



PHIL 126 - Contemporary American Ethics Course Outline

Approval Date: 04/08/2010

Effective Date: 08/13/2017

SECTION A

Unique ID Number CCC000156347

Discipline(s) Philosophy

Division Arts and Humanities

Subject Area Philosophy

Subject Code PHIL

Course Number 126

Course Title Contemporary American Ethics

TOP Code/SAM Code 1509.00 - Philosophy / E - Non-Occupational

Rationale for adding this course to the curriculum Textbook entry.

Units 3

Cross List N/A

Typical Course Weeks 18

Total Instructional Hours

Contact Hours

Lecture 54.00

Lab 0.00

Activity 0.00

Work Experience 0.00

Outside of Class Hours 108.00

Total Contact Hours 54

Total Student Hours 162

Open Entry/Open Exit No

Maximum Enrollment

Grading Option Letter Grade or P/NP

Distance Education Mode of Instruction

SECTION B

General Education Information:

SECTION C

Course Description

Repeatability May be repeated 0 times

Catalog Description The critical examination of personal beliefs related to contemporary American moral issues such as abortion, drugs, capital punishment, euthanasia, privacy, etc. Attention is given to weighing issues, making judgments and understanding diverse positions on any moral issue.

Schedule Description

SECTION D

Condition on Enrollment

1a. **Prerequisite(s):** *None*

1b. **Corequisite(s):** *None*

1c. **Recommended**

- ENGL 120 or higher

1d. **Limitation on Enrollment:** *None*

SECTION E

Course Outline Information

1. Student Learning Outcomes:

- Examine and evaluate major contemporary ethical issues.
- Critically analyze opposing views on ethical issues.

2. Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Define, identify and give examples of deductive and inductive reasoning; syllogisms; logical relatedness; analytic a priori and synthetic a posteriori propositions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the major ethical theories by defining each theory and identifying appropriate examples of each theory.
- List and identify the major contemporary moral issues in America.
- Develop his/her own judgments on each contemporary issue based on a critical-thinking approach by employing the various logical tools to ethical problems and evaluating their efficacy through comparing and contrasting each outcome.
- Identify and critique rationally each contemporary issue covered in class using the theoretical frameworks presented in class.
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3. Course Content

- Introduction to Critical Thinking: Deductive and inductive reasoning, syllogisms, logical relatedness, analytic a priori and synthetic a posterior propositions.
- Developing critical-thinking skills and applying the above-mentioned logical tools to various ethical issues that follow for critical analysis
- Setting Up a Moral System.
- SØREN KIERKEGAARD (1813-1855) "The Leap of Faith"
- KARL MARX (1818-1883) "Morality as Ideology"
- FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844-1900) "The Transvaluation of Values"
- G.E. MOORE (1873-1958) "The Indefinability of Good"
- A.J. AYER (1910-1989) and C.L. STEVENSON (1908-1979) "Ethics as Emotive Expression"
- JEAN-PAUL SARTRE (1905-1980) "Radical Freedom"

- J. JOHN RAWLS (1921-2002) "Ethics and Social Justice"
- K. PHILIPPA FOOT (b. 1920) "Moral Virtue and Human Interest"
- L. ANNETTE BAIER (b.1929) "Ethics as Trusting in Trust"
- M. J.L. MACKIE (1917-1981)" Inventive Right and Wrong"
- N. BERNARD WILLIAMS (1929-2003) "Ethical Skepticism"
- O. Applying the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks to contemporary moral issues as they arise in prominence in our social and political discourse during the particular semester the course is being taught. Examples include, but are not limited to the following issues:
 - a. The Taking of Human Life
 - b. Capital Punishment
 - c. Euthanasia
 - d. Abortion
 - e. Lying, Cheating, Breaking Promises and Stealing
 - f. Human Sexuality
 - g. Bioethics
 - h. Business Ethics
 - i. Environmental Ethics
 - j. Stem Cell Research
 - k. Internet Fraud
 - l. Defamation and Personal Attacks
 - m. Madoff et.al.
 - n. AIG Scandals, etc.
 - o. Cloning
 - p. Health Care in the US compared to European nations
 - q. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan
 - r.

4. Methods of Instruction:

Lecture: Socratic method and class discussion.

Other: Lecture/discussion/films/podcasts. Lectures provide course content outlined from textbook and then image and video enhanced presentations augment or further clarify course content. Class and/or group discussion will follow for 10 - 15 minutes.

5. Methods of Evaluation: Describe the general types of evaluations for this course and provide at least two, specific examples.

Typical classroom assessment techniques

Exams/Tests -- Multiple choice and essay.

Home Work -- Read and master 1/3 of the text every 4 - 5 weeks.

Final Exam -- Combination multiple choice and essay.

Additional assessment information:

- 3 Midterms (Objective and/or Essay)

SAMPLE OBJECTIVE TEST QUESTIONS: 1.) Which philosopher speaks of the unconscionable conduct of those of "Christiandom"? 2.) Who wrote "Thus Spoke Zarathustra"?

SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTIONS: 1.) Summarize John Rawls' idea of "ethics and social justice" and relate his ideas to Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham". 2) What does G. E. Moore mean by "the indefinability of Good"? Do you agree or disagree, and why or why not?

- 1 Final Exam

SAMPLE FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS: 1.) Choose one value of the Christian Right at variance with Nietzsche's transvaluation of all values and discuss what Nietzsche's resolution would be for the Christian right. 2.) Discuss Annette Baier's idea of "trusting in trust" and apply this to a specific situation such as marriage, business ethics, friendship, parenting, etc.

Letter Grade or P/NP

6. Assignments: State the general types of assignments for this course under the following categories and provide at least two specific examples for each section.

A. Reading Assignments

- Read chapters of the entire textbook pacing chapters based on the length of the semester.
- Read and/or use all available media (TV, radio, internet, podcasts, etc.) to keep abreast of current moral issues being discussed publicly in America.

B. Writing Assignments

Write at least two papers, each one being no more than 15 pages, on (1) a critique of one ethical theory and (2) an application of one theory to a contemporary moral issue.

C. Other Assignments

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7. Required Materials

A. EXAMPLES of typical college-level textbooks (for degree-applicable courses) or other print materials.

Book #1:

Author: Shafer-Landau, R
Title: The Fundamentals of Ethics
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Date of Publication: 2015
Edition: 3rd Edition

B. Other required materials/supplies.

- Access to TV, radio, internet and current periodicals (found in library).