

Syl03Fdennehy012224002

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Spring 2003
Office Hours: T 11AM-12
R 1-2PM &
by appt.

Required Texts (USF bookstore)
How Should I Live?, Feezell & Hancock
Ethics for Modern Life, Abelson & Friquegnon

Course Objectives

To lead the student to an appreciation of Socrates' dictum, "The unexamined life is not worth living" and to introduce him or her to the classic ethical theories, which are both the consequences and the tools of the *examined life*; to demonstrate the importance of leading an ethical life and to acquire the ability to formulate an ethical argument and to distinguish between ethical and non-ethical considerations; finally and most important is the objective of leading the student to understand that practical knowledge, as opposed to theoretical knowledge, is ordered to the concrete, particular circumstance; thus ethical theories are ordered to action. Toward this end, the student will address contemporary ethical problems, such as war, capital punishment, honesty in the work place, abortion, etc., by identifying the ethical theories embedded in their pro and con arguments.

Learning Outcomes

- 1) The student will be familiar with the various ethical theories: e.g., hedonism, utilitarianism, natural law, deontology, relativism, etc.;
- 2) the student will identify the crucial points of difference between the theories;
- 3) the student will accurately define ethical terms, such as good, duty, and responsibility as well as show the difference between descriptive and prescriptive statements;
- 4) the student will present and defend an ethical theory that embodies the Socratic vision of the *examined life*.

Grading

Evaluation of student performance in the course will be based on attendance, 3 written tests and a final examination.

Attendance: Four unexcused absences will lower the final grade by one full letter grade, five unexcused absences will lower it by two full letter grades, etc. Thus a series of unexcused absences can result in an "F" for the course. Only a physician's note or a note stating that the absence was due to an official university activity or documented evidence of extenuating circumstances will be accepted as grounds for an excused absence.

Tests: The tests will be administered every several weeks and will comprise 60% of the final grade; they will be given on Wed., Sept. 17th, Wed., Oct. 8th, and Wed. Nov. 12; the **final examination** will constitute 40% of the final grade; it will be administered on **Monday, December 15th at 8AM**. An unexcused failure to take any of the tests at the appointed time and place will result in an "F" for the test; an unexcused failure to take the final examination at the appointed time and place will result in an "F" for the course. As

with class attendance, only a physician's note or a note stating that the absence was due to an official university activity or documented evidence of extenuating circumstances will be accepted as an excuse.

Class Schedule

September

M 9/1 Holiday (Labor Day) – no class

W 9/3 Introduction to the course

M 9/8 Dialogue 1: “What is Ethics?”

W 9/10 Dialogue 2: “Ethics and Religion”

M 9/15 Mortimer, “Religious Absolutism”

W 9/17 Dialogue 3: “Ethics and Relativism”

M 9/22 Benedict, “Cultural Relativism”

W 9/24 Dialogue 4: “Ethics and Self-Interest”

M 9/29 Test

October

W 10/1 Dialogue 5, “Ethics and Consequences”

M 10/6 Smart, Utilitarianism

W 10/8 Dialogue 6, “Ethics and Persons”

M 10/13 Kant, “Rational Absolutism”

W 10/15 No class, Chicago

M 10/20 Dialogue 7, “Ethics and Virtue” Berkeley Debate

W 10/22 Foot, “Virtue Ethics”

M 10/27 Test

W 10/29 Dialogue 8, “Female Voices”

November

M 11/3 Aquinas, “The Sin of Suicide” Hume, “The Right of Suicide”

W 11/5 No class Dallas

M 11/10 Sullivan, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"

W 11/12 Rachels, "In Defense of Both"

M 11/17 Noonan, "The Immorality of Abortion"

W 11/19 Warren, "The Right to Abortion"

M 11/24 Test

W 11/26 Amsterdam, "The Folly of Capital Punishment"

December

M 12/1 Van den Haag, "The Wisdom of Capital Punishment"

W 12/3 Epilogue: "Is Ethics Worth While?"

M 12/8 review

W 12/10 last day of class; review

M 12/15 Final Examination 8 AM