

Applied Ethics (U2):Phil. 224 Fall 14

Instructor: Dr. Arash Naraghi

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Office Hours: Tue. 2:30-3:30pm, Wed. 2:30-3:30pm, and by appointment.

Lectures: TR 1:10pm-2:20pm, Main St. Campus, Memorial Hall, 302.

Course Description:

A study of the application of ethical theory to complex real and fictitious cases concerning contemporary moral issues. In this course, we specifically focus on the following topics: (1) Abortion; (2) Euthanasia; (3) Homosexuality; (4) Gun Control; (5) World Hunger; (6) Animal Rights and (7) Human and Nature.

Course Objectives:

- To develop an ability to read, interpret, analyze, and evaluate philosophical texts.
- To introduce students to major themes of applied ethics.
- To facilitate thoughtful and respectful dialogue on important philosophical, moral, and religious issues.
- To understand the relevance of “fundamental questions” to everyday life concerns.
- To learn how to distinguish between good and bad pieces of reasoning.
- To diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes our mind against speculation.
- To enrich our intellectual imagination.
- To learn how to think and write things explicitly, clearly, and succinctly.
- To think creatively, and to be able to imagine alternatives about the nature of human condition.
- To exercise scholarly fairness, sympathy, and tolerance toward different conflicting views, and expand our intellectual horizon.

Required Texts:

- *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*, Hugh LaFollette (ed.), Blackwell Publishers, 2014. ISBN 978-0470671832.

The book is available at Moravian College Bookstore.

(Some additional material will be posted on Blackboard. Please make sure you have access to Blackboard.)

Note: You will find that you get the most out of the course if you read each assignment before lecture and then re-read the assignment after the lecture.

Lecture attendance:

It is not possible to perform well in the course without attending lectures regularly. We will cover substantial amounts of material in the lectures not necessarily included anywhere in the readings. It is highly unlikely that you will learn this material adequately by, e.g., borrowing your friend's lecture notes. You have two class sessions you can miss with no question asked. Beyond those two class sessions, any further missed classes without a really good excuse (involving a note from your doctor, psychiatrist, parole officer, etc.) will cost you 2% of your final grade.

Academic honesty:

Students are required to honor academic integrity. The course imposes the application of Moravian College's Academic Honesty Policy. The policy is to be found at Moravian College's *Student Handbook*.

Important Note: Please turn off your cell phones before walking into class! If you are having an emergency that requires you to have your cell phone on, please tell me at the beginning of class. No text messaging is allowed during the class, and the use of computers should be strictly confined to the things directly related to the class.

Course requirements:

- (1) A regular final exam, scheduled for **Thursday, December 1, at 1:30pm**, plus a midterm (tentatively scheduled for **Tue. October 9**). You will receive Study Guide for the Midterm and Final Exams prior to the exams to know what kind of questions you should expect on the Midterm and Final Exams. Make up final exam will be administered only under the most extraordinary of circumstances, and only in light of appropriate supporting documents.
- (2) One paper (700-1500 words). On **October 23**, the paper topic will be posted on Blackboard. The paper due is **November 6**. Paper should be typed, double spaced, and spell-checked. You are responsible to submit a hard copy of your paper. In some exceptional cases, you may be allowed to submit your paper through email. If so, you must receive a confirmation email from me, otherwise, you must assume that I have not received your paper. If the paper is turned in late without prior permission, the grade will be adjusted downwards by a third of a grade for each day the paper is late (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B, etc.). It is always helpful to discuss the draft of your paper with your friends, roommates, or classmates so as to solicit

feedback. You are required to submit your paper via Blackboard.

