

MORAVIAN COLLEGE
COURSE SYLLABUS
Fall 2010

PHI 293 Moral Argument Analysis and Debate

Instructor: Dr. Bernie J. Cantens
Classroom: Zinzendorf 103

Fall 2010
MW 8:55- 10:05

Instructor: Dr. Bernie Cantens
Office: Zinzendorf 203
Phone/E-Mail: (610) 861-1589/ bcantens@moravian.edu
Web Page: <http://berniephilosophy.com/>
Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00 PM
THURS. 9:00 AM -12:00 PM

Text

Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues. Editor, Barbara MacKinnon. Wadsworth 2009.

Course description:

A study of the fundamental elements of ethical theory and their application to contemporary issues, through argumentative analysis and debate.

Course Outcomes:

Students who complete this course should be able to do the following:

1. Identify and explain the objective and goal of ethics and moral philosophy;
2. Describe ethical relativism and its consequences.
3. Recognize the major role that culture plays in the study of ethics.
4. Identify and explain the differences among norms, laws, and ethics.
5. Recognize and explain the nature of morality and the various ethical theories (e.g. ethical egoism, utilitarianism, rule-utilitarianism, and deontology).
6. Perform written and oral analysis of contemporary issues.
7. Discern and distinguish morally relevant and irrelevant issues.
8. Develop well-thought-out ethical positions, while identifying the various perspectives of a moral question.
9. Construct strong, cogent arguments in defense of a moral position based on strong ethical and moral reasoning.

Learning Methods: Lectures, presentations, discussion, written case analysis, oral case analysis, and debate

Learning Strategies

After spending a substantial portion of the semester studying ethical theories, students will be given complex ethical cases to analyze. First, students will perform an analysis of the case, summarizing the facts of the case and identifying all the relevant moral issues. Second, students will take an ethical position on an ethical issue and defend it. Third,

students will construct ethical arguments, using the ethical theories learned in class, to defend their ethical position. Part of the process of defending their position will entail considering objections to their arguments and position, and providing replies to these objections. This last step will force students to consider the various alternative perspectives, making them aware of the complexity of moral issues and how different perspectives can skew our moral understanding of situations. In the process, students will become aware that there are fundamental values upon which one justifies moral arguments and their ethical positions. Making students grapple with these values is an essential part of developing their arguments. Finally, these assignments will substantially hone students' ability to deal with moral issues in a more intelligible manner, improving their capacity to defend and justify moral judgments.

Grading/Measures of evaluations:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) Written Presentations 25% | October 20 |
| 2) Oral Presentations 25% | November 3, 8 and 10. |
| 3) Ethics Bowl Competition 25% | November 20 th |
| 4) Final Exam 25% | December 15, 2010 (Wednesday 1:30 PM) |

*** If we qualify for nationals, everyone gets an automatic A on 1, 2 and 3.**

Extra Credit

Students will have the opportunity to earn a total of 3 extra points to the final grade by attending a minimum of 3 philosophy club meetings. The 3 extra points will bump you up one extra grade, for instance from a B to a B+ or from a B+ to an A- etc.

A=100-95; A- =94-90; B+=89-87; B=86-84; B- = 83-80; C+=79-77; C = 76-70; D=69-60; F= <59

Written Presentation 25%

Students will prepare and turn in a written preparation of their assigned cases (3 to 5 cases). The due date for the written presentations is October 20, 2010.

FORMAT

Case #

1. ISSUE
2. POSITION
3. FACTS
- 4 STATE YOUR POSITION AGAIN
5. ARGUMENTS (at least 5 to 8)
6. OBJECTIONS
7. REPLIES
8. SUMMARY
 - Position
 - Arguments
 - Conclusion

Oral Presentation 25%

Read case ____ and prepare a presentation according to the written format. You may **NOT** read your presentation, but you can bring a blank sheet of paper and pencil. You will be given 2 minutes to write down your ideas and arguments before you begin your presentation. The presentation should be 10 minutes. November 3, 8, and 10.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory. Students will lose 1 point for every unexcused absence up to a possible 5 points. Students can make up lost points in unexcused absences by actively participating in class discussions. Unexcused absences included only the following: (1) sickness with a doctors' note, (2) death in the family, or (3) some other extraordinary event.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

See Student Handbook pp. 32 – 38

Student Behavior:

See Student Handbook pp. 38 – 40

Topics:**Part I: Logic****Part II: Theory****1. Introduction: What is Ethics and Ethical Reasoning?**

- 1.1 Why Study Ethics?
- 1.2 What is Ethics?
- 1.3 Ethics and religion
- 1.4 Ethical Reasoning and Arguments

2. Ethical Relativism

- 2.1 What is Ethical Relativism?
- 2.2 Argument in support of Ethical Relativism
- 2.3 Arguments against Ethical Relativism
- 2.4 Solution: Objective Tolerance

3. Egoism

- 3.1 Psychological egoism
- 3.2 Ethical Egoism
- 3.3 Why be Moral?

4. Utilitarianism

- 4.1 The principle of Utility
- 4.2 Quality vs. Quantity of Pleasure

- 4.3 Evaluating Utilitarianism
- 4.4 Act and Rule Utilitarianism

5. Kant's Moral Theory

- 5.1 What gives an Act Moral Worth?
- 5.2 The Categorical Imperative
- 5.3 Evaluating Kant's Moral Theory
- 5.4 Perfect and Imperfect Duties
- 5.5 Variations on Kantian Moral Theory

6. Natural Law and Natural Rights

- 6.1 Natural Law
- 6.2 History: Aristotle
- 6.3 Evaluating Natural Law

7. Virtue Ethics

- 7.1 Virtues and everyday Life
- 7.2 What is virtue?
- 7.3 Evaluating Virtue Theory.

Part III: Applied Ethics

- 1. Euthanasia
- 2. Abortion
- 3. Economic Justice

Part IV: Cases

(See Cases)