

PHIL 1120 Social Ethics - Spring 2011

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Format: We will meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:30-10:20 in Main 301

Office Hours: Monday 1:30-2:30, Wednesday 12:30-1:30, or by appointment

Purpose of the Course:

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an introduction to social ethics – controversial ethical issues that we often read about in the papers or hear about from politicians. The course will focus on questions relating to abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, sexuality, censorship, drug use, social justice, and the environment.

These are issues that demand answers and lively discussion. However we will not proceed as popular discussions about such things often do. As philosophers we are more concerned with the *reasons* people give to support their views than we are with emotional sloganeering. As such, the focus of the course will be an evaluation of the arguments put forth by various sides of each issue in support of their view. By reading an anthology of articles from philosophers and judicial experts, we will have the opportunity to hear clear and reasoned debate about these pressing issues.

Our job will be to try to get clear on just what these philosophers have said, why they have made these claims, and whether or not they have good reasons for making these claims. Along the way, the basic philosophical skills of reasoning, argumentation, and evaluation will be developed. The hope of the instructor is that the student will not only gain an understanding of the issues, but will begin to develop a habit of thought whereby pressing social issues are treated with mental rigor rather than emotional chaos.

Required Texts:

- *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, 7th ed. Ed. Mappes & Zembaty (McGraw Hill 2006)
- *Course Packet* (available at the bookstore)

Required Work: (Final grades will be determined based on the following assignments)

* Note: Failure to submit any assignment will constitute a sufficient condition for failing the course. *

* Note: I reserve the right to lower a student grade by up to 1 letter grade for poor attendance and participation. *

- 2 Article Reviews (1/3 each): Students will submit two Article Reviews, one of which will be presented to the class. More details will be forthcoming in class and via my website.
- Final Paper: (1/3): This will be a short service learning paper. Students will be asked to do some service and then write a moral argument for the service done. See the course schedule for assignment distribution (via my website) and submission dates.

My Website and Online Correspondence:

For the sake of convenience, I will post some things on the internet (syllabus, assignment information, etc). Go to <http://web.mac.com/harrisonkleiner> to get to the main page. Click on “Harrison Kleiner’s USU Page”. Material specific to our course will be on the “Courses” page (link at top of page). I will have posted material in PDF format for you to download in the event that you need a copy of various course materials.

I will occasionally try to contact individuals or the whole class via email. Banner allows me to email right from the course roster. The email will go to whatever email address you have listed on Banner as your official email, so make sure that you check that account.

Some General Information for my students about my Policies:

1. Please feel free to ask any question about anything at any time – in class, my office, or by phone; that’s what philosophy is.
2. Expect to be challenged, to work, to find some of the course material “over your head” at first. If it isn’t, you can’t move up, only sideways.
3. Not a policy matter but of great importance for getting good grades: All studies show that the single most accurate predictor of grades is this: the more TV, the lower the grades; the less TV, the higher.
4. The most important good grade producer is scheduling, time management. Specifically, don’t cram, do work ahead of time. And work first, then play – you get in more of both that way.
5. Be sure to have read all assignments BEFORE the class during which we go over it, otherwise half of what goes on in class passes you by. I will assume everyone has done the reading on time. Also, bring your text to class and be ready to discuss it.
6. I assume you will attend class regularly. Habitual skippers obviously are handicapping themselves very seriously; they are like scientists who deliberately ignore their data.
7. Late work will be accepted only with a reasonable and documented excuse (of which I am the judge).
8. University regulations are enforced concerning any kind of dishonesty. If I suspect plagiarism on a paper, due to style or content, I will tell you so, and challenge you. If you admit it, the assignment receives a zero and that is all. But if there was no plagiarism, I will not be able to find it, so you should challenge me and if I do not find the evidence you get an A on the assignment. But if I do demonstrate plagiarism, you get not only a zero for the assignment but will fail the course and will be reported to the Dean’s Office. If you are not sure what “plagiarism” means, look it up in the dictionary and in the University Regulations.
9. No one has a “right” to a “good” grade. No one gets extra credit for “effort,” which is invisible.
10. If you have a disability or any circumstance that requires any sort of special consideration, please come and see me as soon as possible so you can be accommodated.
11. I do not correct all grammatical errors in your written work (I only have one life!). More seriously, many problems in philosophy are really problems in English communication. This is as often true of American students as of foreign students. If you cannot communicate it clearly, no one knows what you know. What to do about it? Read great books. Learn how to write by imitation.
12. Though not all grammatical errors will be corrected, I do have a guiding policy on these: Any page of your paper that has two or more errors in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. will result in a loss of one half of a letter grade. This effect will be cumulative. For example, two pages with two or more errors will result in a full letter grade penalty.
13. Do not be afraid to argue with me. I do not raise your grade for agreeing with me, or with my favorite philosophers, or lower it for disagreeing.
14. Logistical and educational point: Email has made for considerably easier communication between students and teachers. However, the medium can be abused. I prefer that you raise questions in class or come to my office hours when you have questions. It is beneficial for you too – the human contact allows for a more intimate and natural mode of discourse, and it is my belief that students learn more from dialogue than from monologue (which is the necessary form of email).

