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100-16 Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy

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PHIL100 – 16 – ETHICS AS INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. JAMES RIORDAN – RIORDANJ@XAVIER.EDU
OFFICE LOCATION:
OFFICE PHONE: X3573 / CELLULAR PHONE: 513-497-2403
OFFICE HOURS: WEDNESDAY 12:00 – 1:00 PM. OR BY APPOINTMENT
CLASS MEETING TIME AND LOCATION: WED/FRI 3:00-4:15 PM. ALTER 112
SECTION NUMBER – 16

COURSE AIMS:
This course will provide an introduction to the Western tradition of philosophical ethics through a study of Plato’s Republic. After some introductory texts regarding philosophical studies as a whole, we will explore Plato’s Republic in great detail. We will ask such questions as: What is justice and how can it be achieved? What kind of life should I lead? What is happiness? Can there be uniform standards to behavior? Will doing good make me happy?

As we will come to see, these questions are answered in a myriad of ways. Since this is a course focused on ethics as a philosophical project, we will examine how the Republic intersects with contemporary moral issues. The “point” of this project is not necessarily to arrive at a “final judgment”, but rather examine the various claims and evaluate the underlying philosophical underpinnings attached.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- Students will be effective communicators in writing and orally.
- Students will be critical thinkers.
- Students will be creators of new knowledge and expression.
- Students will be able to understand and appreciate the arts, humanities and science disciplines, and reflect on connections among these studies.
- Students will be integrated individuals who articulate a coherent, ethical perspective on the world and their place in it.
- Students will be aware global citizens.
- Students will be intellectually, morally and spiritually educated individuals capable of critical reflection on ethical and/or religious questions of social significance from the perspective of multiple disciplines with unique methods.
COURSE PROCEEDINGS:

This class meets only twice a week and therefore will require you to come prepared. I would not expect you to understand everything you read, but your preparedness will be evident based on your questions, engagement with the texts, and class time. There will be various ways you are evaluated in the course:

Surprise Quiz (10 pts.)
Mid-Term Examination (30 pts.)
Introductory Paper (10 pts.)
Synthesis Essays (10 pts. each)
Final Examination (30 points)
Participation (10 points)

Considering our time frame and the material to be covered, it is imperative you come to all classes for the semester. If you miss more than 8 classes you will automatically fail the course. If you fail to hand in any exam/paper/assignment you will automatically fail the course.

Please do not be late to the class; if you will be late, please notify me ahead of time. Barring circumstances of hospitalization and death in a family, the following penalties will apply for all absences and tardiness:

a) You are allowed three absences from the class; there is no penalty. After three absences you will lose a letter grade from your final grade in the course (B, B-). For every absence please email me and let me know you will not be in class that day. This is a simple courtesy. If I have to cancel a class, I will do the same for you.
b) Tardiness: If you do not notify me ahead of time of your tardiness, I will subtract a point from your current grade in the class. Please arrive on time for class.
c) Make-Up Work: If you are absent on a day and miss a quiz/exam/etc. you are responsible for: a) letting me know you will not be in class to take the exam. b) finding a suitable date between us to take the exam (within the following week or no grade). Any assignment/exam taken late will be deducted 3 points due to your absence.
d) Papers: If you are not present a day a paper is to be turned in I will deduct 20% off the given grade you receive.
e) If I allow you to email me an assignment, you must email it to me before it is due otherwise I will not accept it.

Synthesis Essays: You are responsible for writing 5 synthesis essays throughout the semester. A “synthesis” is a combination of two or more entities that form something new. In the case of these essays, you are asked to take two or more readings and make a claim that is entirely new. You are NOT asked to summarize the readings; I assume that you have read and re-read the essays in order to write the paper. What you are to do is
1) read the respective essays that fall between the last time you did a synthesis paper and the day the current one is due.
2) Make a claim on the relationship between the readings as you understand it (this is your thesis) Example: “After reading Plato’s *Republic* in relation to the “Death Penalty Debates,” it is clear that the death penalty does not create a better more civilized culture.” – Something like this is your thesis statement.

3) Now…after you make a solid claim, you defend it with information from the assigned readings. You must cite your sources. You can use a simple in-text reference for this (Riordan, 74).

4. Finally, make a conclusion that summarizes your claim and defense.

5. This synthesis paper should be 1 page. I will tear off a second page.

**Technology:** You and I both live in a world in which we feel we need our smart phone, lap top, IPod, etc. I am there with you. In the class, I am going to ask you to put your phones away. You are not allowed to text or call during class. If your phone goes off in the class, I will subtract a point from your grade. It is really rude (as it is in church, theater, movie) for us to neglect to place our phones on vibrate.

