DEPARTMENT Philosophy

EFFECTIVE SESSION Spring 2015

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check the items below which describe the purpose of this request.

☑ 1. New course with supporting documents
☐ 2. Add existing course offered at another campus
☐ 3. Expiration of a course
☐ 4. Change in course number
☐ 5. Change in course title
☐ 6. Change in course credit/type
☐ 7. Change in course attributes (department head signature only)
☐ 8. Change in instructional hours
☐ 9. Change in course description
☐ 10. Change in course requisites
☐ 11. Change in semesters offered (department head signature only)
☐ 12. Transfer from one department to another

PROPOSED:

Subject Abbreviation PHIL
Course Number 21100
Long Title Contemporary Moral Problems
Short Title Contemporary Moral Problems

EXISTING:

Subject Abbreviation
Course Number

TERMS OFFERED
Check All That Apply:
☐ Fall ☑ Spring ☑ Summer

CAMPUS(ES) INVOLVED
☐ Calumet
☐ Cont Ed
☐ FT Wayne
☐ Tech Statewide
☐ Indianapolis

Abbreviated title will be entered by the Office of the Registrar if omitted. (20 characters only)

CREDIT TYPE
1. Fixed Credit Cr. Hrs.
☐ 2. Variable Credit Range: Minimum Cr. Hrs. (Check One) To Or
☐ Maximum Cr. Hrs.
☐ 3. Equivalent Credit: Yes ☐ No ☑

1. Pass/Not Pass Only
☐ 2. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Only
☐ 3. Repeatable
☐ Maximum Repeatable Credit:
☐ 4. Credit by Examination
☐ 5. Fees:
☐ Fess:
☐ Coop:
☐ Lab:
☐ Rate Request
☐ Include comment to explain fee

COURSE ATTRIBUTES: Check All That Apply
☐ 6. Registration Approval Type
☐ Instructor
☐ Department

Schedule Type
Lecture
Recitation
Presentation
Laboratory
Lab Prep
Studio
Distance
Clinic
Experiential
Research
Ind. Study
Pract/Observer

Minutes Per Mg
75
2
15
100

Cross-Listed Courses

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEMS

Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne
Spring Semester 2015
Syllabus for Philosophy 27700

Jeff Strayer

Office: LA 07A
Office hours: TTH 3:00-4:00 PM, and by appointment
Voice mail 481-6301; Philosophy office 481-6366
E-mail strayerj@ipfw.edu
Computer Help Desk 481-6030 Kettler 206
Teaching and Technical Assistant:

Students are encouraged to visit the Blackboard site for this class frequently for information that pertains to the class, and to check the site for any email that pertains to the class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The principal purpose of this course is to acquaint the student with some primary ethical problems that many people in the world have to face. How to deal philosophically with specific issues that may confront one in life is called ‘practical ethics,’ or ‘applied ethics.’ The notion of practicality marks this dimension of ethics off as a subject from normative ethics, and means to emphasize the fact that the sorts of problem that this course will consider are real, and so are not simply theoretical imaginings that might be used to test the soundness of an ethical theory. However, the idea of application relates problems in ethics to theories in ethics, and underlines both the importance of ancient, modern, and contemporary ethical theory to certain ethical issues, and the use of reason in the consideration of particular moral matters. To that end, we will begin with looking at some main kinds of ethical view and theory, including some that are largely universally rejected, and others that are more commonly thought to be viable, if not the final word in this part of philosophy. In addition to looking briefly at the relevance of reason and argument to ethics, we will consider the possible importance of feeling to moral considerations. As we begin to look at particular problems in ethics, the student will be encouraged to think of them in relation to prevalent and rejected moral views, both to grasp how thinkers in a particular tradition would be likely to analyze the problem, and to help the student to formulate a defensible view of the matter being considered.

The brief look at kinds ethical theory, and the considerably more substantial consideration of specific ethical issues, and how divergent views pertaining to them are formulated, should enable the student to appreciate the level of complexity and difficulty of the topics with which this branch of ethics deals. These things together should assist the student in seeing how to begin to formulate defensible solutions of the sorts of problem that it is the purpose of practical ethics to attempt to solve.

