

ETHICS, JUSTICE AND LAW

PHILOSOPHY 1051, SPRING 2019

SECTION 02

MWF, 12:00–12:50, Burgett 115

CONTACT INFORMATION

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

An exploration of challenging and controversial issues such as euthanasia, the meaning of equality, and the role of religious beliefs in a society with multiple religious traditions, starting with issues at the level of personal ethical beliefs, then moving to broader issues of social justice, and concluding with the role of law in a pluralistic society.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course challenges students to investigate a range of controversial normative questions. To begin, we'll familiar ourselves with the three leading ethical frameworks (viz., consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics). Then, we'll consider a series of questions about ethics, justice, and the law. For instance, we'll consider the morality of abortion and violent video games. We'll consider whether justice demands affirmative action and/or open border policies. Finally, we'll consider whether capital punishment and/or euthanasia should be legal. Along the way, we'll develop the philosophical skills we need to answer these questions and justify our answers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. identify and describe the three leading ethical frameworks
2. apply those theoretical frameworks to questions about ethics, justice, and the law
3. articulate and defend their views on these questions by:
 - a. constructing *valid*, well-supported arguments for their views (*intellectual courage*)
 - b. identifying *strong*, well-supported objections to those arguments (*intellectual empathy*)
 - c. providing *compelling*, well-supported responses to those objections (*intellectual humility*)

OFFICE HOURS

- I am available to meet on a first-come, first-served basis on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00-4:00 and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00-4:00 pm.
- I am also available by appointment.

REQUIRED TEXT

- Shafer-Landau, Russ. *Living Ethics*. Oxford University Press, 2019.
- All other assigned readings will be available in Moodle.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Studies show that those who take handwritten notes retain more information than those type out their notes (see, for example, <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away>). In light of that, I ask that students do not use laptops (or tablets) during class (unless I specify otherwise). If you think this is a bad policy or that I should make an exception in your case, please let me know. You may convince me.

GRADES

- Students earn “D”s by demonstrating their ability to *reliably* meet course objectives 1-2.
- Students earn “C”s by demonstrating their ability to *reliably* meet course objectives 1-3a.
- Students earn “B”s by demonstrating their ability to *reliably* meet course objectives 1-3b.
- Students earn “A”s by demonstrating their ability to *reliably* meet course objectives 1-3c.

GRADED ELEMENTS

ATTENDANCE

Students should attend class regularly. After a student’s third unexcused absence, each additional absence will result in a 2% reduction in his/her final grade.

HOMEWORK

Students will receive a number of homework assignments over the first seven weeks. They should complete these assignments on their own, before class, and then rework (most of them) in class with a small group of their peers. Students can accumulate up to sixty (60) points this way.

CLASS PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION

Students should prepare for each class period by reading (and flagging!) the assigned reading and completing the associated reading quiz (2 points/reading). During class, they should be active participants in small and large group activities and discussions.

PAPERS

Students will write three papers, one on ethics, one on justice, and one on the law. Although each paper will take a slightly different form, each will require basically the same thing. In short, students will be required to take positions on controversial normative questions. They will present valid, well-supported arguments for their positions, consider strong, well-supported objections to their arguments, and provide compelling, well-supported responses to those objections. The first paper is worth 60 points, the second is worth 80 points, and the third is worth 100 points.

<i>GRADED ELEMENT</i>	points
Homework	60
Class Preparation and Participation	60
Papers	240
Total	360

ASSIGNED READINGS (Spring 2019)

Week 1 – Introduction to Ethics, Justice and Law

- 1/14 **Incoming Survey**
1/16 Spelman, Skill #1: Evaluating Arguments
Shafer-Landau, Chapter 2, “Moral Reasoning”
1/18 **Homework #1: Evaluating Arguments**

Week 2 – Cultural Relativism

- 1/21 *No Class (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)*
1/23 Spelman, Skill #2: Constructing and Reconstructing Moral Arguments
Harry Gensler, “Cultural Relativism”
1/25 **Homework #2: Constructing and Reconstructing Moral Arguments**

Week 3 – Consequentialism and Poverty Relief

- 1/28 Spelman, Skill #3: Using Thought Experiments and Counterexamples as Evidence
Shafer-Landau, Peter Singer, “The Singer Solution to World Poverty”
1/30 Shafer-Landau, Chapter 5, “Consequentialism”
2/1 **Homework #3: Using Thought Experiments and Counterexamples as Evidence**

Week 4 – Deontology and Eating Meat

- 2/4 Spelman, Skill #4: Responding to Objections
Shafer-Landau, Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”
2/6 Shafer-Landau, Chapter 6, “Kantian Ethics”
2/8 **Homework #4: Responding to Objections**

Week 5 – Virtue Ethics and Violent Video Games

- 2/11 Morgan Luck, “The Gamer’s Dilemma”
2/13 Shafer-Landau, Chapter 10, “Virtue Ethics”
2/15 **Homework #5: Ethical Theory**