PHIL 1120 Social Ethics – Spring 2011 Schedule
*** Readings from *Social Ethics* unless otherwise noted ***

Wk 1

M Jan 10: Introduction to course
 W Jan 12: Utilitarianism, *Course Packet* p2-30

Sign up for Article Reviews
 F Jan 14: Utilitarianism, *Course Packet* p2-30
Final Day to sign up for Article Reviews

Wk 2

M Jan 17: MLK Day - No Class
 W Jan 19: Kant & Deontology, *Course Packet* p31-41
 F Jan 21: Kant & Deontology, *Course Packet* p31-41

Wk 3

M Jan 24: Abortion, p1-21
 W Jan 26: Abortion, p21-44
 F Jan 28: Abortion, p44-56

Wk 4

M Jan 31: Euthanasia, p58-74
 W Feb 2: Euthanasia, p74-87
 F Feb 4: Euthanasia, p87-102

Wk 5

M Feb 7: Death Penalty, p104-125
 W Feb 9: Death Penalty, p125-138
 F Feb 11: Death Penalty, p138-153

Wk 6

M Feb 14: Sex and Marriage, p155-183
 W Feb 16: Sex and Marriage, p183-201 + *CP* p42-46
 F Feb 18: Sex and Marriage, p202-215

Wk 7

M Feb 21: Presidents Day - No Class
 T Feb 22: Contraception, *Course Packet* p47-67
 W Feb 23: Pornography, ..., Censorship, p217-227
 F Feb 25: Pornography, ..., Censorship, p227-248

Wk 8

M Feb 28: Pornography, ..., Censorship, p248-256
 W March 2: Pornography, ..., Censorship, p256-270
 R March 4: Drug Control and Addiction, p272-289 +
 p308-314

March 7-11: Spring Break - No Class

Wk 9

M March 14: Drug Control ..., p289-295
 W March 16: Drug Control and Addiction, p296-308
 F March 18: Just War, *Course Packet* p68-82

Wk 10

M March 21: Terrorism, ..., Civil Liberties, p316-333
 W March 23: Terrorism, ..., ..., p333-342, 357-369
 F March 25: Terrorism, ..., Civil Liberties p342-357
Final Paper Topic Distributed (on website)

Wk 11

M March 28: Social and Economic Justice, p371-391
 W March 30: On Human Work, *Course Packet*
 p83-105
 F April 1: On Human Work, *Course Packet* p105-121

Wk 12

M April 4: Social and Economic Justice, p392-428
 W April 6: World Hunger and Poverty, p430-442
 F April 8: World Hunger and Poverty, p443-456

Wk 13

M April 11: World Hunger and Poverty, p456-476
 W April 13: Animals, p478-492
 F April 15: Animals, p492-503

Wk 14

M April 18: Animals, p504-519
 W April 20: Environment, p521-525, 531-537
 F April 22: Environment, p526-531, 537-546

Wk 15

M April 25: Environment, p546-574
 W April 27: Wrapping up
 F April 29: Wrapping up

Finals Week – *Final Paper will be due*
Tuesday, May 3 at 10:00am.