

Southern New Hampshire University
Course Reference Number (CRF) 05575

Course Syllabus: Honors 201
Fall/Spring Terms 2003-2004

Professor Eleanor Dunfey-Freiburger
Robert Frost Hall 309 x2254
Email: e.dunfey@snhu.edu

OFFICE HOURS: I am in my office every day but Friday. Please call or stop by to make an appointment. Barbara Thompson, 309A works with me and will be happy to let you know my schedule. I encourage you to communicate through Email, also.

TITLE: World Ethics

TEXT: Gregory, Wanda T. and Donna Giancola. World Ethics. CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. 2003 (ISBN: 0-534-51271-2).
Each student also needs a three-ring binder and pocket folder.

PURPOSE: To recognize and understand more fully, the importance of ethical reflection and action for people across the globe.

GOALS:

- To learn about and value our own ethical/philosophical roots
- To encourage an understanding and respect of ethical concepts in other cultures
- To research and present projects that show a grasp of core ethical principles and the consequences of ignoring them.

Ultimately, this intellectual and moral journey is an effort to “lift” us out of making judgments merely from the “I think” mode in order to evaluate issues and ideas from other perspectives. It is an effort, as well, to recognize that such a process does not reduce ethical decision making to relativism.

FOCUS: Recognizing the value of questioning is key to a mature process of critical thinking. In this course we will draw on several resources:

- Analysis and discussion of primary sources
- Film
- Guest lecturers
- Research and Presentation

POLICIES:

There is an expectation that students' dress, behavior, and preparation reflect respect and create an atmosphere conducive to learning.
Appropriate dress (no hats, etc) required for presentations

Attendance:

The subject matter requires interaction. Therefore, active participation in class is essential. Absence will impact student's grade. Excessive (more than two) unexcused absences may result in dismissal from course or failing grade. Conformity to college policy on cuts is expected.

Materials and Assigned Work:

- All reports must be typed/word processed unless exception is given. Careless errors (grammatical and spelling) are unacceptable in final drafts. APA or MLA format is required for citations.
- Readings must be completed to insure quality discussion.
- Students must conform to college standards regarding cheating/plagiarism.
- Late work receives half-grade.

Schedule: Adjustments will be made as needed; students are responsible to make note of any schedule change. Such adjustments are required to take advantage of speakers and/or field trips that could not be scheduled when this syllabus was developed.

Field Trips and Speakers: Students who have a legitimate conflict when a field trip or speaker is scheduled will notify me and complete a research paper (to be assigned) covering the topic.

Please note: All students are expected to take initiative in making appointments to meet with me early in the term to discuss seminar work. Such meetings will impact the participation portion of student's grade.

Evaluation: This is a 6-credit course. You will receive an X as a grade on your transcript in December, but I will give you a grade for your first semester's work. That grade will be averaged into your Spring term's work.

The following applies to Fall term only. Students will receive another syllabus in December for Spring term.

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|------------------------------|----|
| Attendance and Participation | 20 |
| Assigned Work for Classes | 40 |
| Tests (2) | 20 |
| Final Examination | 20 |

When approaching assignments in the vast arena of world ethics, consider the following:

The three A's:

Awareness

Analysis

Application

These three A's are the steps we will use in all our written work, particularly the research project .

Awareness covers all the areas we need to uncover to recognize an issue. Research tools (including online sources) and interviewing are included in this step—the “collecting information” step.

Analysis addresses questions and methods of substantiating a thesis. The critical thinking process is our tool in this step. Ethical Theories offer criteria by which we make judgments.

Application is the transfer of the first two steps to specific situations today. It is in this step that we make connections from the the information and theories to real life dilemmas—ethics in the business of living.

9/4 -First Class: Welcome! The title of this course: What do you think it means?
Course overview.
Why ask Why? The role of questioning in philosophy
Text: 23-25: Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (video)

9/9 –Week 1: (Due class 1)

Two-page reflection on Plato's Allegory in light of any current ethical dilemma you wish to discuss

Read Text; xiii-xx – Introduction

Class sessions:

Ethics (Ethos) the "measure" of character

Religion and Ethics?

"Man is the measure of all things" (Protagoras)

What good is it to say that if we do not know what 'man' is?

(Socrates' reply to Protagoras)

Terminology and the importance of Semantics

Synoptic philosophy

Socratic Dialogue

"The difference between us when we argue is that you think the conversation's over and I think it's just beginning."

