INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS
PHILOSOPHY 10, Section: 70861, Location: Room 450
Spring 2011
TTH 9:30 am – 10:50 am

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Office Hours: MW 2:00 pm – 2:30 pm, W 3:50 pm – 6:00 pm, TTH 9:00 am – 9:30 am

Core Competencies
This class focuses on all four of Cabrillo’s core competencies:
I. Communication
II. Critical Thinking & Information Competency
III. (Not Applicable)
IV. Personal Responsibility and Professional Development

Student Learning Outcomes
Evaluate key ethical concepts, issues and problems covered in this course.
Critically analyze the philosophical texts covered in this course, which consists of identifying the
structure and strategy of the arguments as well as the motivations of the arguer.

Course Objectives
1. Identify and explicate the major problems and solutions to these problems presented by
the philosophers covered in this course.
2. Identify and distinguish the major ethical categories for ethical judgment and justification,
e.g. absolutism, objectivism, relativism, subjectivism, nihilism. This involves
distinguishing the different standards used in developing different theories and discerning
the difference not only in content but in concern, e.g. subjective vs. objective, action vs.
character or virtue, emotion vs. reason, deontological vs. teleological and consequential
theories.
3. Compare and contrast the major ethical categories and the theories presented by the
philosophers covered.
4. Identify some of the basic assumptions and worldviews adopted by the philosophers
covered. Enumerate and describe how these basic assumptions help make such
philosophical theories possible.

Reading
Text: Sommers & Sommers, Vice and Virtue in Everyday Life, 7th or 8th edition

Here are some other options

Textbooks On Reserve
A copy of the textbook is on a 2-hour reserve in the library. If the book is checked out in the last
2 hours of the day, it can be used over night.

Textbook Exchange and Housing Board
You might find the book by going to the Cabrillo Textbook Exchange website at:
https://alacran.cabrillo.edu/classifieds/

Borrow a Book
Students may apply to borrow a book for the semester. If the textbook is not in the inventory of
this program, the coordinator of the program might be able to order it. The book must be
returned at the end of the semester in good condition for future use by others. For an application,
see Melissa Brilino in the Transfer Center, Bldg. 100.
Responsibilities
If you miss class it will be your responsibility to discuss with another student what it is we covered and ask that student for her or his lecture notes. Then if you have questions with regard to these notes, you should come to my office hours. The point of this discussion here is that if you miss class, it is your responsibility to do some work here. You should always read the material we will discuss that day before having come to class and be prepared to discuss it.

Blackboard
You will need access to a computer. All material will be found on blackboard. You will also submit your writing assignments on blackboard. (See the Blackboard handout for instructions on how to log on to the system). Every Friday, I will post what you will need to do for the next week in addition to announcing it in class. It is also possible that I might post something on blackboard that I did not bring up in class so you should make a point of checking blackboard every weekend for any instructions, assignments or announcements. You will also find copies of the study questions for the text exams, study guides for the content exams as well as a copy of the syllabus.

Class Requirements
Midterm worth 20%
Final worth 20%
Pop quizzes worth 20%
Text/Reading Exams worth 20%
Timed Writing Assignments worth 20%
(Short Argumentative Essays)

Midterm & Final
Each exam will consist of multiple-choice questions. The questions will concern the material we cover in lecture. (This will include the text, the films and the listening assignments as well). I will give you a list of the material you should study and know before the exam. On the day of the exam, you will need to bring an apersan (the light blue scantron) and a #2 pencil. NO NOTES, NO BOOK.

4 Text/Reading Exams – (the lowest scored exam will be dropped, the highest doubled)
These will consist of multiple-choice questions, which concern the readings. You will be given a selection of study questions before the exam on blackboard, with pages numbers from the text to guide you to the answers. I will select the multiple-choice questions for the exam from this list of questions. This will be open note, no textbook allowed. You will need an apersan (the light blue scantron) and a #2 pencil on the day of the exam. If you are absent or late and miss the exam, you will receive a zero for that one. NO MAKE-UPS.

ANY STUDENT MORE THAN 15 MINUTES LATE FOR AN EXAM WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE EXAM.

