2014

100-24 Ethics as Introduction to Philosophy

Adam Konopka

Follow this and additional works at: http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/philosophy_syllabi_fall_2014

Recommended Citation
http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/philosophy_syllabi_fall_2014/28

This Restricted-Access Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Philosophy Syllabi 2014 at Exhibit. It has been accepted for inclusion in Philosophy Syllabi Fall 2014 by an authorized administrator of Exhibit. For more information, please contact exhibit@xavier.edu.
Course Catalog Description:

“An introduction to philosophical thought by way of Plato’s Republic and other readings in moral philosophy. Special emphasis on justice.”

Philosophy Department Description:

“PHIL 100 explores the questions of the nature of a good human life and a good human community, with specific attention to the role of justice in a good life. Since the course is also an introduction to the discipline of philosophy, these questions are explored through a close study of primary texts. Students learn to understand and evaluate other’ arguments on these issues, and in doing so, learn to better understand and evaluate their own positions” (2008).

Course Objectives:

Our main objective in this course is an introductory survey of the central problems posed in moral philosophy and its attempts to resolve them. Concentrated attention will be given to everyday ethical concerns in light of a historical approach to the development of moral theory. Through an exposure to the primary texts of three predominant normative approaches (virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism) we will be challenged to articulate our own reasoned positions with regard to their validity, soundness, and implications.

The study of ethics has a diversity that spans multiple different kinds of disciplines. Moral philosophy has a rich tradition that focuses on questions such as: What makes a person good or bad? What does it mean to live well? What are the right and wrong things to do? What are the fundamental principles of moral obligation? What makes government legitimate? Our objectives are to develop critical thinking, communication (both oral and written), and reading comprehension skills in the process of answering these questions.

Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes:

1) Students recognize and cogently discuss significant questions in the humanities, arts, and the natural and social sciences.
2) Students identify and critically assess multiple dimensions of an ethical issue in an attempt to
reach a conclusion.

**Teaching Methodology:**

Class discussion, small group work, lecture, field trips, and guest speakers will be utilized in this course. Regular readings, writing assignments and quizzes will be involved in class preparation.

**Required Texts:**


Additional readings will be posted on the canvas site for this course and can be accessed through this link: http://luminis.xavier.edu. Your student ID and password are required to access canvas.

**Course Requirements:**

**Attendance:**

- You are expected to have *punctual* attendance to every class meeting.
- You are allowed three unexcused absences. For every unexcused absence your attendance/participation grade will be lowered by 5%. (A total of five unexcused absences will result in a 0% for your attendance/participation grade.)
- Excused absences will be given if the student supplies a note from a doctor, a coach, etc. You must hand in the note within one week from your first day back to class, preferably before, especially if the absence is anticipated. If there is no note within this time frame, then the absence will be counted as unexcused.
- If you are late to class and have missed the role call/attendance sheet, you must notify me of your presence after class. If you do not, you will be counted as absent. (It is your responsibility to demonstrate your attendance.)
- If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes/information that you missed from another student. You are also welcome during office hours to discuss the material.
- Special campus events: Over the course of the semester, there will be several campus events, e.g., lectures, panel presentations, etc., that will have required attendance. Exceptions to this policy will be made on an individual basis and will require supplementary assignments.

**Participation:**

- You are expected to participate in class. This can be done in several ways, e.g., small group discussion, questions/comments during lectures, etc.
- There will be special small group discussions throughout the semester that are especially designed for your participation. It will important for you to be especially active in these groups - your participation will be noted.
- It is the policy of our classroom to not use electronic forms of communication and entertainment, e.g., cell phones, laptops, etc., during class.
- University Disability Policy: Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to speak to course faculty at the beginning of the semester. In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Xavier University affords academic adjustments and auxiliary aids for students with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit or restrict one or more of such major life activities as walking, seeing, hearing, or
learning. Students with disabilities should contact the Student Disability Services Center: http://www.xavier.edu/lac/student-disability-services.cfm.

Quizzes:
- During the course of the semester there will be several quizzes on the reading assignments that will be conducted on canvas. These are primarily designed to help your attentiveness to the reading assignments and for you to demonstrate that you have done the reading. The quiz questions will only cover the reading for the particular day of the assignment. The lowest quiz scores will be dropped.

Papers:
- There are two 3-4 page papers assigned for this semester. Specific guidelines for the papers will be available at least one week in advance of the paper due date that will specify the criteria of evaluation.
- Writing Center – The James A. Glenn Writing Center is located in Room 400 of the Conaton Learning Commons and relevant information can be found on the center website: www.xavier.edu/writing_center. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this valuable resource.

