Phil 3580: Ethics and Economics

Professor Brittany Gentry
Office Hours: 1:30-2:30 MWF, and by appointment on zoom
Office: Old Main 002 A
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Course Description: How does economics fit into the moral life? How do we answer questions about poverty, jobs, freedom, government, policy, opportunity, morality, hatred, love and human nature? Is economics responsible at some level for some the problems we face in areas such as poverty or government? Can economics be ethical or is it an essentially amoral subject, the way we might think mathematics is amoral? We will be asking these and many more questions as we consider economic theory and the ethical issues that relate to it. We will begin with classic texts from Adam Smith and Karl Marx and move into more contemporary readings. This course is discussion based so come prepared to talk about both the reading assignments and the ideas that you are interested in discussing.

Course Learning Objectives:
1) Develop an understanding of various arguments and views read in this course
2) Develop and practice independent, critical thinking and reading skills
3) Develop philosophical writing, arguing, and articulation skills

Assignments:
You will be graded on four components:
1) Participation (10 points per day): Class will begin with student’s interpretations on the assigned material and so you should arrive prepared to share your thoughts. Many class periods will also include five to ten minutes of small group work where each group will be assigned a specific portion of the reading material to re-examine more carefully and present to the whole class. Participation includes engaging in small groups, asking questions, listening attentively to everyone (including fellow students), offering thoughts, and bringing a hardcopy of daily readings. I will keep track of participation daily.
   Grading for Participation:
   F—excessive absences, unprepared for class, no reading material, not paying attention, and distracting behavior such as whispering or sleeping in class
   D—less of “F” behaviors, and rarely offering comments or asking questions
   C—in class, paying attention, prepared, reading material in hand, and offering comments now and then (e.g. once a week)
   B—in class, paying attention, prepared, reading material in hand, and commenting or asking questions 1-2 times per class period in the large group or in small groups
   A—in class paying attention, prepared, reading material in hand, and commenting or asking questions 2-3 times per class period, in the large group or in small groups
2) Reading Quizzes: 24 quizzes total. Quizzes are announced. Each will cover the assigned material for the day and be worth 10 points. Students are responsible for being on time for quizzes (tardiness may result in missing a quiz and incurring a grade of 0 on that quiz). Makeup quizzes are not allowed, except in special circumstances. I will drop the three lowest quizzes. Open notes (NOT OPEN BOOK);
3) Short Paper, 4-5 pages, 150 points
4) Long Paper, 8-10 pages, 250 points

Grade Distribution (1000 point total):
~24% Quizzes: 240 points
~15% Short paper: 150 points
~25% Long paper: 250 points
~36% Participation: 360 points
### Policies:

1. Using electronics (such as phones, computers, or pads) is not permitted in class, except by special permission (persons with documented disabilities please be sure to see me for an exception).
2. Cheating—DON’T. First time offense earns zero on assignment and no more than C in the course; second offense earns an F for the entire course.
3. Hard copies of the day’s reading assignment must be brought to class—this requires printing articles provided electronically and counts as part of your participation grade.
4. Attendance is expected, missing more than three classes results in a 5 point deduction per additional classes missed.
5. No make-up quizzes (except in rare cases)—lowest three quiz scores dropped (this includes missed quizzes).
6. Papers should be double spaced, 12 point, New Times Roman font, with one-inch margins. Late papers receive a 2 point deduction per day late. Further explanation on the paper assignments in class.
7. Mistakes exist in this syllabus, so remember that this syllabus is more of a guideline—corrections as needed.
8. Academic accommodations follow USU’s policy stated below:

Diversity Statement: USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, 435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

### Required Texts:

- George Orwell—*Animal Farm* (ISBN: 9780451526342)

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Please note that all class policies are subject to Covid-19 related revisions and exceptions and accommodations.