Pop Quizzes (two lowest quizzes will be dropped)
These will consist of five questions at the most. The questions will concern the material we’ve been covering in lecture. The answers will be brief (at most one sentence), e.g. What is the nature of human beings according to Hobbes? Answer: Motivated by self-interest and a fear of death. No book, no notes. You will have no advance warning as to when these quizzes will occur. And I am not indicating to you how many there will be. If you are absent or late and miss the quiz, you will receive a zero for that one. NO MAKE-UPS.
4 Timed Argumentative Essays Exams
You will not come to class when these are scheduled. You will be at a computer of your choosing (either on campus or off campus) and log on to blackboard where you will find the assignment, which I will post by the beginning of class time. This will be a timed writing assignment and you must turn it in during the allotted time as specified on blackboard and me in class. You will have all of class time and an additional 10 minutes after to complete and submit your argument, (i.e. 1 hour and 30 minutes). If you do not turn it in by then via blackboard, you will have failed the assignment. **NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED, NOT FOR ANY REASON.** I will provide you with 2 – 4 possible essay assignments ahead of time, from which I will choose the actual one you will be given. I will do this the lecture prior to the exam (e.g. if the exam is scheduled on March 3rd, you will get the possibilities during class on March 1st). I will only provide these during that class. They will not be posted on blackboard. So if you miss class, it will be your responsibility to get them from another student. **YOU WILL NOT GET THEM FROM ME IF YOU HAVE NOT ATTENDED THAT CLASS. DO NOT EMAIL ME to ask me what they are, you will not hear back from me.**

During the class in which I provide them, we will spend time discussing them. You should begin at that point thinking and figuring out the ways in which you would complete each. We will go through how you will submit your answer via blackboard in class.

**Arguments:** 300 words min., 500 words max. You’ll get full credit so long as you follow directions, and meet the word requirement. **See the particulars below.**

- **20:** 2,000 words total for all four (with no writing assignment less than 300 words)
- **16:** 1,800 – 1,999 words total for all four (with no writing assignment less than 300 words)
- **14:** 1,600 – 1,799 words total for all four (with no writing assignment less than 300 words)
- **12:** 1,400 – 1,599 words total for all four (with no writing assignment less than 300 words)
- **10:** any total less than 1,400 words

If any assignment is less than 300 words, you will drop down one level, e.g. if you have 2,000 words total but your first writing assignment is 250 words, your score will drop to 16.

**Excellent Writing**

Those submissions that meet this standard will receive an asterisk. Any submission with an asterisk will be weighted more when calculating the final grades. So it is possible that such submissions will raise your final grade. Whether or not that happens will depend on where you fall on the grading scale and the rest of your performance in the course. If you receive an asterisk on all four submissions you have a guarantee that whatever your final grade calculates to at the end of the term once all the work for the course is in, it will be bumped up one letter grade (e.g. if you have a C, once all the work for the course has been calculated, that C will be raised to a B)

Excellent writing assignments will consist of the following:
They will tackle the assignment given and not stray from that assignment. They will be at least 500 words.
The argument presented will be clear and coherent. You should be clear on what your conclusion is and the premises, which should provide support for your conclusion. The entire essay should be relevant to the argument you are presenting.
The essay will exhibit logical structure and flow. The writer will make logical connections between his or her sentences and develop his or her reasoning (an essay ought never to read like a grocery list).
They essay will have been adequately proofed, making no (or minimal) errors in grammar and punctuation.
The essay will exhibit a sophisticated understanding of the material (philosophical concepts and problems) we’ve covered in class as well employ a sophisticated use of vocabulary.

Make-ups
Makeup exams for the midterm will only be offered in extraordinary circumstances (and I MEAN, EXTRAORDINARY). There will be no makeup final exam, quizzes, text/reading exams, and writing assignments.

Listening Assignments
I might have you listen to specific programs on Philosophy Talk, which I assign to you. You will listen to these outside of class. I will post specifics about the assignments on blackboard as well as discuss them in class. You should come to class prepared to discuss them. The exams and the writing assignments may include questions concerning these assignments.

Discussion: You are not graded on participation in the class. But participation has proved to be a good indicator of success in the course as it helps in comprehension as well as the student’s acquiring the skills necessary to good critical reasoning. I take participation into consideration at the end of the term. It can make a difference for a student whose performance places them on the border between two grades. In such a case, when a student has made a decided effort and a real contribution to the class I will bump the student up to the higher grade.

Extra Credit: There is none. Just do the work assigned to you.

