

Siena Heights University
Lansing Community College Campus

PHI 320: SOCIAL ETHICS

Fall Term -- 2009

Saturdays: 9:00 – 5:00

10/10/09; 10/31/09; 11/21/09; 12/19/09

Course Syllabus

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Course Description

This class will investigate a range of moral issues, including capital punishment, abortion, euthanasia, poverty and racism, terrorism and war, sexuality and marriage, pornography and drugs, and the environment. Along the way we will examine a variety of ethical theories. Our aims will be to understand better the complexities of the moral realm, to enable students to develop their own moral reasoning skills and to strengthen their own social ethics.

Required Textbooks:

James E. White (2009) Contemporary Moral Problems, (Ninth Edition), USA: Thompson Wadsworth., 2003, ISBN# 10: 0-495-55320-4

Anonymous, M.D., Unprotected, NY: Sentinel: The Penguin group, 2006, ISBN# 1-59523-025-4

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will examine a variety of moral theories
- 2) Students will become familiar with
 - the key perspectives involved in each of the several moral issues
 - the harmony and conflict between legislation and morality
 - the harmony and conflict between objective and subjective guilt & virtue
 - the harmony and conflict between personal and social values
- 3) Students will clarify their own personal and social ethics in relation to the classical moral theories and codes of ethics

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Course Requirements

- Attendance (30% of grade)
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- Review questions and reflection papers (38% of grade)
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- Research paper (24% of grade)
- 8 page paper on an ethical / moral issue of the student's choice.
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- Oral Presentation (8 % of grade)
A 15-minute oral presentation and defense of the research paper

Grading Scale

Percentage	Letter grade
97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
below 60	E

Academic Dishonesty Policy (See page 169 of catalog)

Disability Statement: If a student is in need of an accommodation based on the impact of your disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Students with Disabilities for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously registered with the Office for Students with Disabilities, I encourage you to do so. Just a reminder, requests for accommodations are not retroactive.

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Attendance Policy

Due to the format of four 8-hour classes, attendance is essential for all four days. A foreseen conflict with any class session prohibits registration for this course. Unforeseen emergencies require a complete make-up of the entire 8-hour session missed. Attendance and oral presentation involve a total of 38% of the grade for this course.

Course Schedule

October 10, 2009

Assignments:

Introductions
syllabus
moral theories and codes
moral issues for research paper

Affirmative Action, Poverty and Racism

Read Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality", Bjorn Lomborg, "The cost of global warming" and Alan Durning, "The environmental costs of consumption" in chapter 8 of

The environment

Contemporary Moral Problems.

discussion

Answer review questions (not the questions) for each article. and turn in at the 1st class.

October 31, 2009

Assignments:

Sexuality and Marriage

Read Jonathan Rauch, "Who needs marriage?" in chapter 5 of *Contemporary Moral Problems*. Answer review questions. Reflection paper (300 words) on chapter 1, 300 words on chapter 2 + 300 words on chapter 4 of Unprotected.

Abortion and Euthanasia

Read "Excerpts from Roe vs Wade (1973)" and John T. Noonan, "An almost absolute value" in chapter 2 of Contemporary Moral Problems.

Write answers to review

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questions (not the discussion questions) for both of these articles and turn in at the first class. Read James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia" and Bonnie Steinbock "The intentional termination of life" in chapter 3 of Contemporary Moral

Problems.
questions (not the
on these two articles
class.

Write answers to review
discussion questions)
and turn in at the first

Read Chapter 6 in Unprotected.
Write 300 words of reflection
on this chapter.

November 21, 2009

Assignments:

Drugs and Addiction

Read Thomas Satz, "The ethics of addiction" and USDEA "Speaking out against drug legalization" in chapter 6 of *Contemporary Moral Problems*. Answer review questions.
Reflection paper (300 words) on chapter 7 + 300 words on chapter 8 in Unprotected.

Capital Punishment

Read "Gregg vs Georgia" in chapter 4 of Contemporary Moral Problems; answer review questions.

War and Terrorism

Read Douglas Lackey, "Pacifism" and William O'Brien, "The content of just and limited war" Answer review questions for both articles in chapter 9 of Contemporary Moral Problems.

December 19, 2009

Assignments:

Oral Presentations of research papers

8-page research paper due at
beginning of class

15- minute oral presentations during class

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Pre-class assignment:

discussion

Read Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality", Bjorn Lomborg, "The cost of global warming" and Alan Durning, "The environmental costs of consumption" in chapter 8 of

Contemporary Moral Problems.

Answer review questions (not the questions) for each article.
and turn in at the 1st class.