The general goal of philosophy is the pursuit of truth through a disinterested study of reality. This dedication to the pursuit of truth applies to the various branches of philosophy,
including practical ethics. Ethical investigations are conducted through the use of reason, and the results of reason are communicated to others in written and spoken language. By using reason to analyze real ethical dilemmas, and to see its relevance to common moral assumptions, to more refined ethical theory, and to the morally good life, the reflective moral mind is both challenged and enlightened. And as moral reality is investigated, the world of the intellect is enlarged. This is part of the value of philosophy.

The study of problems in practical ethics, and the relation of moral theory to them, is additionally valuable in making the student doubtful of easy or superficial answers to difficult moral questions. In recognizing the difficulty of different problems in practical ethics, and how different thinkers have attempted to deal with these problems, the student should learn the importance of a healthy skepticism about the nature and limits of moral 'knowledge' that emerges from a purely common perspective. This healthy skepticism is not only intellectually important, but it can be seen to have a moral dimension in itself. This is because, in making the student open to ways of thinking that may differ from individual and group opinion, it fosters a willingness to consider the possible merits of different points of view. Again, such consideration is undertaken in pursuit of the goal of all worthy intellectual investigation: the unbiased search for truth.

The foregoing course objectives, and the course requirements and method listed below, pertain to basic learning objectives as they form part of a general education. These include: being familiar with important modes of human thought that are the foundations of science, philosophy, art, and social behavior; being able to read, write, and speak with comprehension, clarity, and precision as these things pertain to human knowledge and its problems; being able to reason quantitatively (as means of gaining and creating knowledge and drawing reliable conclusions); being able to think critically and to solve problems; demonstrating the ability to evaluate ideas based upon disciplined reasoning; and understanding the traditions that have formed one's own and other cultures as one is prepared to view them critically and objectively.

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1.3. Read critically, summarize, apply, analyze, and synthesize information and concepts in written and visual texts as the basis for developing original ideas and claims.
1.5. Develop, assert and support a focused thesis with appropriate reasoning and adequate evidence.
5.6. Identify examples of how social, behavioral, or historical knowledge informs and can shape personal, ethical, civic, or global decisions and responsibilities.
6.1. Recognize and describe humanistic, historical, or artistic works or problems and patterns of the human experience.
6.2. Apply disciplinary methodologies, epistemologies, and traditions of the humanities and the arts, including the ability to distinguish primary and secondary sources.
6.3. Analyze and evaluate texts, objects, events, or ideas in their cultural, intellectual or historical contexts
6.4. Analyze the concepts and principles of various types of humanistic or artistic expression.
6.5. Create, interpret, or reinterpret artistic and/or humanistic works through performance or criticism.
6.6. Develop arguments about forms of human agency or expression grounded in rational analysis and in an understanding of and respect for spatial, temporal, and cultural contexts.
6.7. Analyze diverse narratives and evidence in order to explore the complexity of human experience across space and time.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. READINGS.

    All assigned readings should be read prior to viewing the recorded lecture. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized, and the student who neglects to read the material prior to viewing the lecture will be at a disadvantage in understanding the lecture. Just as viewing the lecture will facilitate understanding the assigned reading material, so will having read the material assigned prior to viewing the lecture better enable you to understand the lecture. The student should not view the lecture as a substitute for reading. The purpose of the lecture is to consider the main points of the reading and to raise relevant questions about it. You may be tested on assigned material that is not covered in class. It is recommended that you highlight the main points of a chapter or article as you read, and then reread the highlighted portions of the work again sometime after class.

    In addition, students are expected to have read and reflected on the assigned material prior to individual and group discussion. The importance of this to intelligent discussion of issues cannot be overemphasized. An important part of the student’s grade will depend on reading and studying the assigned material prior to the class period to which discussion is devoted.

2. TESTING DURING THE TERM.

    There will be three tests during the term that must be taken sometime between dates that are listed in the Order of Assigned Readings for Lectures and Tests section of the syllabus below. All testing is to be completed online in Blackboard.

