

Contemporary Moral Problems

The University of Toledo

PHIL 2400-901/902 Spring 2013 Distance Learning Course

Jan 7th - May 3rd, 2013

CRN 11107/11108

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Course Description: PHIL 2400 CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEMS

[3 hours] A study of topics such as abortion, environmental responsibility, animal rights, famine relief, sexuality, and just war, in light of their sustainability. Attention is paid to moral arguments and the bases of moral decisions. Humanities core course. UT Distance Learning course.

The course is an introduction to some central issues within the realm of contemporary applied ethics. No particular previous coursework in ethics is required. The course is accessible to students coming from various academic backgrounds and its online format is very practical and pleasant. This course is being offered entirely online through the University of Toledo's Blackboard system, accessible through the MyUT Web Portal. Students encountering any technical difficulties should contact the IT Help Desk at 419-530-2400, or the department of Distance Learning at 419-530-8835.

The elements of your UT education — from the first year beginnings to the capstone experience — link together as related stages of learning. UT Core and major courses, opportunities for research, community engagement, and ongoing assessment mark the unique path you are taking and are touchstones along the way.

Students are provided with an opportunity to incorporate diverse knowledge in an experience that is integrative and theme-based, the scope of which will eventually encompass an entire learning career. This is designed to include at least one element that relates to and advances learning about a theme, in this case, Sustainability. We are experimenting with ways to make your education as positive and useful as it can be and to inspire all UT students to become lifelong learners. Through guided reflection and engagement, you will see these varied learning experiences in their connections to your own life and to broader social challenges. This DL course will incorporate the following learning objectives:

1. We will be relating Contemporary Moral Problems to key concepts, questions, and problems in the general field of Sustainability, broadly conceived.
2. We will work on guiding questions, such as: What is Sustainability? What is environmental ethics? How can we develop innovative, sustainable technologies and ways of life, so as to make our world a better place?
3. We will develop and use critical thinking, by introducing problem-solving skills used to address those and other urgent community problems, such as abortion, environmental responsibility, sexuality, just war, animal rights, and famine relief.
4. As we will discuss moral arguments and the bases of moral decisions, we will be engaging in interdisciplinary and integrative learning, relating practical questions of legislation and political policies to ethical theories and philosophical problems.
5. We will be thus promoting civic engagement through community projects, service learning, and social awareness, as students will be encouraged to reflect on the moral grounds of democratic citizenship and human solidarity.
6. Students will be encouraged to contribute one or more class assignments to the online student portfolio (Epsilen platform).

Required Text:

Lewis Vaughn, *Doing Ethics*. W.W. Norton & Co., 2009. 2nd Revised Edition. Paperback. ISBN 978-0-393-93428-1.

Further Reading / Reserved Materials (Library):

John Arthur, editor. *Morality and Moral Controversies*. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004.

Richard N. Burnor and Yvonne Raley. *Applied Ethical Reasoning: A Case Study Approach to Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Lawrence M. Hinman. *Contemporary Moral Issues*. Pearson Prentice-Hall, 1996.

Louis P. Pojman, Editor. *Philosophy: The quest for truth*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Grading Policy:

Grades are based on point accumulation throughout the sixteen weeks (from Jan. 7 thru May 3, 2013), divided into eight units (one chapter per unit). There are 6 Homeworks / Quizzes worth 10 points each and 1 final, multiple-choice exam worth 10 points.

Participation is worth 30 points (by sharing your views, insights, comments, and criticisms with classmates on the Discussion tab on-line, at least one post per unit).

Students can earn up to 100 points in this course.

Final grades for the course are based on the following scale:

93-100 pts. = A	77-79 pts. = C+
90-92 pts. = A-	73-76 pts. = C
87-89 pts. = B+	70-72 pts. = C-

83-86 pts. = B
80-82 pts. = B-

60-69 pts. = D
59 and below = F

Academic Honesty:

Neither plagiarism (i.e., presenting the written work of another as one's own) nor cheating (i.e., providing answers to exam questions or receiving exam answers from another) will be tolerated. Any academic dishonesty will be disciplined according to the guidelines in the University of Toledo student handbook.

Accessibility:

If you need special accommodations to follow this course, please notify me immediately. Any student needing accommodation based on the impact of a disability and students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Accessibility (ext. 4981 - <http://utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/accessibility>) to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Reading Assignments & Class Structure:

Chapters on the schedule [website] refer to the 2009/2010 edition of Vaughn's book. Prepare all the readings before the date given. The reading assignments are usually short and hopefully pleasant. Every week you'll have the opportunity to ask questions and do self-assessment by taking the quiz or writing a couple of paragraphs to address some of the Discussion Questions at the end of each chapter..

Unit 1: Jan. 7 – 19 : Introduction: CHAPTER 1 - Ethics and Examined Life

Unit 2: Jan. 19 - Feb. 3 : CHAPTER 2 - Subjectivism, Relativism, and Emotivism

Jan. 26 - Feb. 3 : HOMEWORK/QUIZ # 1

Unit 3: Feb. 3-17 : CHAPTER 8 - Abortion

Feb. 10-17 : HOMEWORK/QUIZ # 2

Unit 4: Feb. 17 - Mar. 3 : CHAPTER 12 - Sexual Morality and Marriage

Feb. 24 - Mar. 3 : HOMEWORK/QUIZ # 3 / Bonus Midterm 1 (optional)

Mar. 3 - 9 : SPRING BREAK

Unit 5: Mar. 10-24 : CHAPTER 14 - Environmental Ethics

Mar. 17-24 : HOMEWORK/QUIZ # 4

Unit 6: Mar. 24 – Apr. 7 : CHAPTER 15 - Rights of Animals

Mar. 31 - Apr. 7 : HOMEWORK/QUIZ # 5

Unit 7: Apr. 7-14 : CHAPTER 16 – Warfare

Unit 8: Apr. 14-21 : CHAPTER 18 - Global Economic Justice

Apr. 21-28 : HOMEWORK/QUIZ # 6 / Bonus Midterm 2 (optional)

Apr. 28-May 3 : PHIL 2400 FINAL EXAM (multiple-choice exam)