



National Taiwan University of Science and Technology

2020 Summer Program

PHIL 130 Contemporary Moral Issues

Course Outline

Term: July 06-August 07,2020

Class Hours: 14:00-15:50 (Monday through Friday)

Course Code: PHIL 130

Instructor: Prof. Vladimir Pistalo

Home Institution: BECKER COLLEGE

Office Hours: TBA

Email: vpistalo@yahoo.com

Credit: 4

Class Hours: According to the regulations of Minister of Education, R.O.C, 18 class hours could be counted as 1 academic credit in all universities in Taiwan. This course will have 72 class hours, including 40 lecture hours, professor 10 office hours, 10-hour TA discussion sessions, 2-hour review sessions, 10-hour extra classes.

Course Information

This course provides philosophical and, partly, literary consideration of some of the major moral problems and controversies that divide contemporary global society. We should examine the most important classical ethic theories. We shall apply ethical theories to many contemporary moral issues (hence the name of the course). We will examine the following issues: (1) Abortion, (2) Euthanasia 3) Enduring ethical relativism and spins 4) Greed, economic Justice and Global Obligations 5) Capital punishment 6) Same sex marriage 7) Drugs and addiction 8) Moral



status of animals and cloning 8) Global warming and consumption 9) War and terrorism 10) Torture.

Before every readings students are expected to write a one page paper on a moral issue we discuss. After the reading they should write another one page paper following how their moral positions change (or harden), confronted with the competing moral arguments.. These papers provide students with the journal of the evolution of their moral beliefs and they will be a part of their grade.

Textbook:

James E White Contemporary Moral Problems 10th Edition, 2019

-Additional readings will be put on canvas or distributed in class.

Requirements and grading

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| - Class participation and presentations | 20% |
| - Six quizzes | 30% |
| - Mid – term exam | 20% |
| - Final exam | 30% |

My grading scale is: 90-100%=A, 80-89%=B, 70-79%=C, 60-69%=D; and below 60% = F.

I retain the right to introduce some necessary changes to this syllabus in the course of the semester. A student has to do all the assignments in order to complete this course.

Attendance

Because of the nature of the course, student attendance and participation are mandatory. Students are encouraged to take lecture-notes. Each student should be prepared to discuss the readings.

Using the cell phones are strictly prohibited in my classroom.

If you are experiencing difficulty with the course, do not wait until the end of the semester to seek help. I encourage you to come and see me during my office hours.



Classroom Policies and Learning Atmosphere:

1. Using of cell phones in class is prohibited.
2. Before coming to class, students must have enough sleep and rest. Take a cup of coffee/tea, or soda that has caffeine. Eat lightly. Some people get sleepy after eating a heavy meal. Eating during class is not allowed.
3. Email submission is NOT allowed.
4. Meaningful and constructive dialogue is encouraged in this class. This requires a degree of mutual respect, willingness to listen, and tolerance of opposing views. Respect for individual differences and alternative viewpoints will be maintained at all times.
5. All returned materials should be kept until the official final grade is given. Back up all written assignments to insure against loss.

Grading policies:

1. Academic integrity: Cheating will not be tolerated and I reserve the right to fail any student caught.
2. Make up examinations would not be granted without documented emergency.
3. Late papers would be marked down $\frac{1}{3}$ of the letter grade for each day late (thus a B that is two days late receives a C+)
4. I am strongly opposed to giving incompletes except in emergencies, such as serious illness.

I retain the right to change the order and content of some of the readings as the class go. For every class, each student will read a textbook, write a one page summary and prepare 2 questions and five points on the material. In addition to that, each student will write a one page paragraph about each of the texts. Students will present their comments about the readings in each class. Presentations will be a part of their grade.

Course Outcomes

1. Students should be able to explain in an essay the arguments for and against a specified position. For example, students should be able to write a three page take-home essay explaining the reasons for and against accepting the Pro-Choice side of an abortion debate.