    Each test will include multiple choice and true/false questions. It is anticipated that each test will be about 50 questions. However, a test may be a bit longer. The focus of the questions will be on the main points made by an author or authors in an assigned reading. Therefore, you should be looking for what stands out in the reading, what is most important to the argument that the author/s is making. Both the lectures and study guides are designed assist the student in comprehending these main points. Each test will consist of a combination of true/false and multiple choice questions followed by a few short-answer questions. The time limit for a 50-question test will be 60 minutes. A longer test will have a longer testing time.

    It is expected that students will take on-line exams as if they were in class, that is, without books, notes, or supplemental material of any kind. In any case, tests will be so written that a student who has not adequately prepared for a test will not be able to finish the test in time if he or she were to take the test using the book, notes, etc. Therefore students are encouraged to study hard, to think carefully about the assigned material, and to approach on-line testing as if it were in-class testing.

    Tests will be largely devoted to new material, but may consist of some previously tested material. Each test will cover material that is indicated on page 8 of this syllabus.

    Each test accounts for 15% of the grade for the course. Thus the three tests together account for 45% of the final grade.
3. DISCUSSION.

I envision two main kinds of class discussion – which may be subject to change – depending on experimentation, and what is found to be effective. The first kind of discussion I call 'individual – entire class discussion,' and the second kind is called 'selected group-to-class discussions.'

In the first kind of discussion – individual – entire class discussion – each person will be encouraged to participate in the discussion, and the student will be awarded points based on the quality of his or her discussion. Quality of discussion primarily means, in this class, showing an understanding of the points made by authors on different sides of an issue being discussed. It includes being able to argue for one side or another, and hence being able to give reasons for supporting one side or another. Quality of discussion so understood is not the same thing as voicing an unsupported opinion.

It is anticipated that there will be a number of individual discussions, and on more than more problem, but the total of individual discussions will represent 10% of the student's final grade.

In the second kind of discussion – group-to-class discussion – students will be separated into groups of four or five members each. The group will be expected to understand both sides of an issue being discussed, and then will be expected to present their views to the rest of the class. The class will then be encouraged to ask them questions, to raise points that may either reinforce the view being considered or suggest that there is a problem with the view held. In this discussion between group and class participants will be expected to have read the assigned material and to argue, and not simply state, their views. Each group will take turns addressing the class and engaging in discussion with them. The group may nominate a principal figure to talk for them, at least initially in outlining the group's view, but then each group member should be ready to participate in the discussion to follow the presentation to the class of the group's view.

Each group will be graded by each member of the class in addition to the instructor. It is also anticipated that there will be a number of group discussions on a number of topics, and the total of group discussions will represent 10% of the student's final grade.

The combined total of the different forms of discussion is 20% of the final grade.

4. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (SHORT ESSAYS).

There will be two required writing assignments – or short essays – for this class on topics that pertain to the readings, and that will focus on the ethics of a particular issue(s), and will include things that are relevant to the issue(s), such as particular ethical theories, to which the student is expected to respond. I may also give you the option of choosing to respond to one or another of two or more questions.

Each written assignment will be worth a maximum of 100 points and each essay will represent a maximum of 10% of the student's total grade. Since we are going to have two written assignments this portion of the course will be 20% of a student's total grade.

Assigned topics for analysis and discussion will be posted on Blackboard. Each written assignment must be submitted to the instructor topic as a Word, Word Perfect, PDF, or .RTF attachment in Blackboard, by due dates that will be announced in advance and posted
Graded submissions will be returned to the student through Blackboard. A returned essay may or may not include comments from me.

5. ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES.

Due dates for written assignments will be announced in class and will be posted on Blackboard. Students are responsible for knowing those dates in advance and should consult Blackboard regularly to know when essays are due. *Not knowing that an essay must be submitted by a certain date will not be tolerated as an excuse for not submitting the essay on time.* Thus a student who fails to submit an assignment out of ignorance of the terminating date for the assignment will be given a zero for that essay.

