

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
PHILOSOPHY 2401, SPRING 2019

SECTION 06

TuTh, 12:00–1:15, Burgett 133

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Jonathan Spelman
Burgett 129, (419) 772-3091
j-selman@onu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course prepares students to think more critically about the ethical questions they will face as professionals. With that goal in mind, students will become familiar with the leading ethical theories (viz., consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics) and learn how to apply those theories to a variety of practical problems. In particular, students will investigate what professionals owe their clients, their local communities, their societies, and the environment. Accordingly, students will try to figure out when (if ever) they are morally required to give clients more information, break confidentiality, blow the whistle, participate in service organizations, etc. Along the way, students will develop the philosophical skills they need to answer these questions and justify their answers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. describe the three leading ethical theories (viz., consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics)
2. apply those theories to ethical questions that arise in their professions (and beyond!)
3. articulate and defend their answers to those 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 1:00-2:30 and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00-4:00 pm.
- I am also available by appointment.

REQUIRED TEXT

- All of the 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 second 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 must complete these assignments on their own, before class, and then they will 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 (3 points/reading). During class, they should be active participants in small and large group activities and discussions.

PAPERS

Students will write two papers, each of which will involve analyzing a different ethical case. After applying consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethicists to their cases, students will take positions on those cases. Then, students 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, and the second is worth 80 points.

FINAL EXAM

The final exam will require each student to apply consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics to a couple ethical cases. It will also require each student to take a position on a third case, present valid, well-supported arguments for his or her position, consider strong, well-supported objections to his or her argument, and provide compelling, well-supported responses to those objections. The final exam is worth 100 points.

<i>GRADED ELEMENT</i>	points
Homework	60
Class Preparation and Participation	60
Papers	140
Final Exam	100
Total	360

ASSIGNED READINGS

Week 1 – Evaluating Arguments

- 1/15 **Incoming Assessment**
IEB, “Bodily Identity Integrity Disorder”
1/17 Spelman, “Skill #1: Evaluating Arguments”

Week 2 – Constructing and Reconstructing Arguments

- 1/22 **Homework #1: Evaluating Arguments**
Spelman, “Skill #2: Constructing and Reconstructing Moral Arguments”
1/24 **Homework #2: Constructing and Reconstructing Moral Arguments**
IEB, “Omission on Application”

Week 3 – Ethical Theory

- 1/29 Spelman, “Skill #3: Examples and Thought Experiments”
Russ Shafer-Landau, “Consequentialism”
1/31 Spelman, “Skill #4: Counterexamples”
Russ Shafer-Landau, “Kantian Ethics”

Week 4 – Ethical Theory

- 2/5 **Homework #3: Examples, Thought Experiments, and Counterexamples**
Russ Shafer-Landau, “Virtue Ethics”
2/7 **Homework #4: Ethical Theory**

Week 5 – The Professions

- 2/12 **Homework #5: Which occupations are professions?**
Michael D. Bayles, “The Professions”
Michael Davis, “Professional Responsibility: Just Following the Rules?”
2/14 **Homework #6: Codes of Ethics**

Week 6 – Consent

- 2/19 Tom Dougherty, “Sex, Lies, and Consent”
2/21 Alan Meisel and Mark Kuczewski, “Legal and Ethical Myths About Informed Consent”

Week 7 – Confidentiality

- 2/26 Michael Huemer, “Devil’s Advocates: On the Ethics of Unjust Legal Advocacy”
2/28 Kenneth Kipnis, “A Defense of Unqualified Medical Confidentiality”
Sissela Bok, “The Limits of Confidentiality”

Spring Break

- 3/5 
3/7

Week 8 – Whistleblowing

- 3/12 Michael Davis, “Some Paradoxes of Whistleblowing”
3/14 David Kline, “On Complicity Theory”
Plato, “The Ring of Gyges”

Week 9 – Writing Workshop #1

- 3/19 Spelman, “How to Write a Philosophy Paper”
Paper #1 Handout
3/21 **Paper #1 Draft**

Week 10 – Social Responsibility

- 3/26 **Paper #1**
Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
Travis Timmerman, “A Reply to Singer”
3/28 Rachel Smolkin, “Off the Sidelines”

Week 11 – Conscientious Objection

- 4/2 Julie Cantor and Ken Baum, “The Limits of Conscientious Objection”
4/4 John Corvino, “Under God’s Authority”

Week 12 – Affirmative Action

- 4/9 Daniel M. Hausman, “Affirmative Action: Bad Arguments and Some Good Ones”
4/11 Victoria Sgarro, “What Are ‘Ethics in Design’?”

Week 13 – Writing Workshop #2

- 4/16 **Paper #2 Handout**
4/18 **Paper #2 Draft**

Week 14 – Assorted Topics

- 4/23 **Paper #2**
4/25

Week 15 – Assorted Topics

- 4/30
5/2 **Outgoing Assessment**

Final Exam

Wednesday, May 8, 4:15-6:15 pm in TBD

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