(from "Jerry Maguire")

Philosophic argument

Need for different perspectives

9/15 -Week 2: (Due class 1)

Plato's "Euthyphro": 5ff

Prepare: 2-page typed response to readings. What do you think is

The role of questioning? Refer to "Allegory" and "Euthyphro"

Class sessions:

Discussion of the "Euthyphro"

Introduction to "The Defense..." What we are looking for

Plato's "Defense of Socrates" distributed

9/22 -Week 3: (Due class 1)

Read first half of Plato's "Defense of Socrates" – 2-page paper
 Select a minimum of 3 excerpts and discuss what you think each means as well as your opinion of it in relation to living a good life.

Class sessions:

Class 1: We will discuss your assignments in light of current ethical issues in our corporations. I encourage you to attend the following which, with a 2-3 page response/reaction paper, will give you extra credit.

Monday, September 22: Speaker: David Weinstein, Fidelity
 "Ethics and Corporate Governance"
 4:00-5:00 Walker Auditorium

Class 2: Plato's "Defense of Socrates"
 Selections from "Barefoot in Athens"

9/29- Week 4: (Due class 1)

Finish reading the "Defense of Socrates" and write 3 pages: Select, analyze, and apply at least 5 excerpts from the "Defense."

Class sessions:

Class 1: Ethics and Egoism: Might is Right!
 Read and discuss in class: Text: p.12ff, Plato's "Ring of Gyges"
 Review

Class 2: **Test 1**

10/6 - Week 5: (Due class 1) – Tests returned - Comments

Text: p. 29: Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics," Bks. I,II,X
 Find and read a current article (newspaper/magazine/journal) that reflects a virtue or vice (honesty, greed, etc.)
 Then, write a 2-page letter "from Aristotle" to the person about whom this story is written. Give advice you think, from your reading of the Nicomachean Ethics, that Aristotle would give.

Class sessions

Discussions: What is happiness? Success? What is virtue? (article)
 Epicurus and Epictetus: Text: 38 ff
 Alisdair McIntyre's "After Virtue" – Text: 161 ff

10/13 (holiday) – Week 6: (Due 10/16)

Select Epicurus, Epictetus or McIntyre and defend that philosopher's ideas about "the good life." Creativity is encouraged here! 3-pages. Use textual references in your paper (3-4 pages).

Class session (10/17)

Values and the development of Ethical Theories
Deontology, Kant's "Metaphysics of Morals"
Utilitarianism, Mill's "What is Utilitarianism?"
Assign students discussion question on p. 93

10/20 -Week 7: (Due class 1)

Response to text readings: 87-93 (Do assigned question on p. 93)
Written response should be thorough with text references

Class session

Understanding ethical theories as ways to "measure" an action
Thursday, October 23 class – TBA

10/27 - Week 8: (Due class 1)

Read Marx: pp. 104-112; Respond to discussion questions in light of what you have been studying in ethics up to this point.

Class sessions

Justice and Ethics: A look at Marxism, Capitalism, Egalitarianism

11/3 -Week 9: (Due class 1)

Text: John Rawls 148-160 – Rawls' theory of justice
(Keep the issue of justice in your mind in connection with 2nd term project)

Class sessions

Class 1: Ethics and Economics: What about the poor, the mentally ill, etc?

Review

Class 2: **Test 2**

Distribute copy of Midgely's "On Trying Out One's New Sword"

11/10 -Week 10: (Due class 1) Tests returned - Comments

2-3 page reflection on "On Trying Out One's New Sword"
Text: 169-173; 187-209; The Taoist and Confucian Traditions

Class sessions:

Introducing Asian Traditions: Broadening the Western Perspective
The Taoist and Confucian Traditions

11/17 – Week 11: (Due class 1)

Read: Text: 174-186: The Bhagavad Gita (Hindu)

The Buddha's Teaching

2-page paper: 1page about similarities you see between West/East

1page about the differences

Class sessions

The “world” in World Ethics: Broadening the Western Perspective

Hindu and Buddhist Traditions, cont'd.

Assign readings for Monday's class: Mencius, Gandhi, Thich Nhat Han

11/24 – Week 12: (Due class 1)

2-page reflection on your assigned reading – to be discussed in class
and submitted.

Class session

Discussion and review of Asian Traditions

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your families!

12/1 - Week 13: (Due class 1)

No assignment due today

Class Sessions

African Cultures

For Thursday, 12/4, read assigned author

12/9 -Week 14: (Due class 1)

2-page reflection on your assigned reading – Consider the
reason this article is included in a world ethics text. What
is its message? Use excerpts in your discussion.

Class session

African Cultures

Final Examination review