Movies
We will watch, discuss and evaluate some movies relevant to the issues we are discussing. The viewing of the movie while perhaps not as rigorous as the reading of a philosophical text does require focus on your part. The movies will dramatize particular questions, concerns and/or problems, which we have been reading about in the texts and discussing in lecture. Our aim then will be to identify the philosophical import of the film and to analyze it in light of the texts and lectures. In the event that I assign a particular film and we are unable to watch all or any of it during class time, the student will be required to watch the film outside of class and come to class prepared to discuss it. The films might be difficult to watch due to some disturbing subject matter and scenes of both a violent and sexual nature. If any student has a concern about this she or he should come talk to me outside of class. That being said, a student’s concern does not negate the student’s responsibility for viewing these films. If any student feels (for whatever reason) that they cannot watch any of the films, they should drop the course. If a film is assigned, it is your responsibility and obligation as a student of this course to watch it. If you cannot meet this obligation, you should not be in this class. What follows is a list of the films. This is only a possible list. Do not expect that we will watch all of these films or any particular one of these films. If we do, however, watch a film it will be chosen from this list.

Fernando Meirelles’ and Katia Lund’s City of God
Woody Allen’s Crimes & Misdemeanors
Quentin Tarantino’s Pulp Fiction
Polanski’s Chinatown

Academic Integrity
Students are responsible for doing their own work. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Any work deemed not to be the student’s own will result in the following: (1) a failing grade (F) for the course, (2) dismissal from the course and (3) a frank discussion with me about the matter. There is a fourth possible consequence and that is that I will submit a report at which
point disciplinary action will be taken. But I suspect #3 will be the most painful of the consequences of committing plagiarism. If I were you, I wouldn’t risk it. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, consult the Writing Center here at Cabrillo. They have general guidelines as to plagiarism and how to avoid it on their website. (www.cabrillo.edu/services/writingcenter/Plagiarism.html) If you have any further questions or concerns come see me.

**Attendance:** The course is structured in such a way that requires regular attendance. Attendance alone will not assure you of a high grade or even a passing grade but missing frequently will almost assuredly lead to a poor one. Every student is expected to attend regularly.

**Grading:** I calculate the grades using percentages. Once everything has been calculated, the basic scale applies.

- A: 90 – 100
- B: 80 – 89
- C: 70 – 79
- D: 60 – 69
- F: below 60

**Note:** Attendance will be taken the first two weeks of the term. The Professor (that’s me) has the right to drop any student who fails to attend class within these first two weeks. This is a right that the Professor will enforce, if there are students present who are not enrolled and want a spot in the class.

**Classroom Decorum Guidelines**

We all must agree in advance to a code of behavior in the classroom that will promote an equal opportunity to learn for all students. Remember, we are only in class three hours per week. So let’s use our time wisely and agree to the following.

**Cell Phones and Beepers and Pagers:** Shut them off before you enter class. I’ll have to shut mine off too (and if I don’t, you have permission to call me on it, just don’t use your cell phone to do it).

**Class Participation:** During most classes you will have an opportunity to ask questions and respond to questions. I will call on you if you raise your hand. Just respect the time constraints of the class and that you are one of a number of students. Give other students equal opportunity and remember that sometimes dialogue may have to be cut short in order to get through the material.

**Arriving Late:** If you arrive late, just take your seat in as quiet a manner as possible and no need for excuses (unless they are particularly interesting ones that involve Marat Safin, Wynton Marsalis or Daniel Craig). That being said, you should not make a habit of this. If you are considerably late consistently, I will consider dropping you from the course.

**Sleeping:** If you didn’t get a good night sleep, bring a double shot of espresso with you. In fact, if you did get a good night sleep, bring a double shot of espresso. In other words, try your best not to (i.e. slumber). Think of it this way, if you’re going to be sleeping wouldn’t you rather be doing so in the comfort of your own bed, with the lights dimmed and listening to some nice comforting music like Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin or the Doors? Rather than in an uncomfortable chair with harsh florescent lighting and my voice interrupting your dreams with talk of Kant’s *categorical imperative*? Of course if you absolutely must, be warned. Stay at the
back of the room, no sleepwalking, no talking in your sleep unless it’s of philosophic import and
by all means, snore quietly.

**Food:** I’ve got no problem with it so long as what you bring doesn’t pose a disruption to other
students. Bringing a *little* something to eat and/or drink with you to class is fine with me so long
as you take your trash with you and dispose of it in the trashcan, don’t make a mess at your desk
and above all don’t talk with food in your mouth.

**Note:** The Professor (that’s me) reserves the right to modify this syllabus as events warrant
including the point scale above, which may be modified depending on the performance of
the class.