2. Students should analyze philosophic concepts. For instance, students should be able give an analysis of concepts such as Justice, Personhood, or the Good. Analyses should include an adequate definition and considerations of potential counterexamples.
3. Students should accurately and informatively explain the topics discussed by the philosophers studied. For instance, students studying John Stuart Mill should be able to write a one-page essay explaining what he means and how he defends himself when he argues for a maximum amount of personal liberty in the academic environment.
4. Students should identify, distinguish, and explain the different schools of thought in Ethics (e.g., Divine Command Theory, Cultural Relativism, Ethical Egoism) and demonstrate understanding of how different theories generate competing solutions.
5. Students should understand how different schools of ethics are still relevant in the world in which they live. They should be able to identify the moral issues in the world in which they live.
6. Students should be able to discuss orally or write argumentative essays containing clear thesis claims and reasonable consideration of opposing views.
7. Students should critically reflect on moral problems and their own moral positions

List of topics:

Class 1

Introduction to Moral Theories I

Read: Ch, I: James Rachels, John Arthur, Saint Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, Mary Midgeley , p 1 -38

Class 2

Introduction to Moral Theories II

Read: ChI: John Stewart Mill, Immanuel Kant, Aristotle, John Rawls, Jean Grimshaw, problem cases, p 38 - 80

Quiz in class

Class 3



Abortion, part 1

Read: Ch II: Introduction, The US Supreme Court, Excerpts from Roe vs Wade(1973) , John T Noonan Jr, Judith Jarvis Thomson, p 82 - 113

Quiz in class

Class 4

Abortion, Part II

Read: Ch II: Mary Anne Warren, Sidney Callahan, Don Marquis, Problem Cases, p 113 - 147

Class 5

Euthanasia and the duty to die, part I

Read: Ch III: Introduction, James Rachels, Bonnie Steinbock, Philippa Foot, p 150-172

Quiz in class

Class 6

Euthanasia and the duty to die, part I

Read : Ch III: John Harris, John Hardwig, Problem Cases, p 172 - 192

Quiz in class

Class 7

Perspectives

Screening of Akira Kurosawa's movie Rashomon,

Discussion



Class 8

Money, a problem or a solution?

Read:

-Voltaire on London Stock exchange, Philosophical letters:

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7351337-go-into-the-london-stock-exchange-a-more-respectable>

-Karl Marx , Power of money, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844:

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/power.htm>

Various philosophers on money:

<https://bigthink.com/scotty-hendricks/10-philosophers-on-if-money-can-make-you-happy>

Ayn Rand The Meaning of Money

<https://courses.aynrand.org/works/the-meaning-of-money/>

Class 9

Capital Punishment I

Read : Ch IV: The Us Supreme Court, Gregg vs. Georgia (1976), Ernest van den Haag, p 195 – 218

Mid term Exam in Class

Class 10

Capital Punishment II

Read : Ch IV : Jeffrey H. Reiman, David Gelertner, Problem Cases p 218 - 236

Quiz in class

Class 11



Gay Rights and Same Sex Marriage I

Read: Ch V : Introduction, Martha C Nussbaum, Jeff Jordan, p 238 – 257

Quiz in class

Class 12

Gay Rights and Same Sex Marriage II

Read: Ch V : Jonathan Rauch, Maggie Gallagher, Problem Cases , p 257 - 275

Quiz in class

Class 13

Class 14

Drugs and addiction I

Read: Ch VI : Introduction, Thomas Szasz, US drug enforcement administration “Speaking out against drug legalization”, p 277 - 298

Class 15

Drugs and addiction II

Read: Ch VI : Introduction, Daniel Shapiro, Robert E Goodin, Problem Cases p 298 – 320

Class 16

Moral status of animals

Read: Ch VII: Introduction, Immanuel Kant, Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Mary Ann Warren, Problem cases, p 322 - 354



Class 17

Global warming and consumption

Read: Ch VIII: Introduction, Robert Hood, Born Lomborg, Alan Thein Durning, Peter Singer, Problem Cases, p 357 - 396

Class 18

War and terrorism

Read: Ch IX: Introduction, Douglas P. Lackey, Laurie Calhoun, Louise Richardson, Claudia Card, David Luban, Problem Cases, p 399 - 461

Class 19

Torture

Read: Ch X: Introduction, Henri Shue, David Luban, Heather Macdonald, Problem Cases, p 464 – 497.

Class 20

Final in Class