Philosophy Department

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: ETHICS

FALL 1999

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

PROFESSOR: Chris Latiolais
Philosophy Department
Kalamazoo College
Humphrey House #202
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Offices Hours:
1) Mon. 2:00 - 3:30
2) Tues. 10:30 - 11:30
3) By Appointment.

COURSE GOALS:
This course is offered as a basic introduction to the major traditions of ethical theory in Western philosophy. The historical focus of the course allows students to appreciate how such traditions inherit and criticize earlier attempts to justify moral judgments concerning what actions are "right," "wrong," "obligatory," "forbidden" and "permissible." Special emphasis is placed upon assessing the liabilities and assets of such theories in regard to contemporary social circumstances.

EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of class participation, weekly quizzes, a midterm test, and a comprehensive final examination.

Class Participation Discussion Participation 10%
Midterm Test 1 @ 20% = 20%
Quizzes 8 @ 5% = 40%
Final Examination 1 @ 30% = 30%
POLICIES:

Open, respectful and critical discussion is crucial to this course. Quizzes offer students and professor the opportunity to identify and clarify central concepts and arguments, the mastery of which is required to pass the course. The midterm and final examinations test a student's comprehension of the central schools of thought in Western ethical theory. 3 unexcused absences will result in a full grade reduction of the student's course grade.

TEXTS:


READING SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION: ETHICAL THEORY

THURS, SEPT 23rd: WEEK ONE
2. Hinman, "The Moral Point of View" (pp. 1-26)
3. Pojman:
   A. "What is Ethics" (pp. 1-7).
   B. Plato, "Crito" (pp. 8-14).

1. MORAL RELATIVISM:

SAT, SEPT 24th:
1. Hinman, "The Role of Relativism in Moral Life" (pp. 26-54).
2. Pojman:
   A. Herodotus, "Custom is King" (p. 20)
   B. Thomas Aquinas, "Objectivism: Natural Law" (pp. 21-34).
   C. Ruth Benedict, "A Defense of Ethical Relativism" (pp. 34-38).

TUES, SEPT 28th: WEEK TWO
1. Hinman, "The Diversity of Theories" (pp. 54-82).
2. Pojman:
   A. Louis Pojman, "A Critique of Ethical Relativism" (pp. 38-52).
B. Gilbert Harman: "Moral Relativism Defended" (pp. 52-62).
C. Quiz #1.

2. EGOISM, ALTRUISM AND EVOLUTIONARY THEORY:

THURS, SEPT 30th:
1. Hinman, "The Ethics of Selfishness: Egoism" (pp. 121-155).
2. Pojman:
   A. Thomas Hobbes, "The Leviathan" (pp. 67-80).
   B. Joel Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism" (pp. 80-92).
   C. Brian Medlin, "Ultimate Principles and Ethical Egoism" (pp. 92-97).

TUES, OCT 5th:
THREE
1. Pojman:
   A. Michael Ruse, "Evolution and Ethics: The Sociobiological Approach" (pp. 111-131).
   B. Elliot Sober, "Prospects for an Evolutionary Ethics" (pp. 131-142).
   C. Quiz #2.

3. UTILITARIANISM:

THURS, OCT 7TH:
1. Hinman, "The Ethics of Consequences: Utilitarianism" (pp. 155-190).
2. Pojman:
   A. John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism" (pp. 189-211).
   B. J. J. C. Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism" (pp. 211-218).

TUES, OCT 12th:
WEEK FOUR
1. Pojman:
   A. Kai Nielsen, "Against Moral conservatism" (pp. 218-226).
   B. Bernard Williams, "Against Utilitarianism" (pp. 226-236).
2. Quiz # 3.

THURS, OCT 14TH:
1. Pojman:
   A. Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality" (pp. 236-254).
   B. Robert Nozick, "Side Constraints" (pp. 254-258).
   C. Philippa Foot, "Utilitarianism and the Virtues" (pp. 258-268).
2. Quiz # 4.

4. KANT AND DEONTOLOGICAL MORAL APPROACHES TO MORAL THEORY:

TUES, OCT 19TH:
WEEK FIVE
2. Pojman:
   A. Immanuel Kant, "The Foundations of the Metaphysic of Morals" (pp. 289-315).

THURS, OCT 21st:
1. Pojman:
   A. Fred Feldman, "Kantian Ethics" (pp. 323-335).
   B. Onora O'Neill, "Kant's Formula of the End in Itself and World Hunger" (pp. 335-346).
   C. Quiz # 5.

TUES, OCT 26TH:
WEEK SIX
1. Pojman:
   A. Philippa Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" (pp. 346-352).
   B. Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck" (pp. 352-359).

5. ARISTOTLE AND VIRTUE ETHICS:

THURS, OCT 28th:
1. Midterm Examination.

TUES, NOV 2nd:
WEEK SEVEN
1. Hinman, "The Ethics of Character: Aristotle and Our Contemporaries" (pp. 286-320).
2. Pojman:
   A. Aristotle, "The Ethics of Virtue" (pp. 365-379).

THURS, NOV 4TH:
1. Pojman:
   A. Bernard Mayo, "Virtue and the Moral Life" (pp. 379-382).
   B. William Frankena, "A Critique of Virtue-Based Ethical Systems" (pp. 382-388).
   C. Quiz # 6

TUES, NOV 9th:
WEEK EIGHT
1. Pojman:
   A. Walter Schaller, "Are Virtues No More Than Dispositions to Obey Moral Rules" (pp. 388-395).
   B. Robert Loudan, "Some Vices of Virtue Ethics" (pp. 395-405).
   C. Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Nature of Virtues" (pp. 405-419).

THURS., NOV. 11th:
1. Pojman:
   A. Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints" (pp. 419-431).
   B. Louis Pojman, "In Defense of Moral Saints" (pp. 431-437).
6. THE CHALLENGE OF DIVERSITY: THE ETHICS OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY:

TUES., NOV. 16th: WEEK NINE
   1. Hinman, "The Ethics of Diversity: Gender, Ethnicity and Individuality" (pp. 321-357).

THURS., NOV. 18th:
   1. Hinman, "The Ethics of Diversity: Gender, Ethnicity and Individuality" (Cont.).

TUES, NOV 23rd: WEEK TEN
   1. Student Evaluations.

FINALS WEEK