**Plagiarism:** You will be expected to follow the policy for academic honesty as outlined in the Xavier University Catalog. Violation of this policy will result in an F on the assignment. A second violation of this policy will result in an F for the course.
- Consulting a website such as Sparknotes does not constitute plagiarism. Cutting and pasting from a website, however, is plagiarism, even if you rephrase occasional passages. Any time you use someone else’s words, you must provide an adequate citation.
- For helpful information on how to avoid plagiarism, see the xututor website (www.xavier.edu/library/xututor/plagiarism/).
CLASS SCHEDULE

Wednesday, 28 August:
In-Class: a) Discuss and clarify the syllabus b) Introduction to the course

Homework: a) Type a two-page (or more) paper on what YOU THINK Philosophy and Ethics is all about. Please use examples and/or experiences to back up your claim. You are NOT allowed to use outside sources (dictionary, etc). You will be graded on your grammar and thoughtfulness.

Friday, 30 August:
In-Class: a) Collect introductory paper and discuss your findings. b) Further discussion on the significance of Philosophy.

Wednesday, 4 September:
In-Class: a) Discussion of “Ancient Ethics”
Homework: “Ethics in Ancient Greece,” pp. 121-131 –e-reserve

Friday, 6 September:
In-Class: a) Discussion of “Ethics in Ancient Greece”
Homework: “Figure of Socrates.” pp. 22-38

Wednesday, 11 September:
In-Class: a) “Figure of Socrates,” pp. 22-38
b) Homework:

Friday, 13 September:
In-Class: Discussion of “Ancient Greece” and “Figure of Socrates”
Homework: #1 Reflection Paper due Wednesday

Wednesday, 18 September:
In-Class: Turn in #1 Reflection Paper and discussion
Homework: Read Republic, Book 1, pp. 1-14.

Friday, 20 September:
In-Class: Discussion of Republic, Book 1, pp. 1-14.
Homework: Read essay (on Blackboard) on death penalty

Wednesday, 19 September:
In-Class: Discussion of death penalty and Republic
Homework: #2 Reflection Paper due Friday

Friday, 25 September:
In-Class: Hand in #2 Reflection Paper and discussion
Homework: Read Republic, Book 1, pp. 14-35
Wednesday, 27 September:
**In-Class:** a) Discussion of *Republic*, Book 1, pp. 14-35
**Homework:** Take notes and questions on Book 1, pp. 14-35

Friday, 2 October:
**In-Class:** Continued discussion on Book 1, pp. 14-35
**Homework:** Read essays on Earth Liberation Front and deforestation

Wednesday, 4 October:
**In-Class:** Discussion of essays regarding ELF and Deforestation. Begin viewing *When a Tree Falls* - film
**Homework:** Read essays and take notes for discussion

Friday, 9 October:
**In-Class:** Viewing *When a Tree Falls* and discussion
**Homework:** #3 Reflection Paper due Wednesday

Wednesday, 11 October:
**In-Class:** #3 Reflection Paper due
**Homework:** Study for Mid-Term Examination on Wednesday

Wednesday, 16 October:
**In-Class:** Mid-Term Examination
**Homework:** Read *Republic*, Book IV pp. 103-120

Friday, 18 October:
**In-Class:** Discuss Book IV, pp. 103-120
**Homework:** Continue reading Book IV pp. 103-120

Wednesday, 23 October:
**In-Class:** Discussion of Book IV, pp. 103-120
**Homework:** Read essays (on Blackboard) on Occupy Movement and Market Capital

Friday, 25 October:
**In-Class:** Discussion of essays on Occupy and Market Capital
**Homework:** #4 Reflection Paper due Wednesday

Wednesday, 30 October:
**In-Class:** #4 Reflection Essay due and discussion
**Homework:** Read from *Love Does No Harm*, pp. 14-32

Friday, 1 November:
**In-Class:** Discussion of Read from *Love Does No Harm*, pp. 14-32
Homework: Read *Love* pp. 33-39

Wednesday, 6 November:
In-Class: Discussion of *Love Does No Harm* pp. 33-39
Homework: Read *Love* pp. 40 – 54

Friday, 8 November:
In-Class: Discussion of *Love* pp. 40 – 54
Homework: Continue reading *Love*, pp. 55-72

Wednesday, 13 November:
In-Class: Film: *Dreamworlds 3* 
Homework: Continue reading *Love* pp. 85-101

Friday, 15 November:
In-Class: Film: *Dreamworlds 3* 
Homework: Continue reading *Love* pp. 85-101

Monday, 20 November
Final Day to from class

Monday, 22 November
In-Class: Discussion of *Dreamworlds 3 and pp. 55-101*
Homework: #5 Reflection Paper due Wednesday after break

Classes do not meet November 27 & 29

Wednesday, 4 December:
In-Class: #5 Reflection Paper due and discussion
Homework: Read *Love*, pp. 102-113

Friday, 6 December:
In-Class: Discussion of *Love*, pp. 102-113
Homework: Read *Love*, pp. 114-127

Wednesday, 11 December:
In-Class: Discussion of *Love*, pp. 114-113
Homework: Read *Love*, pp. 128-138

Friday, 16-19 December: Study Day