the problem of malnourishment. Successful people may reach their long-term goals, but so many of them starve themselves in the process. Do not so focus on your goals that you miss out on dynamic opportunities that can nourish your person, inform your circumstance, grow your character, and enlarge your world. In other words, do not so focus on the future that you neglect the blessings that are right in front of you. Go forth and seize each and every day with a passion for excellence!

IX. CLASS SCHEDULE, TOPICS, & ASSIGNED READING:

Depending upon class context, I may alter our readings and topics. Notwithstanding, follow this outline unless otherwise directed by professor. Sometimes I may ask you to re-read certain chapters or portions from required readings or articles.

“When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.”
~Friedrich Nietzsche

| Class meeting | Topic | I will be introducing you to some important ideas from the following books and authors: | Reading Assignment |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| 27 August | Introduction to Course: What is a worldview? What is Philosophy? Development of Critical Thinking Skills; How to study ethics | <i>Introduction to Deontological Ethics; Virtue Ethics; Consequential Ethics</i> | Each reading is due by beginning of class time. Pojman, chapter 1 |
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| 3 September | Virtue Ethics: Socrates Plato | <i>Plato's Meno</i> <i>Plato's Republic</i> | Pojman, chapter 2 |
| 10 September | Aristotle's Virtue Ethics Contemporary Virtue Ethics Critique: Advantages & Disadvantages | <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> <i>G.E.M. Anscombe</i> | Pojman, chapter 8. |
| 17 September | Deontological Ethics: Natural Law Kantian Ethics Intuitionism | St. Thomas Aquinas Immanuel Kant Sir David Ross, <i>The Right and the Good</i> | Pojman, chapters 4, 7 |
| 24 September | Ethics of Agapism Stoicism Epicureanism Hume's Ethics | <i>An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals</i> | Review Pojman, chapters 1, 2, 4, 7 & 8. |
| 1 October | Mid-Term Exam: | <i>Be on time!</i> <i>Bring Scantron # 2 pencil</i> | Review chapters 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8 for mid-term exam. |
| 8 October | Ethical Objectivism: Introduction to Ayn Rand | <i>Moral Objectivism</i> | Read Pojman, chapter 3. |
| 15 October | Consequential Ethics: Egoism Utilitarianism: Jeremy Bentham; John Stuart Mill | <i>Jeremy Bentham;</i> <i>John Stuart Mill</i> | Read Pojman, chapter 6. |
| 22 October Last day to drop course is Wednesday, October 24. Primo Levi paper due on 28 October by 11:59pm | Relativism Nihilism Existentialism | Simone de Beauvoir's <i>Ethics of Ambiguity</i> | Re-read Pojman, chapters 3 & 6. |

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| 29 October | Round table Discussion over Primo Levi's <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i> | Be on time! | Bring Primo Levi book to class! |
| 5 November | Ontological Foundations for Ethics American Pragmatism Emotivism | C. S. Lewis John Dewey Paul Kurtz William Lane Craig | Pojman, chapter 5. |
| 12 November Ethical essay paper is due 14 Nov to D2L by 11:59pm. | Ethics of Care vs. Ethics of Justice Ethics of R. M. Hare Addressing the Problem of Evil and Suffering | <i>Carol Gilligan</i> <i>R. M. Hare</i> | Read Pojman, chapter 9. |
| 26 November Video analysis paper due on 28 November by 11:59pm on D2L | Application of Ethics | Gandhi vs. Frank Castle | Re-read Pojman, Chapters, 3, 5, 6, & 9. |
| 3 December | Application of Ethics Aesthetics and Ethics | Review Notes | Be able to summarize major positions & personalities from chapters in Pojman. |
| 10 December | Final Cumulative Exam Be on time to class!!! No exceptions! | 4pm-6pm | Need Scantron 882 E and number 2 pencil only. |

X. OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS:

- A. Topics, Assignments, Tests, Reading Materials, and Office Hours are subject to change per professor's discretion.**

B. I'm here for you. It is best to contact me by e.mail shockleypr@sfasu.edu to make an office appointment.

C. Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic honesty in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. According to the SFA policy located at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp,

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another person in another in act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an internet source or another source and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Anyone who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism will receive an F for the course. Moreover, the student is required to meet with the instructor to discuss the incident, and a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student's permanent file. If you feel the instructor's determination of academic dishonesty is in error, there is an appeal process described in full at [www.http:/ www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp).

D. Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy:

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

E. Students with Disabilities:

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-

1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>.

EXTRA NOTES:

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.”
~ Dr. Seuss