Typically, an essay will be due one week after the final date for a test pertaining to a section of the syllabus to which the assignment also pertains.

6. FINAL EXAM.

The final exam grade is 15% of the student’s grade. The final exam will not be comprehensive, but will pertain to the material covered after the material that pertains to test 4. *The final exam is to be taken online in Blackboard.* The final exam is anticipated to be 75-100 questions, and the time limit for the exam will be two hours.

7. TEST DATES.

Testing dates for each test will be announced in class. Typically, semester tests are on line for a week, but the final exam will be up for three to four days only. *A test must be taken within the time frame allotted, and so before the ending date for the test.*

Make-up tests will only be allowed in extreme cases, and at the discretion of the professor. *As testing dates are announced in advance, not knowing that a test is scheduled to be taken by a particular date will not be accepted as an excuse for missing the test.* The instructor reserves the right to refuse a make-up test, and reserves the right to penalize the late taking of tests, by reducing the number of points possible to receive on the test, even if all questions are answered correctly. As a general rule, the penalty will be 10% per day for each day beyond the day on which the test is scheduled. Any student missing a test must contact the instructor immediately, and must provide a justifiable reason for missing the test in order to be allowed to make it up. *There is no make-up test for the final exam!!!*

GRADE SUMMARY:

The course grade consists of 45% for three tests, 20% for required discussion, 20% for two required written assignments, and 15% for the final exam = 100% of the final grade for the course.

GRADING SCALE:
COURSE METHOD:

This is a lecture and discussion course. Even when discussions are not scheduled, and I am lecturing, students may ask a question, points can be made – to be followed up in future discussion – and topics, or an author’s view, may be commented on.

Please note that all cell phones must be turned off during class. No talking, NO TEXTING, or any disturbances of any kind during lecturing will be tolerated.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Text:


Additional Articles in Blackboard:

1. “The Good Divorce” – Constance Ahrons
2. “Is Divorce Immoral?” – Lawrence Houlgate
4. 2 “38 Who Saw Murder Didn’t Call Police” – Martin Gansberg
5. 3 “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” – Peter Singer
7. “Doctors Must Not Kill” – Edmund Pellegrino
8. “Voluntary Active Euthanasia” – Dan W. Brock
9. “Of Suicide” – David Hume
10. “Suicide and Duty” – Immanuel Kant
12. “Why We Must Leave Our Organs to Others” – D. Micah Hester
14. 5 “How to Argue About the Death Penalty” – Hugo Adam Bedan
15. 6 “A Moral Defense of Vegetarianism” – James Rachels
Handouts on website:

2. Pellegrino and Brock on Euthanasia.
3. Freedom Versus Determinism and the Problem of the Superior Species.
4. The Tasty Humans Problem.

The text for the course is available in the bookstore. The articles are on Blackboard. Handouts are on the Blackboard website and may be printed at any time. Both articles and handouts should be retained throughout the semester.

Study Guides:

Study guides for all of the exams are posted on the website. Although working through a study guide is not required, it is highly recommended. A student who has studied a completed study guide carefully will be well-prepared for the test to which the study guide pertains.

ORDER OF ASSIGNED READINGS FOR LECTURES AND TESTS

Classes are not scheduled on the following dates: Tuesday, March 12th and Thursday, March 14th. (Spring break.)

The course will be divided into the following ten sections:

1. Ethics and Theory.
2. Divorce.
4. Sex and Drugs.
5. World Hunger and Social Responsibility.
6. Race.
8. Eugenics, Cloning, and Organs.
9. The Death Penalty.
10. War, Terrorism, and Torture.
13. Ethics and Aesthetics/Art and Morality.
**All technical matters** pertaining to watching the videos, taking tests, downloading material, accessing materials on the Blackboard website for the class should be directed to my teaching and technical assistant??. If you cannot reach my TA then contact the Help Desk at IT Services. **DO NOT** contact me regarding technical matters! **

1. Ethics and Theory.

   A. Philosophy and Ethics.
   
      1. Philosophy and Ethics – Power Point.
      3. Some Basic Points about Arguments – Chapter Two, Rachels.
         a. Some Basic Points about Arguments – PowerPoint.

