

PHL 202

Elementary Ethics

Spring 2017

Instructor: Joey Tuminello

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Office Hours: MW 11AM - 12PM and by appt.

Class Time: MWF 10 - 10:50 AM

Classroom: NSH 110

Office: IA 216

Course Description

This course focuses on ethics, the branch of philosophy that consists of examining questions and justification regarding what we should do (or refrain from doing), how we should live our lives, and what makes actions right or wrong. Throughout the term, we will survey the historical and intellectual development of ethical theory, and will hone our critical thinking skills in evaluating the relationships between various approaches to ethics, considering both the merits and limitations of these views. We will discuss the impacts of religion and science on ethical theories, as well as the ways that ethical theory can be utilized to engage in real-world ethical decision-making. Students will further improve their ability to develop and question their own perspectives, to consider the views of others charitably and with respect, and to identify and evaluate concrete ethical issues.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the distinguishing characteristics of the most prominent ethical theories.
- Identify strengths and weakness in their own reasoning process in regard to moral dilemmas, particularly the presence of logical fallacies.
- Gain insight into their personal values systems which influence moral decision making.
- Apply analytical skills to social or natural phenomena to explain, evaluate or predict human behavior.
- Communicate an understanding of the cultural historical contexts in western culture, connections to other disciplines, and relevance to their own lives.
- Identify and analyze complex practices, values, and beliefs and the culturally and historically defined meanings of difference.

Course Materials

All required readings will be made available through Canvas, as well as through our shared folder on Google Drive. Students are required to bring either digital copies or printed copies of readings to class on the appropriate dates.

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation (10%)

Student participation is required in this class. This includes participation in class discussions as well as in-class group work. Failure to participate in class activities will result in a loss of participation points.

Exams (40%)

Over the course of the term, students will take both a midterm exam and a final exam. The midterm exam will take place on **Wednesday, May 3**, and the final exam will take place on **Wednesday, June 14, from 8-9:50 AM**. Each exam is worth 20% of the total course grade. Exams will be comprehensive, and will consist of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions.

Argumentative Paper (30%)

Students will write one argumentative paper on a topic relevant to any of the course themes. Students will select their own topics, and are encouraged to consult with the instructor (during office hours, via email, or during a scheduled appointment) when determining their topics. Detailed information on paper requirements and recommendations will be included in a "Paper Guidelines" document on Canvas, and will also be discussed in class. The first draft of the paper is due on **Friday, May 19 by 11:59 PM**, and this draft is worth 15% of the total course grade. The instructor will return these drafts with feedback for each student within one week of the due date. Students will then revise their papers based on instructor feedback on their first drafts. The final draft of the paper is due on **Friday, June 9 by 11:59 PM**, and is also worth 15% of the total course grade.

Reading Quizzes (20%)

Throughout the term, the instructor will administer 14 unannounced in-class reading quizzes. Each quiz will consist of a single multiple choice, true/false, or short essay question. At the end of the term, the instructor will apply each student's ten highest reading quiz grades when calculating final grades for the course. Each reading quiz is worth two points.

Grading Policy

This course is graded according to the requirements specified and weighted above. Final grades will be issued as follows:

A = 90%+

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = 0-59%

Course Policies

Makeup/Late Assignment Policy: The instructor may grant permission for makeup exams/quizzes and for extensions on argumentative paper drafts, but students must contact the instructor prior to the due date of the assignment in order to utilize this policy. If there is an emergency situation that prevents students from completing an assignment on time, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements.

Classroom Behavior: Respect must be shown for the instructor and fellow classmates at all times. This includes being on time for class, not leaving early (unless prior notice is given for exceptional situations), having your phone on silent (or off), refraining from disrespectful comments, and any other actions which may be distracting to the instructor or the class. Any disruptive, rude, or inappropriate behavior can and will result in the loss of participation points. **Electronic devices are only allowed for accessing course materials and taking notes during class.** If students abuse the use of electronic devices in class, all use of such devices in class will be prohibited.

