PHILOSOPHY 1100 HONORS - INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Section 880
TTh 3:30-4:45
Hellems 196

Professor Michael Tooley
Hellems, Room 277
Office Hours: TTh 12:30-2:00
(Or immediately after class.)

Course Readings

I have become rather dissatisfied with ethics textbooks, which seem to me generally overpriced – something that may be due in part to the fact that publishers are constantly coming out with new editions. As a result, I am currently experimenting with the idea of using readings that I shall place on E-Reserve. (I would very much appreciate your feedback, as the semester progresses, on how you find this alternative to the use of a textbook.)

Classes

Once we get over the introductory, background material on philosophy and ethics, and the critical thinking material, our classes will be a combination of lectures and discussion. It is very important that people come to class prepared to take part in those discussions. This means that you should do the readings in advance, and then think about the issues, so that when an opportunity arises in class to set out your opinion on the issue in question, you are prepared to offer a thoughtful view, along with your reasons for thinking that your view is correct.

Class discussions will sometimes incorporate a mini critical thinking exercise, in which we briefly discuss some controversial issue. When this is the case, the topic to be discussed will be announced in the preceding class, and you should come to class prepared to advance a view on the issue, and a reason for your view.

Course Work

Your grade in this course will be based upon seven critical thinking exercises, two essay-writing exercises (each involving two parts), and a final examination.

Instructions Regarding Assignments

Please note the following very important points:

(1) All assignments are to be downloaded from the Philosophy 1100 Honors website, which is http://spot.colorado.edu/~tooley/Philosophy1100Honors.html.

(2) You should download Exercise 1, read through, and bring it to class on Thursday, August 30, so that we can talk about that first assignment, and discuss any questions that you have.

(3) All assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the due dates listed below.

(4) The policy concerning late assignments is set out below.

(5) Whenever you hand in an assignment, you should bring a downloaded copy of the next assignment to that class, since that is when that assignment will be explained and discussed.
The Web Site for Philosophy 1100 Honors

My home page is http://spot.colorado.edu/~tooley/. Course materials can be accessed either from my home page, by clicking on the link “Current Courses”, or, more directly, by going to the following, Philosophy 1100 Honors web site:

http://spot.colorado.edu/~tooley/Philosophy1100Honors.html.

Those course materials include the following: (1) the exercises, and essay assignments and instructions; (2) a course syllabus; (3) a course overview; (4) lecture material relevant to some of the exercises; (5) lecture notes on several topics; (6) a final examination handout; and (7) some additional readings for the course.

Contacting Me Concerning Any Matters, and Especially Urgent Ones

People tend to rely far too heavily on e-mail. This is not a good idea in my case, since I sometimes get absorbed in my research, and then I do not always check my email on a regular basis. In addition, almost all matters that come up can be dealt with much more quickly and effectively by a conversation. So please contact me by telephone, rather than by email, especially if it is a matter of some urgency.

My home phone is (303) 541-0933, and you will almost always be able to reach me between the hours of 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and on weekends as well, and in the evenings on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Exercises

Exercise 1: The Infallibility of the Bible. (5%)
Due date: Thursday, September 6

Exercise 2: Morality and the Bible. (5%)
Due date: Thursday, September 13

Exercise 3: Jesus and Christianity. (5%)
Due date: Thursday, September 20

Exercise 4: Validity. (5%)
Due date: Thursday, September 27

Exercise 5: Inference-Indicators and the Logical Structure of Arguments. (5%)
Due date: Thursday, October 4

Exercise 6: Analyzing a More Complex Argument. (5%)
Due date: Thursday, October 11

Exercise 7: The Technique of Counterexamples. (5%)
Due date: Thursday, October 18
The Essay-Writing Exercises

**First Essay:** An essay of four to five pages in length (or about 1000-1250 words), on a topic chosen from a list of topics. Full instructions, including a list of topics, can be found on our class website at http://spot.colorado.edu/~tooley/FirstEssayExercise.html. (20%)

**Sub-assignments:**

(a) Your basic thesis, your central supporting argument, and one important objection that you will address. (5%)
Due date: Thursday, October 25

(b) The completed essay. (15%)
Due date: Thursday, November 8

**Second Essay:** An essay of four to five pages in length (or about 1000-1250 words), on a topic chosen from a list of topics. Full instructions, for this second essay, including a list of topics in a variety of areas, can be found at http://spot.colorado.edu/~tooley/SecondEssayExercise.html. (20%)

**Sub-assignments:**

(a) Your basic thesis, your central supporting argument, and one important objection that you will address. (5%)
Due date: Thursday, November 15

(b) The completed essay. (15%)
Due date: Thursday, December 6

**Final Examination**

There will be a two and one-half hour, closed book, essay-style examination on Thursday, December 20th, at the (not entirely agreeable!) time of 7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. in Hellems 196. (25%)

Detailed information about the format of the final examination, together with a list of possible questions from which those on the final examination will be selected, can be found at http://spot.colorado.edu/~tooley/FinalExaminationHandout-1100-Honors.html, and http://spot.colorado.edu/~tooley/PossibleExamQuestions-1100-Honors.html.

**Policy on Late Assignments**

(1) If you are not going to be able to hand in an assignment by the due date, you need to contact me about this, either in person, or by telephone, or by e-mail so that I can determine whether there is an adequate reason for late submission.