- (3) You will be required to write some short paragraphs (roughly two pages) consist of your critical evaluation of the material to be discussed in the class. In the paragraphs, you should concentrate on a specific concept, theme or question. Throughout the semester I am going to assign 12 assignments, and you are required to complete 10 out of 12 assignments by the end of the semester. That is, you are allowed to skip two assignments. The topic for the reflecting paper will be posted on Thursday on the Blackboard, and the due date will be the next Thursday. You are required to submit your assignment via Blackboard.
- (4) You will be divided into two groups, and groups are required to participate in 4 class discussions. As a group you receive a grade between 0 and 10 for each discussion. If you miss a discussion, you individually receive 0 for that discussion, unless you have an extremely good excuse for your absence. If your absence is excused, then I will decide how you may make up for the missing discussion. However, if you miss more than one discussion, the make up policy applies only to one of them, and you will receive 0 for the rest.

Important note: *By the end of the semester, all five above-mentioned requirements (midterm exam, final exam, weekly assignments, paper, and class debates) must be completed in order to pass the course. In order words, if you miss at least one of the above requirements, we will fail the course automatically.*

Grading:

Final Exam: 20% - Midterm Exam: 20%- Paper: 20% - Class debates: 20% - Weekly Paragraphs: 20%.

The grading scale is as follows:

Points	Grade	4-point conversion
95-100	A	4
90-95	A-	3.7
87-90	B+	3.3
84-87	B	3
80-84	B-	2.7
77-80	C+	2.3
74-77	C	2
70-74	C-	1.7
67-70	D+	1.3
64-67	D	1
60-64	D-	0.7
0-60	F	0

Tentative Lecture Schedule:

Part I: What is the right thing to do?

- (1) **Utilitarianism:** August 26, 28.
- (2) **Deontology:** September 2, 4.
- (3) **Virtue Ethics:** September 9.

Part II: What is good?

- (1) **Cultural Relativism:** September 11.
- (2) **Divine Command Theory:** September 16.

Part III: Applied Ethics:

- (1) **Abortion: Arguments for and against:** September 18, 23, 25.

Readings:

- “A Defense of Abortion”, by Judith Travis Thomson (p.63)
- “An Argument that Abortion is Wrong”, by Don Marquis (p. 83)

- (2) **Euthanasia:** September 30, October 2, 7.

Readings:

- “Rule- Utilitarianism and Euthanasia”, by Brad Hooker (p.22)
- “Against the Right to Die”, by J. David Velleman (p.32)

Note: Your Midterm Exam is scheduled for Tuesday October 9th.

Note: Your first debate is scheduled for Thursday, October 16th.

- (3) **Homosexuality:** October 21, 23

Readings:

- “Why Homosexuality is Abnormal?”, by Michael Levin (p. 233)
- “Homosexuality and the Moral Relevance of Experience”, by John Corvino (p.241)

- (4) **Gun Control:** October 28, 30.

Readings:

- “The Liberal Basis of the Right to Bear Arms”, by Todd C. Hughes and Lester H. Hunt (p.313)
- “Gun Control”, by Hugh LaFollette (p. 325)

Note: On October 23, the Paper Topic will be posted on Blackboard. The paper due is on November 6th.

- (5) **World Hunger:** October 31, and November 4, 6

Readings:

- “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”, by Peter Singer (p.572)
- “Famine Relief and the Ideal Moral Code”, by John Arthur (p.582)

Note: Your Second debate is scheduled for November 11.

- (6) **Animal Rights:** November 13, 18.

Readings:

- “All Animals Are Equal”, by Peter Singer (p.107)
- “The Case for Animal Rights” by Tom Regan (p.140)

Note: Your Third debate is scheduled for November 20.

(7) Human and Nature: November 2.

Readings:

- “Feeding People versus Saving Nature”, by Holmes Rolston (p.621)
- “The Land Ethics”, by Aldo Leopold (p.631)

Note: Your Fourth debate is scheduled for December 4.

Note: The Final Exam is scheduled on Thursday December 11 at 1:30pm in Main St. Campus, Memorial Hall, 302.

Important Notes:

- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling 610-861-1401. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.
- The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392. The Writing Center tutors will make arrangements with the student who needs tutoring services to meet in an accessible location, such as the library or a study/conference room in PPHAC.