

Contemporary Moral Issues: Spring 2006

Philosophy 1400
Section 003 T/Th, 9:30-10:50
Section 004 T/Th, 12:30-1:50

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Office hrs: T/TH 8-9:30,
11-12:30, 2-3:00 PM

About this class:

This class will cover a multitude of contemporary social, moral and ethical issues. In order to do this in an intellectual, scholarly, and philosophical manner, I believe it is important to have at least a basic foundation, or working knowledge of major ethical systems. Therefore, we will begin this semester with a brief and introductory analysis of some of the more influential works in ethical theory. These works will include the writings of people like Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Bentham, Mill, Sartre, Snoop, Dre, Sneezy, Wheezy, Run, D, and MC.... still with me? Ok, good! Once we have a little bit of foundation or common ground from which to build, we will begin looking at contemporary and socially relevant issues, comparing and contrasting them with the classical ethical theories as well as our own way of thinking. All the while asking questions such as, "Is this really a relevant issue?" "Why do we debate this...still?" "Is this way of thinking based on anything solid?" "Do I think this way?" "Do *I* have a solid basis for thinking this way?" ...see where I'm going here? This class in general will have two major parts. The first part consists of the daily reading assignments, which are crucial. They are our foundation if you will. The second part consists of class discussions. This is the part where we openly and actively challenge and engage the text and one another in the aforementioned intellectual and scholarly manner. Lastly (yes I know this is technically part three) there is the small matter of grades. You will be graded on attendance, short quizzes, two exams (that is midterm and final) and four short writing assignments. (Stay tuned for more specific information...)

Text

The only required text for this course is, *Social And Personal Ethics* (5th edition) - William H. Shaw; Wadsworth 2005.

Disability Accommodations

The Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies complies with the *Americans with Disabilities Act* in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please register with the Office of Disability Accommodations so the necessary arrangements can be made.

Breakdown

- 10% Attendance
- 10% Quizzes
- 20% Midterm
- 20% Final
- 40% Writing assignments

Explanation

Attendance seems to be self-explanatory with one exception. Let me just say that I understand being late on occasion, but leaving early just hurts my feelings! (And your grade)

Quizzes will be given around once a week, more or less. They will be short, (3 or 4 questions) sweet and to the point unlike this syllabus. The questions will of course be based on the assigned reading for that class period, and they will be graded as pass/fail.

The exams will mostly consist of multiple choices, true/false, and possibly some short answer questions. Pretty standard stuff here and we can go into more detail as it becomes relevant. Quizzes may surprise you, but rest assured that I will never give an exam without first having at least one portion of the class dedicated to review.

There are four writing assignments in all. They should be topical in nature and relevant to the material we cover in class. You should pick two people or essays that we read for a given topic then analyze and evaluate their arguments in a compare/contrast, pro/con style. You can certainly color it with your opinion, but these are really designed to help me evaluate how well you understand and grasp the given arguments. If you want to make your feelings know, in class participation is the best opportunity! The first two papers can be turned in anytime before the midterm and should be about the material covered between now and then. The final two can be turned in anytime after the midterm, and should be relevant to anything we cover from the midterm to the final. They should be at least two full pages in length (one full page for each essay/argument) typed with standard spacing and font.