Class Cancellation: In the event of class being cancelled (due to campus closure or for other reasons), students should assume that any readings, assignments, or exams due on the day class is cancelled will instead be due at the next scheduled class meeting. Any necessary adjustments to the schedule will be announced at the next class meeting and posted on Canvas.

Academic Conduct: Students are responsible for reading, understanding and knowing LBCC's Student Code of Conduct which can be found at: http://www.linnbenton.edu/files/dmfile/STUDENT_RIGHTS_Handbook_Fall_2010_with_VOID_Statement_Replaced_Wording_OK_9_21_1012.pdf. Academic dishonesty is of the utmost importance for maintaining the integrity of the course and ensuring fairness in each student's learning experience. All cases of academic dishonesty will result in the student receiving an F on that assignment. If a student commits more than one case of academic dishonesty, that student will receive an F as their final grade in the course. The instructor will also report all cases of academic dishonesty to the Associate Dean of Student Development and the Dean of Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities.

Disability Accommodations Statement: LBCC is committed to inclusiveness and equal access to higher education. If you have approved accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) and would like to use your accommodations in this class, please talk to your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs. If you believe you may need accommodations, but are not yet registered with CFAR, please go to <http://linnbenton.edu/cfar> for steps on how to apply for services or call 541-917-4789.

Drop/Withdrawal Information, and other Academic Dates: Found here: <https://www.linnbenton.edu/academiccalendar>

Class Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in-class and on Canvas. It is your responsibility to obtain the amended schedule.

Course Introduction

- 4/3/17 - Introduction to course, syllabus, classroom policies, and argumentative paper guidelines
- 4/5/17 - Overview of philosophy and ethics; **Reading:** James and Stuart Rachels, "What is Morality?"
- 4/7/17 - Basics of Argumentation and Logical Fallacies; **Reading:** "Logical Fallacies Handout"
- 4/10/17 - Logical Fallacies, continued

Relativism and Subjectivism About Ethics

- 4/12/17 - Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism," pp.15-24
- 4/14/17 - Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism," pp. 24-32
- 4/17/17 - Rachels, "Subjectivism in Ethics," pp. 33-43

Religion and Ethics

- 4/19/17 - Rachels, "Does Morality Depend on Religion?" pp. 49-55
- 4/21/17 - **LBCC Staff Inservice - No Class Meeting**
- 4/24/17 - Rachels, "Does Morality Depend on Religion?" pp. 55-63

Ethics and Self-Interest

4/26/17 - Rachels, "Ethical Egoism," pp. 64-71

4/28/17 - Rachels, "Ethical Egoism," pp. 71-81

Midterm Exam & Review

5/1/17 - Review for Midterm Exam

5/3/17 - **Midterm Exam**

Utilitarianism

5/5/17 - John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism"

5/8/17 - Lisa Cassidy, "Women Shopping and Women Sweatshopping"

5/10/17 - Alastair Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases"

Deontological Ethics

5/12/17 - Rachels, "Are There Absolute Moral Rules?"

5/15/17 - Rachels, "Kant and Respect for Persons"

5/17/17 - Markus Rothhaar, "Human dignity and human rights in bioethics: the Kantian approach"

Virtue Ethics

5/19/17 - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (excerpts); **Argumentative Paper First Draft Due by 11:59 PM on Canvas**

5/22/17 - Raja Halwani, "Virtue Ethics, Casual Sex, and Objectification"

5/24/17 - Cheryl Abbate, "Virtues and Animals"

The Ethics of Care

5/26/17 - Virginia Held, "The Ethics of Care"

5/29/17 - **Memorial Day - No Class Meeting**

5/31/17 - Kyle Whyte and Chris Cuomo, "Ethics of Caring in Environmental Ethics: Indigenous and Feminist Philosophies"

Contemporary Moral Issues (TBA)

6/2/17 - TBA

6/5/17 - TBA

6/7/17 - TBA

Final Exam and Review

6/9/17 - Review for Final Exam; **Argumentative Paper Final Draft Due by 11:59 PM on Canvas**

Final Exam: Wednesday, June 14, 8-9:50 AM