   B. Thinking and Feeling.
   
      1. Thinking, Feeling, and Impartiality – Power Point.

   C. On the Notions of Good and Evil – Power Point.

   **Test One.** Dates will be announced in class.

2. Divorce.

   A. “The Good Divorce” – Constance Ahrons (Blackboard article.)
      1. The Good Divorce – PowerPoint.

   B. “Is Divorce Immoral?” – Lawrence Houlgate (Blackboard article.)
      1. Is Divorce Immoral? – Power Point.

   **Discussion.** Individual – entire class discussion.


      1. A Defense of Abortion – PowerPoint.

   C. On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion and Postscript on Infanticide – Mary Anne Warren – Chapter 13, Rachels.

   D. “On the Sufferings of the World” – Arthur Schopenhauer

   **Discussion.** Selected group-to-class discussions.

   **Written Assignment One.** Due date will be announced in class. This will likely be due one week after the final testing date of test one.

4. Sex and Drugs.
A. Our Sexual Ethics – Bertrand Russell – Chapter 26, Rachels.
   1. Our Sexual Ethics – PowerPoint.


C. A Few Words about Gay Marriage – Andrew Sullivan – Chapter 28, Rachels.
   1. A Few Words about Gay Marriage – PowerPoint.

D. Alcohol and Rape – Nicholas Dixon – Chapter 30, Rachels.
   1. Alcohol and Rape – PowerPoint.

E. America’s Unjust Drug War – Michael Huemer – Chapter 25, Rachels.
   1. America’s Unjust Drug War – PowerPoint

Discussion.

Test Two. Dates will be announced in class.

5. World Hunger and Social Responsibility.

A. 9 "38 Who Saw Murder Didn’t Call Police" – Martin Gansberg (Blackboard article.)

B. The Singer Solution to World Poverty – Peter Singer – Chapter 17, Rachels.

C. 10 "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" – Peter Singer (Blackboard Article.)
   1. Famine, Affluence, and Morality – PowerPoint.


Discussion.

6. Race.

A. Letter from the Birmingham City Jail – Martin Luther King, Jr. – Chapter 31, Rachels.
   1. Letter from the Birmingham City Jail – PowerPoint.

   1. Is Racial Discrimination Arbitrary – PowerPoint.

C. In Defense of Quotas – James Rachels – Chapter 33, Rachels.
   1. In Defense of Quotas – PowerPoint.


A. Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide. (Handout.)
B. “Doctors Must Not Kill” – Edmund Pellegrino (Blackboard article.)
   1. Arguments Opposed to Euthanasia – PowerPoint.
D. “Voluntary Active Euthanasia” – Dan W. Brock (Blackboard article.)
E. The Morality of Euthanasia – James Rachels – Chapter 34, Rachels.
   1. Arguments in Favor of Euthanasia – PowerPoint.
F. Pellegrino and Brock on Euthanasia (Handout.)
G. “Of Suicide” – David Hume (Blackboard article.)
   1. Of Suicide – PowerPoint.
H. “ Suicide and Duty” – Immanuel Kant (Blackboard article.)
   1. Suicide and Duty – PowerPoint.

Discussion.

8. Eugenics, Cloning, and Organs.

   A. The New Eugenics – Matt Ridley – Chapter 36, Rachels.
      1. The New Eugenics – PowerPoint.
   B. “The Human Genome and Our View of Ourselves” – Svante Pääbo (Blackboard article.)
      1. The Human Genome and Our View of Ourselves – PowerPoint.
   C. Human Cloning and the Challenge of Regulation – John A. Robertson – Chapter 37, Rachels.
      1. Human Cloning and the Challenge of Regulation – PowerPoint.
   D. Selling Organs for Transplantation – Lewis Burrows – Chapter 38, Rachels.
      1. Selling Organs for Transplantation – PowerPoint.
   E. “Why We Must Leave Our Organs to Others” – D. Micah Hester (Blackboard article.)
      1. Why We Must Leave Our Organs to Others – PowerPoint.

