2014

100-11 Ethics as Introduction to Philosophy

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Note: Students utilized an interactive version of the syllabus on Canvas. The following is based on that syllabus.

**Participation**

Active participation is a required component of this course. Merely attending class is insufficient.

Students should come to class having carefully read the day's assignment and reviewed their notes from the previous class. Typically class will begin with three questions:

1) What are the key points from last class?

2) What is the most important theme of today's reading? (Be prepared to cite the text.)

3) What is the most confusing aspect of today's reading? (Be prepared to cite the text.)

Students will be called on at random to answer these questions. Answers need not be completely correct to receive credit but should indicate some thoughtful engagement with the text. At minimum it should be clear from their answers that students have read the assigned texts and reflected on the previous class.

The instructor may ask other questions at random. Random question will only cover basic class material. More difficult or speculative questions will be voluntary.

Students may pass on random questions three times during the semester without penalty. Points will be deducted from the participation grade for an excess of three questions skipped and for questions answered inadequately. Students absent when call upon will be charged one of their three passes.

Students absent in excess of 20% of class sessions (i.e. 9 classes) will receive a zero in participation.

Please refer to the Department Grading Standards for the expectations for different grades. These expectations apply to participation. An "A" in participation requires frequent and insightful oral contributions to class.

The instructor reserves the right to conduct unannounced written quizzes. These quizzes will factor into the participation grade.

**Grades**
The most up to date grades are listed posted on Canvas as they become available. Midterm grades will be posted by March 10 and final grades by May 13.

Grades are assessed according to the Philosophy Department Grading Standards.

The average final grade in this course is a B-, though the average varies semester to semester and class to class. Typically fewer than 10% of the class earns an A for the final grade though again this varies from class to class.

The final grade is out of 1000 points. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade regardless of point total.

I strive to make assessments as clear as possible. Should a grade be unclear students are encouraged to discuss their grade with me during office hours or by appointment. Before discussing the grade students should carefully read all comments made on the assignment.

Department Grading Standards:

The Philosophy Department ... agrees that these letter grades signify the following level of accomplishment by students when given for discursive, written work:
A = work that not merely fully and accurately reproduces class discussion, the main thread in an argument or the main philosophical significance of a text under discussion, but which, having considered arguments and counter-arguments, goes beyond these and indicates a contribution of the student herself or himself, giving evidence of an individual and hence deeper understanding of the material in question.
B = work that shows a more or less complete and exact understanding of the issues, texts, and/or arguments as explained in class, clearly and logically formulated without going beyond such explanations.
C = work that shows basic understanding of the material but with errors, omissions and confusions of either a formal or material nature.
D = work that shows a minimal acquaintance with the material or serious logical and conceptual flaws in formulating responses to the question raised, the argument at issue, or to the philosophical text under discussion.
F = work that shows inadequate acquaintance with texts, issues, or ideas with little or no valid logical argumentation; or, the work is a plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism, which involve the use of published or others' written work without giving credit, must be given F.
The department does not mandate grade distributions or curves. The final goal of all of our grading must be fairness to all students and the encouragement of the highest level of achievement possible in each student.

Approved by Philosophy Department
April 15, 2002

Revised by Philosophy Department
January 12, 2005

Assignment: Points Possible

Paper One 50
Paper Two 150
Paper Three 250
Midterm Exam 150
Final Exam 250
Participation 150
Extra Credit Max 10 + 10 + 10

Total Points Scale:

A 1000-950
A- 949-900
B+ 899-870
B 869-830
B- 829-800
C+ 799-770
C 769-730
C- 729-700
D 699-600
F 599-0

Office Hours

My office is 207 Hinkle Hall.

Scheduled office hours are Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:00.

I prefer to meet students by appointment. Since I live on campus in the Jesuit Residence, I'm fairly flexible about meeting times.

Students are strongly encouraged to make use of office hours individually and in groups. Participation in office hours counts towards the class participation grade.

Readings:

Students are expected to read all assigned texts.

Required for purchase online or at the bookstore: (in either print or ebook form)


All other readings will be posted in PDF or ebook form on Canvas.

Please consult the Canvas for the reading schedule.

**Papers:**

Good writing is good editing. With this maxim in mind, all papers in this class go through a four step process complete with four distinct due dates.