Discussion Posts:
- Over the course of the semester, there will be approximately three required discussion posts on canvas that will be an extension of classroom group discussions. Specific questions and guidelines will be available in advance.

Exams:
- There will be two exams during the course of the semester - a midterm and a final.
- Review sheets will be provided a week in advance of the examination.
- Students are especially encouraged to take advantage of office hours prior to the exams.
- The exams are designed to provide the opportunity to display multiple levels of learning. The format and details of each exam will be provided prior to the exams.

Submission and Plagiarism Guidelines:
- Failure to turn in the assignment by class time of the due date will result in a lowering of the grade for that paper. For every day that the assignment is late, the grade will automatically be lowered one letter grade. If the paper is more than one week late, you will automatically fail that assignment. Arrangements for exceptions to this policy must be made in person or by email before the day the assignment is due.
- Plagiarism: In accordance to university policy, papers that display evidence of plagiarism will be failed and can result in failure of the course. All such cases will be dealt with according to this policy and in coordination with the Dean’s Office. Whenever you quote or paraphrase from a book, the internet, a lecture, or other source, you must cite that source and use quotes if appropriate. Please review the student handbook at http://www.xavier.edu/student-integrity/documents/studenthandbook.pdf. As stated in the handbook, “Penalties for violations of this [plagiarism] policy may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an “F” in the course, and expulsion from Xavier.”

Methodology/Grading Percentages:
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- Quizzes: 15%
- Discussion Posts: 5%
- Paper #1: 10%
- Paper #2: 10%
- Midterm Examination: 25%
- Final Examination: 25%
Letter grades are determined according to a ten-point scale:
A  95-100
A- 90-94
B+  88-89
B   83-87
B-  80-82
C+  78-79
C   73-77
C-  70-72
D   60-69
F   59 and below

• The information on this syllabus is subject to change. If a change is made, students will be clearly notified.

Course Calendar:

Introduction: What is Moral Philosophy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/26</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/28</td>
<td>Hinman – “The Moral Point of View” pp. 1-23</td>
<td>Ethics Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>Hadot – “The Figure of Socrates” pp. 22-38</td>
<td>Quiz #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>PBS – “Empire of the Mind” (video)</td>
<td>Quiz #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualia Soup – “Critical Thinking” (video)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ancient Moral Philosophy: Virtue Ethics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Plato – Republic, Book 1, pp. 1-35</td>
<td>Quiz #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>Plato – Republic, Book 2, pp. 36-65</td>
<td>Quiz #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>Plato – Republic, Book 4, pp. 103-135</td>
<td>Quiz #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>Plato – Republic, Book 7, pp. 208-237</td>
<td>Quiz #6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>Plato – Republic, Book 7, pp. 208-237*</td>
<td>Quiz #7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9/30  Case Study Discussion  
10/1  Campus Event: E/RS Lecture  
      Kathleen Smythe - "Jesuit Sustainability"  
      Time: 7:00-9:00pm  
      Location: TBA  
10/2  Midterm Review  
10/7  Midterm Examination  
10/9  NO CLASS – Fall Holiday  

**Enlightenment Political Philosophy**

10/14  Hobbes – TBA  
10/16  NO CLASS – Out of town conference  
10/21  Hobbes - TBA  
10/23  Rousseau - TBA  
10/28  Case Study Discussion  
10/29*  Campus Event: Passenger Pigeon Symposium  
      Time: 7:00-9:00pm  
      Location: Cintas Center  

**Enlightenment Moral Philosophy: Consequentialism**

10/30  Mill – *Utilitarianism*, pp. 1-17  
11/4  Mill – *Utilitarianism*, pp. 18-26  
11/6  Mill – *Utilitarianism*, pp. 27-34  
11/11  Mill – *Utilitarianism*, pp. 35-41  
11/13  Mill – *Utilitarianism*, pp. 42-64  
11/18  Case Study Discussion  

**Enlightenment Moral Philosophy: Deontology**

11/25  Kant – *Groundwork*, pp. 9-20  
11/27  NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break  
12/2  Kant – *Groundwork*, pp. 21-37  
12/4  Kant – *Groundwork*, pp. 37-51  
12/9  Case Study Discussion  
12/11  Final Review  

*Final Examination: Tuesday, December 16, 1:00-2:50pm (Hailstones Hall 100X)*