100-19 Ethics as Introduction to Philosophy

James Riordan
Philosophy 100-19
ETHICS AS INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

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CLASS MEETING TIME: WED/FRI 3:00-4:15 PM.
SECTION NUMBER – 19

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:

Quizzes: 10 points each / 70 points total. 33%
Mid-Term Examination: 30 points. 14%
Introductory Paper: 20 points. 10%
Synthesis Essays: 20 points each / 60 points total. 29%
Final Examination: 30 points. 14%

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, you will not be able to make it up.
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. This holds for papers sent via email.

Synthesis Essays: You are responsible for writing 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 2 pages maximum.

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 worship service, 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, 27 August:
In-Class: a) Discuss and clarify the syllabus b) Introduction to the course


Friday, 29 August:
In-Class: a) Quiz on O’Connor. b) Further discussion on the significance of Philosophy.
Homework: Read, “Why Study Philosophy?”

Wednesday, 3 September:
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Discussion of O’Connor and Philosophy
Homework: Read “Buddhist Ethics,” Pp. 58-68

Friday, 5 September:
In-Class: a) Quiz  b) Discussion of Buddhist Ethics

Wednesday, 10 September:
In-Class: a) Quiz  b) Discussion of “Islamic Ethics”

Friday, 12 September:
In-Class: a) Quiz  b) Discussion of Greek ethics
Homework: Synthesis Paper #1

Wednesday, 17 September:
In-Class: Turn in #1 Reflection Paper and Group Discussion
Homework: Read Republic, Book 1, pp. 1-14.

Friday, 19 September:
In-Class: a) Quiz
   b) Discussion of Republic, Book 1, pp. 1-14.
Homework: Read essay on death penalty:
http://www.newappsblog.com/2013/01/reading-plato-on-death-row.html
http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/socrates.htm
Wednesday, 24 September:
In-Class: Discussion of death penalty and Republic

Friday, 26 September:
In-Class: Discussion of Book I, pp. 14-35
Homework: Read essays on Earth Liberation Front and deforestation

Wednesday, 1 October:
In-Class: a) Quiz
            b) Discussion of Republic, Book 1, pp. 14-35 and ELF
Homework: Read essay on When a Tree Falls

Friday, 3 October:
In-Class: Watch, When a Tree Falls

Wednesday, 8 October:
In-Class: When a Tree Falls

Friday, 10 October:  Fall Break – No Class
In-Class: Discussion of Book I and When a Tree Falls
Homework: a) Synthesis Paper #2  b) Read Book X

Wednesday, 15 October
In-Class: a) Hand in Synthesis Paper #2  b) Quiz  c) Discussion of the Myth of Er
Homework: Prepare for Midterm Examination

Friday, 17 October
In-Class: Complete discussions of Myth of Er and the Republic
Homework: Study for Midterm Exam

Wednesday, 22 October :
In-Class:  
          a) Midterm Examination
Homework: Read, “Difficult Crossings,” Pp. 57-70

Friday, 24 October:
In-Class: Discussion of “Difficult Crossings”
Homework: Read “Difficult Crossings,” Pp. 70-82

Wednesday, 29 October:
In-Class: a) Quiz
            b) Discussion of “Difficult Crossings”
Homework: Read “Difficult Crossings,” Pp. 82-95
Friday, 31 October:
In-Class: Discussion of “Difficult Crossings”

Wednesday, 5 November:
In-Class: a) Quiz
b) “Difficult Crossings”
Homework: Read Love Does No Harm, Pp. 14-32

Friday, 7 November:
In-Class: Miss Representation
Homework: Read Love Does No Harm, Pp. 33-39

Wednesday, 12 November:
In-Class: Finish Miss Representation and begin discussion
Homework: Continue reading LDNH pp. 40-54

Friday, 14 November:
In-Class: a) Guest Speaker – Kendra Massey –Women Helping Women
b) Discussion of LDNH 40-54
Homework: Read LDNH 55-72

Wednesday, 19 November:
In-Class: a) Quiz
b) Discussion of LDNH 55-72
Homework: Synthesis Paper #3

Friday, 21 November:
In-Class: a) Hand in Synthesis Paper #3
b) Discussion of LDNH 55-72
Homework: Read LDNH 85-101

Wednesday, 26 November: Thanksgiving Break – No Class

Friday, 28 November: Thanksgiving Break – No Class

Wednesday, 3 December:
In-Class: Discussion of Love, pp. 102-113
Homework: Read LDNH, pp. 114-127
Friday, 5 December:
In-Class: a) Quiz b) Discuss *LDNH* 114-127
Homework: Read *LDNH* 128-138

Wednesday, 10 December: a) Discussion of *LDNH*
Homework: Study for Final Exam

Friday, 12 December: Final Examination