Week 6 – Abortion

- 2/18 Spelman, How to Read Philosophy
Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, “Zika Abortions”
Shafer-Landau, Chapter 12, “Abortion”
Shafer-Landau, Don Marquis, “Why Abortion Is Immoral”
2/20 Shafer-Landau, Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”
2/22 Shafer-Landau, Rosalind Hursthouse, “Virtue Theory and Abortion”

Week 7 – Writing Workshop #1

- 2/25 Spelman, How to Write Philosophy
2/27
3/1 **Paper #1 Due**
Law & Order: SVU, “Imposter”

Spring Break

- 3/4
3/6
3/8



Week 8 – Economic Justice and Economic Inequality

- 3/11 Shafer-Landau, Chapter 16, “Economic Justice and Economic Inequality”
3/13 Shafer-Landau, John Rawls, “A Theory of Justice”
3/15 Shafer-Landau, Robert Nozick, “The Entitlement Theory of Justice”

Week 9 – Affirmative Action

- 3/18 *Barbara Grutter v. Lee Bollinger, et al.*
3/20 Shafer-Landau, Chapter 18, “The Legacy of Racism”
3/22 Shafer-Landau, Daniel M. Hausman, “Affirmative Action: Bad Arguments and Some Good Ones”

Week 10 – Globalization and Immigration

- 3/25 Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, “Muslim Ban?”
Shafer-Landau, Chapter 17, “Globalization and Immigration”
3/27 Shafer-Landau, Michael Huemer, “Is There a Right to Immigrate?”
3/29 Shafer-Landau, David Miller, “Immigration: The Case for Limits”

Week 11 – Writing Workshop #2

- 4/1
4/3
4/5 **Paper #2 Due**
Bull, “Justified”

Week 12 – Capital Punishment

- 4/8 Shafer-Landau, Chapter 20, “The Death Penalty”
4/10 Shafer-Landau, Igor Primoratz, “Justifying Legal Punishment”
4/12 Shafer-Landau, Stephen Nathanson, “An Eye for an Eye?”

Week 13 – Drugs and Addiction

- 4/15 Shafer-Landau, Chapter 21, “Drugs”
4/17 Shafer-Landau, Robert E. Goodin, “Permissible Paternalism: Saving Smokers from Themselves”
4/19 *No Class (Easter Recess)*

Week 14 – Euthanasia

- 4/22 *No Class (Easter Recess)*
4/24 Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, “Euthanasia for Alcoholism”
Shafer-Landau, Chapter 15, “Euthanasia”
4/26 Shafer-Landau, James Rachels, “The Morality of Euthanasia”

Week 15 – Parent Licensing

- 4/29 Hugh LaFollette, “Licensing Parents”
5/1 Lawrence E. Frisch, “On Licentious Licensing: A Reply to Hugh LaFollette”
5/3 Hugh LaFollette, “A Reply to Frisch”

Final Exam (Wednesday, May 8 from 11:45-1:45 pm in Burgett 115)

Paper #3 Due

See online version for policy statements.

POLICY STATEMENTS

ACADEMIC HONESTY

http://www.onu.edu/student_life/student_conduct/student_handbook

The University expects its students to conduct themselves in a dignified and honorable manner as mature members of the academic community and assumes that individually and collectively they will discourage acts of academic dishonesty. The University also expects cooperation among administrators, faculty, staff, and students in preventing acts of academic dishonesty, in detecting such acts, reporting them, and identifying those who commit them, and in providing appropriate punishment for offenders. The University Code of Academic Student Conduct is found in Appendix C of the Student Handbook, which you can find at the website listed above.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR POLICY

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

http://www.onu.edu/student_life/disability_services

Students requiring particular accommodations because of physical and/or learning disabilities should contact their Dean's office prior to or during the first week of classes. For additional information, see the website listed above.

I should also note that I will make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. Please let me know sometime during the first two weeks of class if one of your religious obligations prohibits you from attending class on a particular day or completing a particular assignment.

TITLE IX POLICY

Ohio Northern University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, transgender status, gender identity, or gender expression in its educational, extracurricular, or athletic programs, or in any admission or employment decisions. ONU is committed to promptly and equitably responding to all reports of sexual discrimination with the goal of eliminating the misconduct and/or harassment, preventing its recurrence, and addressing its effects on any individual or the community.

To report sexual misconduct (violence) or sexual harassment, students may contact:

- Title IX Coordinator, Nancy Sabol, (419) 772-2219, n-sabol@onu.edu
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator, LaShonda Gurley, (419) 772-3145, l-gurley@onu.edu
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Brian Hofman, (419) 772-1878, b-hofman@onu.edu

To confidentially discuss sexual misconduct (violence) or sexual harassment, students may contact University Confidential Resources:

- Counseling Center, (419) 772-2190
- Health Center, (419) 772-2086
- Chaplain, (419) 772-2200

For more information, the University's Sexual Discrimination Policy is available at:

- https://www.onu.edu/files/sex_discrimination_policy_1.pdf