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100-94 Ethics as an introduction to Philosophy

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"He who consorts with a fool suffers a long time. Association with fools as with an enemy is always pain. Association with the wise, as meeting with one’s kinsfolk is happiness” – The Dhammapada

“But the real philosophers are commanders and lawgivers: they say "That's how it should be!" They determine first the "Where to?” and the "What for?” for human beings, and, as they do this, they have at their disposal the preliminary work of all philosophical labourers, all those who have overpowered the past—they reach with their creative hands to grasp the future. In that process, everything which is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their "knowing" is creating; their creating is establishing laws; their will to truth is—will to power.” – Friedrich Nietzsche

“Only those who deliberate well about matters concerning the whole of human life are called prudent without qualification.” -Thomas Aquinas

"If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and in the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else." -Black Panther Party, 10 point plan- point 5.

“Many of the truths we cling to depend on our point of view” –Obi-Wan Kenobi

“Men go forth to marvel at the mountain heights, at the huge waves in the sea, at the broad expanse of flowing rivers, at the wide reaches of the ocean, and at the circuits of the stars, but themselves they pass by.” – St. Augustine of Hippo

II. Course Introduction

The word ‘philosophy’ originates from the Greek words ‘philo’ (brotherly love) and ‘sophia’ (knowledge or wisdom.) This definition is the heart of my approach to teaching. I want my students to pursue wisdom, and use that pursuit to enrich their professional, academic, and social lives. As such, my goal for this semester is to challenge you, both philosophically and textually. This course focuses on the philosophy of important historical figures and their examination of justice, friendship, lying, and democracy. In our examination of several great texts and through our focus on ethics, I will attempt to challenge your abilities, your beliefs, and your mastery of language. I expect you to embrace these challenges, in the attempt to seek sophia.

Pragmatically, I have three general goals for this class. I want you to read. I want you to think about the material you read and apply that material, both for this class and the rest of your college experience. I want you to articulate your thoughts about what you have read. Each of the requirements I have
established for this class reflects these three goals. I do reserve the right to change these requirements, depending on the progression of the course.

I also expect us to establish a positive, active environment. These expectations require respect among colleagues, and toward me. In this light, please remember to adhere to the golden rule at all times, treat others (including myself) as you would like to be treated.

III. Course Materials


A note about the texts: In order to succeed in this class, you will need to bring the appropriate text to every class. I rely heavily on the primary text when lecturing, and you will need to follow along. I also expect you to use the text as a means to participate in class discussion. Consistent failure to bring your text will result in a decreased class participation grade.

IV. Course Requirements

   a. Journal entries  
      6 Entries @ 25 points each = 150 points

   “Journal” here is a loose term that means a “Word document that you submit to Turnitin on a weekly basis.”

Journals serve each of the three goals for this course. First, they serve as a way for me to track your reading progress, since the journals will center on the material that you will be reading for this course. Second, they allow you a safe forum to express your ideas. Perhaps you have established a new way of looking at a text that I had not thought of, or maybe you just don’t quite ‘get’ some of the material. Either way, journals provide a safe environment for you to explore your thoughts. I will comment on your journals, (which is why the journal needs to be a .doc or a .docx file) hopefully helping you individually with your reading. Finally, journaling gives you a way to practice detailing your thoughts in a clear, concise manner. This will help you get ready for the exams and papers.

Journals will be due once a week. They will be due before 11:59pm on Sundays, and will represent your response to the week’s reading as well as class discussion.

Journals should be between 250-350 words in length (for an idea of how long that is, the quotes on the first page of the syllabus total 249 words.) Shorter journals will result in no credit. Late journals will result in no credit. Journals should be your own thoughts, clearly articulated. **You will not be penalized for utilizing other sources if you provide proper citation!**
b. Exams  

2 exams@100 each = 200 points

There will be two exams for this term, a midterm and a final. Both exams will have a similar format, and will not be cumulative (to an extent, as this course builds on ideas and concepts throughout.) I will provide you with study guides a class prior to handing out the exam the exam. These guides will provide you with the instructions for each section of the exam, a sample question for each section of the exam, and hints to aid in your success. I will not provide you with vocabulary lists or provide any questions that will be on the exam. I do not do multiple guess or True/False on my exams.