1) Thesis: Send a detailed thesis to the instructor via Canvas Message. The thesis will either be approved or rejected. Rejected theses must be rewritten until approved. Catching problems at the thesis phase saves a great deal of effort in the long run.

2) Draft: Full length first drafts are submitted via Canvas.

3) Peer Edits: Canvas automatically assigns two peer editors for each student paper. Students are graded on the quality of the comments provided to their peers. Good editors provide actionable critiques. Don't just say that a paper is good or bad. Say why as specifically as possible.

4) Final Draft: Revise the initial draft on the basis on the peer edits. While writers are not required to follow all the advice of their editors. The final draft must be substantially different than the initial draft and informed by the peer comments. Final drafts are submitted via the same Canvas link as initial drafts.

Students are expected to read instructor comments on all written assignments. Failure to read comments within two weeks of their posting will result in a half letter grade penalty.

See Canvas for Specific Assignments

**Exams**

There are two exams in this course, a midterm and a final exam.

The midterm exam is given the last day of class before spring break. The midterm exam is worth 150 points or 15% of the final grade.

The final exam is comprehensive and given during exam week. The final exam is worth 200 points or 20% of the final grade.

Exams consist of short and long essay questions.
Digital Responsibility

This class will rely heavily on digital resources such as Canvas and Turnitin. Students should subscribe to Canvas for schedule updates.

Two common excuses are not acceptable in this class:

"My computer crashed"

"I didn't check my email"

“My computer crashed” is not an acceptable excuse for late work. A single computer’s failure should not result in data loss if proper safeguards are in place. I recommend using a cloud based backup to keep your data secure. These include: Sugarsync, Dropbox, Amazon Cloud Drive, Carbonite, iCloud, and various Google services. The functionality of each is similar but slightly different. All these services and many others like them will help keep your data safe. For maximum security you can sync your most important data across multiple clouds.

Bottom line: 99% of data loss because of PC failure is avoidable. It is your responsibility to adequately back up your work.

Digital Accountability:

Canvas and Turnitin both log student activities on their sites. For example, Turnitin tracks when students review professor comments. I have set up Canvas and Turnitin to collect student use data and reserve the right to use this data in determining paper and participation grades.

The timestamp given by Turnitin will be used to determine whether a paper is on time.

I will only accept “internet problems” as a legitimate excuse for late papers under two circumstances. One, the campus network is down for a significant amount of time the day before an assignment is due. Two, Canvas or Turnitin is down. These two excuses are independently verifiable.

Given the wide variety of electronic communications devices available, failing to check for messages is not an acceptable excuse.

Messages from the instructor will be sent via Canvas Message. These messages can be forwarded to your Xavier email or other accounts. Set up the forwarding system in whatever way is most convenient. Canvas messages are also available via the Canvas app for Android or iOS as well as the Canvas browser interface.

Students are urged to check for messages daily. Problems arising from failing to check for messages are entirely the responsibility of the student.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious academic transgression and will not be tolerated in this class! Those I catch plagiarizing or otherwise cheating on any assignment will fail the course and be reported to the Dean. All non-handwritten assignments will be run through Turnitin (and may receive further evaluation) to rule out plagiarism.

Despite my warnings, every semester of my teaching career I've failed at least two students for plagiarism, often more. Please think twice before copying another's work. The consequences are serious.

For advice on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it see: http://www.xavier.edu/library/xututor/plagiarism/index.cfm

A good rule of thumb: when in doubt, cite. If you are having trouble contact the writing center or come to office hours for help.

This University policy on plagiarism is as follows:

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.

Accommodations

Students requiring special accommodations for medical, athletic, or other approved reasons should contact me by email as soon as possible so we can discuss the necessary steps to be taken.

Disability accommodations are facilitated by the Xavier Learning Assistance Center.

Attendance

Bodily attendance is necessary but not sufficient to be successful in this class. No credit is given for mere bodily attendance. Students must demonstrate mental as well as physical attendance.
Students will be marked mentally absent if found:

Texting

Checking Social Media

Using computers in a manner unrelated to class

Sleeping

Missing course materials (i.e. books, notes, etc...)

Or otherwise demonstrating a lack of attentiveness to the class

Student may have four unexcused absences (mental or physical). 5 points are deducted from the participation grade for each absence in excess of four. Students receive a zero in participation after nine absences.

Exceptions are made for certain University sanctioned events and for grave personal reasons such as documented illness or family emergencies.