

PHIL 1400: Intro to Contemporary Moral Issues

University of North Texas
Spring 2009 (January 20- May 15)

PHIL 1400.005 MWF 1:00 PM TBA
PHIL 1400.005 MWF 2:00 PM TBA

Instructor: Sarah Conrad, Teaching Fellow
Office: ESSAT/ENV 372
Office Hours: M 3-4 PM, W 12-1 PM and by Appointment
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*To care for anyone else enough to make their problems one's own, is ever
the beginning of one's real ethical development. -Felix Adler*

Conventionality is not morality. -Charlotte Bronte

Never let your sense of morals get in the way of doing what's right.-Isaac Asimov

REQUIRED TEXTS

Contemporary Moral Issues: Diversity and Consensus (3rd Edition) by Lawrence M. Hinman
The Elements of Moral Philosophy (5th edition) by James Rachels
Various articles posted on Blackboard

CLASS CONTRACT/AGREEMENT

Many of the contemporary moral issues that we will read about and discuss can be uncomfortable and sensitive subjects. We must all do our part to respect one another, even when we do not agree. To assist in this goal, we will create a contract and agreement between all participants to guide us through the readings and discussions.

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Ethics (<http://www.unt.edu/csrr>): Acts of academic dishonesty are subject to discipline at UNT. Cheating, plagiarism, and furnishing false or misleading information are acts of academic dishonesty. The definitions of these terms are clearly described in the Undergraduate Catalog (www.unt.edu/catalog) by the Center for Students Rights and Responsibilities.

Authorized Class Absence (http://www.unt.edu/vpaa_fy0708_fhb/III-a.html): All travel by students off the campus for the purpose of participation in UNT sponsored activities must be authorized by the dean of the school or college of the sponsoring department. **Within three days** after the absence, students must obtain authorized absence cards from the dean of students for instructors.

Absence for Religious Holidays (http://www.unt.edu/vpaa_fy0708_fhb/III-a.html): A student absent due to the observance of a religious holiday may take examinations/complete assignments scheduled for the day(s) missed within a reasonable time after the absence. *Class participants should notify the instructor, via email, of planned absences for religious holidays by **Monday, February 2nd**.*

Disability Support Services (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>): If you anticipate the need for accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (University Union, 3rd Floor, Suite 321) in order to obtain the required official notification of your needs. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss approved accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate. For more information, contact ODA (940-565-4323).

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COURSE EXPECTATIONS and FORMAT

Absences: It is the responsibility of the class participant to contact other class members and/or the course instructor to receive any missed information in the case of an absence. Late submission of items due on the day of an absence will only be accepted if official documentation (doctor's note, approved school absence note, etc.) is presented to the instructor within three days of the absence.

Approach Paper (APs): Two 2-page papers will be required in the course. Each paper will argue an ethical response to a specific moral issue. APs must be typed, double spaced, with a 1" margin and 12-point Times Roman font. All papers must follow the MLA writing guidelines in citation and style, with the exception that students are encouraged to print papers in a front-to-back style to conserve paper. *See the blackboard folder "Assignment Instructions" for more information.*

Attendance and Participation Expectation: Class attendance is extremely important to the learning process; therefore, students will receive 5 grade points for class attendance and active participation. *Class participants must be present for the entire class period to receive the points.*

Debate: Each group will have the opportunity to more fully explore a specific contemporary moral issue in an in-class debate. Students will choose the topic to explore, but will be assigned a specific stance and moral approach from which to argue. *See the blackboard folder "Assignment Instructions" for more information.*

Electronic Equipment: Cell phone ringers must be turned off during class. Unless special permission is given, class participants must refrain from using any cell phone, MP3, computer and/or other personal handheld or laptop electronic equipment during class.

Email and Use of Blackboard: Class participants are expected to check their university email for updates and information on this course. Additionally, class participants are expected to check the blackboard component of this course on a regular basis. *Class participants will be held accountable for any information missed by not checking university email and the course blackboard site.*

Exams: There will be two exams in this course. The exams will consist of short answer questions and a short essay. The short answer questions will cover lecture, reading, and discussion material. For the essays, you will construct an argument that defends a thesis regarding one of the topics we have discussed.

Late Work: Completing work by specific deadlines is a part of the college and professional experience. All coursework is due by the beginning of the specified class period, unless otherwise indicated. *Late work will not be accepted or graded.*

Reading: Read all assignments carefully, thoroughly, and thoughtfully. All readings must be complete by the date listed in the syllabus. Always bring the assigned readings to class.

Reading Topic Paragraphs (RTPs): For each regular class meeting there will be a reading assignment from one of the texts. After reading the assigned selection, provide a clear and concise response that is at least 5 sentences, is no longer than one page, and answers the following questions. **(1) What is the *thesis* (the main point or conclusion) that the author is defending in the article? (2) What is the *argument* (the supporting reasons and evidence) for that thesis?** Your RTPs should be typed and include your name, the date, author's name, and the title of article. Late or emailed RTPs will not be accepted unless there is a documented, excused absence.

Reading Topic Sentences (RTSs): For class meetings when there are multiple smaller readings assigned, students will provide a one sentence summary of the main point, for each reading, instead of the full RTP assignment. See the course calendar for specific dates.

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Team Work: Class participants will be assigned to a team for the semester for discussion, in-class projects, and the debates.

Unexpected Instructor Absence: If the course instructor should miss class due to an unexpected emergency, class participants should expect to complete a short assignment in blackboard to earn class attendance and participation points for the missed class.

Take Home Quiz: On the second day of class participants must turn in a take home quiz on the course syllabus and blackboard site.

GRADING: Total Points Available in Course: 1000

A= 900-1000 pts **B=**800-899 pts **C=**700-799 pts **D=**600-699 pts **F=**599 points & below

Attendance and Participation: 200 points for 40 days (5 points each) of attendance

- Class participants will be given 43 opportunities to attend class, 40 of which will be rewarded with attendance points. *Class participants who are present for all 43 class days will receive the additional 15 points.*

Debate Presentation: 100 points for 1 group presentation

Approach Papers: 200 points, 100 points for each AP

RTPs: 300 points for 30 RTPs, 10 points each.

- Class participants will be given 34 opportunities to submit RTPs, 30 of which will be rewarded with points. *Class participants who submit all 34 RTPs will receive the additional 40 points.*

RTS: 25 points for 5 RTSs, 5 points each.

Take Home Quiz: 25

Exam over approaches: 50

Final Exam: 100 points