Because this is a condensed course, exams will be “take home.” As such, it would be silly for me to expect you to not use your texts. I will be constructing the exams with the expectation of you having access to the materials of the course. You should expect exams to contain, at minimum, an essay and passage recognition portion. Exams will be handed out a week before they are due, and are due at 11:59pm on Friday. You will submit your exams to Turn-it-in.

c. Term Paper  

150 Points

You will have a term paper due August 9 @ 11:59pm. This paper should be 5 pages in length, and focus on the primary texts of the course. I am looking for a project that minimizes summary and instead focuses on comparison and analysis. Ideally, you should not have to use any outside sources for this project, however, if you do you must cite them properly to avoid plagiarism. I am intentionally leaving the specifics behind this paper vague, as I want you to focus on a subject that is personally relevant. My general suggestion for students struggling to find a topic is to start by looking for something that interests you (a hobby, a cause, a moral claim, etc) and use that to examine the text. I also STRONGLY suggest that you do not procrastinate in constructing the paper, as I am more than happy to provide comments on early drafts.

A note about plagiarism and other forms of cheating:

From Xavier’s Academic Honesty posting  
(http://www.xavier.edu/registrar/ugrd_policies.html#Academic_honesty)

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student’s own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another’s efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one’s own. Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an "F" in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed
in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the
assignment, test, or course. If disputes of interpretation arise, the student, faculty member, and chair
should attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this is unsatisfactory, the dean will rule in the matter. As a
final appeal, the academic vice president will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of
making a final determination.

From the Instructor:

Don’t cheat. If you do, you are wasting your money, and cheapening your degree. If I suspect plagiarism,
or any other forms of cheating, I will report you. In a world with Wikipedia and social networking, it may
be difficult to understand ‘exactly’ what plagiarism is. If you copy and paste a document word for word,
and don’t properly cite the original… that’s plagiarism. If you copy/paste a document and then change a
few words around, and don’t properly cite the original… that’s plagiarism. If you use a resource for your
research and just use general ideas and concepts gleaned from that external resource in your paper, and
don’t properly cite it... that’s plagiarism.

d. Class Participation 100 points

Ah, the mysterious ‘class participation’ grade. For the purposes of this class, the participation portion of
your final grade will be composed of 3 major elements. First, and most basic, is class attendance. You
need to be here for every class. However, I realize that there is life beyond these walls, and you might be
forced to miss a class. If you have to miss a class, it is best for you to contact me via email ASAP. This will
allow us to set up some way for you to get the information you missed. Because this is a shortened
session, attendance to every class is extremely important. Make arrangements with me early if you
cannot make all the sessions.

Secondly, class participation is based on attentiveness. This means listening to lecture and questions
from other students. It also means not doing anything that would distract you from class (IE don’t try to
text, do homework from other classes, or anything of the sort). With this being a long session it may be
tempting for you to zone out, access Tweetfaceyspace, or text during a lecture. If I suspect you are
distracted, I will call you out. To put it more bluntly, such actions are disrespectful and I assume that
you, as adults, are better than that.

Finally, is general class participation. This means responding articulately and clearly to questions I, or
your classmates, may ask you. If I have to pull teeth to get a response to a question, this section of class
participation will suffer. To be articulate, it generally helps to look over the material ahead of time.
Grading Scale:

100-93: A  
92.9-90: A-  
89.9-87.9: B+  
87.8-83: B  
82.9-80: B-  
79.9-77.9: C+  
77.8-73: C  
72.9-70: C-  
69.9-67.9: D+  
67.8-63: D  
62.9-60: D-  
59.9 and Below: F

V. Course Schedule

This course syllabus is subject to revision as needed.

Week 1:

Tuesday: Course Introduction, Republic Book 1

Thursday: Nicomachean Ethics Book 5

Week 2:

Tuesday: Republic Book 2

Thursday: Republic Book 3 (Hand out/post Midterm)

Week 3:

Tuesday: Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX

Thursday: Republic Book 4 (Midterm due Friday at 11:59pm)

Week 4:

Tuesday: Republic Book 5

Thursday: Republic Book 6, Summary of Book 7
Week 5:

Tuesday: *On Liberty* Chapters 1-4 (Note, there is quite a bit of reading here, be warned)

Thursday: *Republic* Book 8, (Final exam handed out.)

Week 6:

Tuesday: *Republic* Book 9

Thursday: *Republic* Book X, (Final due 11:59)