(2) This should be done **no later** than the time at which the assignment is due.

(3) If there is an adequate reason for late submission, **supporting documentation** – such as a medical note – will generally be needed, and it should be provided as soon as possible.

(4) If there is no adequate reason why you were unable to complete the assignment by class on the due date, the assignment may be handed in later, but it will receive only **three-quarters credit**.
The University Library’s E-Reserve

The main readings for the course are available on the University Library’s E-Reserve system. To get electronic copies from E-Reserve, proceed as follows:

1. Go to http://libraries.colorado.edu/search/p
2. Enter the name “Tooley”
3. Select the course PHIL 1100 (The password for the course is “phil”).
4. You will see a list of all of the readings that are available.

Topics and Required Readings

The topics to be covered in this course, if time permits, along with the required readings, are given below. You should attempt to complete a significant part of the readings assigned for a given topic before the first class in which that topic is covered. (It’s not possible to specify dates in advance for a course like this, so I’ll let you know when we are close to moving on to the next topic.)

I. Introductory Material: Critical Thinking, Meta-Ethics, Philosophy, and Religion

Tom Regan, section 1 of chapter 1 - "Introduction" - of Matters of Life and Death, pages 1-2.
Tom Regan, "Meta-Ethics" - sections 2 through 6 of chapter 1 of Matters of Life and Death, pages 3-12.

II. Classical Theories in Normative Ethics

Tom Regan, "Normative Ethics" - sections 7 through 20 of chapter 1 of Matters of Life and Death, pages 12-29.
John Stuart Mill, Chapters 1 and 2 of Utilitarianism.
Aristotle, selections from Books 1 and 2 of his Nicomachean Ethics.
Immanuel Kant, selections from Chapters 1 and 2 of the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals.

III. Sexual Morality

Readings from the Bible: Exodus, chapters 20-23; Leviticus, chapters 18-20, Deuteronomy, chapters 21-22; 1 Samuel, chapter 15; Matthew, chapter 5, verses 27-32; chapter 15, verses 19-20; chapter 19, verses 3-12; Mark, chapter 10, verses 2-12; Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 21-33; Romans, chapter 1, verses 18-32.

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible is available at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv/browse.html
The King James Version of the Bible is available at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/k/kjv/browse.html
"The Vatican Declaration on Sexual Ethics" (1975)

The copy on electronic reserve contains section headings that I have added to make it easier to locate quickly passages dealing with specific topics. A copy without the added headings is available online at


The second page of this selection contains the table of contents of Scruton’s book, so that you will have an idea of the content of the book as a whole. This is followed by the first two pages from chapter 11 – pages 322 and 323 – which I have included to give you an overview of that chapter as a whole. I have then omitted pages 324 through 335, and the material that we will be discussing starts with the second paragraph on page 337 (“We must now attempt . . .”).


IV. Homosexuality


“Homosexual behavior in animals” Wikipedia article.

“List of animals displaying homosexual behavior“, Wikipedia article.

Updated versions of the preceding two Wikipedia articles may be available at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexual_behavior_in_animals


V. Pornography


Walter Berns, "Beyond the (Garbage) Pale, or Democracy, Censorship and the Arts", in Applying Ethics, 4th ed., pages 129-132.


VI. Prostitution

VII. Suicide and Euthanasia

A. Suicide
Tom Beauchamp, "Suicide" - chapter 3 of Matters of Life and Death, pages 69-120.
David Hume, “Of Suicide.” (Translated into contemporary English by Jonathan Bennett, Early Modern Texts)
A revised version may be available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/suicide/

B. Euthanasia
James Rachels, "Euthanasia" - chapter 2 of Matters of Life and Death, pages 30-68.

VIII. The Moral Status of Animals


**IX. Human Cloning**


**X. Abortion**


**Course Concerns and Plagiarism Policy**

**1. Concerns Regarding this Course**

If at any point during the semester you have any concerns about the exercises, lectures, discussions, or anything else in this course, please talk to me about those matters.

If you still have concerns after talking with me, or if you feel that the matter is one that you need to discuss with a third party, you should contact either Professor Wes Morriston, who is the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Philosophy Department (Wes.Morriston@Colorado.edu, 303-492-8297), or Professor Graeme Forbes, who is the Head of the Philosophy Department (Graeme.Forbes@Colorado.edu, 303-492-7120).
2. Course Plagiarism Policy

Each student is expected to submit his or her own original work for each exercise, essay, and final exam. So one should not, for example, discuss answers to questions in an exercise with other people in the class before handing in the exercise.

The use of essays and other material downloaded from the Internet is obviously a serious case of plagiarism. But, in general, any substantial use of material from any source must be clearly acknowledged, and any ideas should be expressed in one's own words.

A first violation of this plagiarism policy, or the University Honor Code, or the Honor Code pledge shown below will result in a grade of zero for the relevant piece of work, and, in accordance with University requirements, will have to be reported. In addition, if that first violation is especially serious – such as the copying of a whole document – the result will be a failing grade for the course as a whole.

A second violation will result in a failing grade for the course as a whole.

Honor Code Pledge

“On my honor, as a University of Colorado at Boulder student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this work.”