Discussion.

Test Three. Dates will be announced in class.

9. The Death Penalty.

   A. “The Ultimate Punishment: A Defense” – Ernest van den Haag (Blackboard article.)
   C. “How to Argue About the Death Penalty” – Hugo Adam Bedau (Blackboard article.)
      1. Arguments against the Death Penalty – PowerPoint.

Discussion.

Written Assignment Two. Due date will be announced in class. This will likely be due one week after the final testing date of test four.

10. War, Terrorism, and Torture.
A. The Ethics of War and Peace – Douglas P. Lackey – Chapter 21, Rachels.
   1. The Ethics of War and Peace – PowerPoint.
B. Fifty Years after Hiroshima – John Rawls – Chapter 22, Rachels.
   1. Fifty Years after Hiroshima – PowerPoint.
   1. What Is Wrong with Terrorism – PowerPoint.

Discussion.


A. “A Moral Defense of Vegetarianism” – James Rachels (Blackboard article.)
B. Torturing Puppies and Eating Meat: It’s All in Good Taste – Alistair Norcross – Chapter 15, Rachels.
C. “Down on the Factory Farm” – Peter Singer (Blackboard article.)
   1. Down on the Factory Farm – PowerPoint.
   1. Do Animals Have Rights – PowerPoint.
E. “An Animal’s Place” – Michael Pollan (Blackboard article.)
   1. An Animal’s Place – PowerPoint.
F. “Free Will” – Thomas Nagel (Blackboard article.)
   1. Freedom versus Determinism – PowerPoint.
G. Freedom versus Determinism and the Problem of the Superior Species. (Handout.)
H. The Tasty Humans Problem. (Handout.)

Discussion.


A. “Deep Ecology” – Devall and Sessions (Blackboard article.)
B. “The Case against Nature” – Gregg Easterbrook (Blackboard article.)
   1. The Case against Nature – PowerPoint.

Discussion.

13. Ethics and Aesthetics/Art and Morality.

A. “The Ethical Criticism of Art” – Berys Gaut (Blackboard article.)
   1. The Ethical Criticism of Art – PowerPoint.
B. “Artistic Value and Opportunistic Moralism” – Eileen John (Blackboard article.)
1. Artistic Value and Opportunistic Morality – PowerPoint.

Discussion.

FINAL EXAM. Begins Monday, May 5 and ends Thursday, May 8.

_Students are encouraged to visit the Blackboard site for this class frequently for information that pertains to the class, and to check the site for any email that pertains to the class._

*** This syllabus may be amended by the instructor as he determines any change to it to be necessary. Students will be apprised of any changes that are made. ***

POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

_Academic honesty is expected of all students. Students are responsible for knowing how to maintain academic honesty and for abstaining from cheating, the appearance of cheating, and permitting or assisting in another’s cheating. Instructors are responsible for fostering the intellectual honesty and development of students, and for applying methods of teaching, examination, and assignments that discourage student dishonesty._

University policies that pertain to academic dishonesty can be found in the _Bulletin_ as “Academic Regulations, part 7.9 (Academic Honesty).” They are also available online at [http://www.ipfw.edu/academics/regulations/honesty.shtml](http://www.ipfw.edu/academics/regulations/honesty.shtml) and are supplemented by part II.A (Academic Misconduct) of the “Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct” as it can be found in the _Bulletin_ and in the _Student Handbook Planner_. The policies on academic dishonesty of the IPFW Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies compliment IPFW’s policies on academic dishonesty. The interested student may contact the department for a copy.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT:

If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. Contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities (Walb, room 113, telephone number 481-6658), as soon as possible to work out the details. Once the Director has provided you with a letter attesting to your needs for modification, bring the letter to me. For more information, please visit the web site for SSD at [http://www.ipfw.edu/ssp/](http://www.ipfw.edu/ssp/).

Eric Wagenfeld, MA, LLPC, NCC
Director, Services for Students With Disabilities & ADA Coordinator
113 Walb Student Union
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