

SYLLABUS

Philosophy 2200: Elements of Ethics

Dr. Wolar

Spring, 2009

T – 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course considers a wide range of basic issues and schools of thought in moral philosophy. Ethics is the philosophical study of moral judgments and fundamentally implores the student to ponder the following question: Which moral judgments are correct, and why?

OBJECTIVE:

To critically explore an array of issues in ethical theory, including the nature of justice and virtue, the objectivity of moral values, the source of moral obligation, and the conditions of the good life. The course will be discussion-driven, per the weekly readings.

OUTCOMES:

The student will be intellectually exposed to a variety of ethical values, theoretical constructs, and traditions. The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge and critical thinking skills in preparation for transfer to a four-year college or university. Additionally, the student will acquire rudimentary library skills and apply effective writing skills in pursuance of the above-stated objectives.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Louis P. Pojman, The Moral Life: An Introductory Reader in Ethics and Literature. Third Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Sissela Bok, Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life (New York: Vintage, 1999).

RECOMMENDED:

Kelly James Clark and Anne Poortenga, The Story of Ethics: Fulfilling Our Human Nature. (New York: Prentice Hall, 2003).

James Rachels, The Elements of Moral Philosophy. 5th Edition. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2007).

William Lee Miller, Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography. (New York: Knopf, 2003).

Harry G. Frankfurt, On Bullshit (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); and, On Truth (New York: Knopf, 2006).

Eric Hoffer, The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements (New York: Harper, 1951).

Ethics Updates – <http://ethics.acusd.edu/>

Josephson Institute of Ethics – <http://www.josephsoninstitute.org>

The Center for Applied Christian Ethics –
<http://www.wheaton.edu/cace/>

Dennis Prager – <http://www.dennisprager.com/>

ON RESERVE:

The Jerusalem Bible.

James Rachels, The Elements of Moral Philosophy. 5th Edition.

Harry G. Frankfurt, On Truth.

William Lee Miller, Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week of January 12: Pojman, Introduction; and, chapter 1: What is the Purpose of Morality?

Week of January 19: Pojman, chapter 2: Good and Evil; Genesis 2:15-3:24; Matthew 7:1-5, 16-27; Miller [Lincoln's Virtues], pp.83-86; and, Judith [Jerusalem Bible].

Week of January 26: Pojman, chapter 3: Is Everything Relative?

Week of February 2: Pojman, chapter 4: Utilitarianism; and, Miller [Lincoln's Virtues], pp.192-203.

Week of February 9: Pojman, chapter 5: Deontological Ethics; Frankfurt [On Truth], pp. 67-93; and, Rachels [The Elements of Moral Philosophy], chapter 9 (particularly 9.2 and 9.3).

Week of February 16: Frankfurt; Miller [Lincoln's Virtues], pp. 147-153; and, Pojman, chapter 6: Virtue Ethics.

Week of February 23: Pojman, chapter 7: Virtues and Vices; and, Miller [Lincoln's Virtues], pp.222-225.

Week of March 2: Pojman, chapter 8: Ethics and Egoism: Why Should We Be Moral?

Week of March 9: Pojman, chapter 9: Does Life Have Meaning?

- March 9-13 – Spring Break – No Classes.

Week of March 16: Pojman, chapter 16: International Justice and the Threat of Terrorism.

Week of March 23: Pojman, chapter 10: Freedom, Autonomy, and Self-Respect

Week of March 30: Pojman, chapter 11: Sex, Love, and Marriage

Week of April 6: Pojman, chapter 12: Is Abortion Morally Permissible?

Week of April 13: Pojman, chapter 13: The Morality of Euthanasia

Week of April 20: Pojman, chapter 14: Our Duties to Animals; and, chapter 15: Our Duties to the Environment

Week of April 27: Continued discussion, final exam review, and possible film presentation.

Week of May 4: Final Essay Examination.

ETHICAL JOURNAL SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

January 27 [Optional evaluation – no grade]

February 10

March 17

April 21

CRITICAL BOOK SUMMARY DEADLINE:

April 14

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:

The course will be conducted on the basis of Socratic questioning and directed discussion. Occasional use will be made of computer-assisted materials and handouts.

EVALUATION:

The student will keep an “Ethical Journal” of the assigned readings and class discussions. The “Ethical Journal” will be periodically evaluated and will encompass 35% of the course grade. A final essay examination will pose as 20% of the course grade. The critical book summary of Lying will be worth 15% of the course grade. The final examination will include a problem-solving question that will require the student to apply various ethical concepts to the problems presented on the final examination. The remaining 30% of the course will involve a class participation evaluation.

The “Ethical Journal” must discuss the various issues, themes, concepts, schools of moral thought, etc., which are included within the assigned readings. A separate journal submission should include salient points covered in class discussions.

The critical book summary will be based upon criteria supplied by the instructor via a critical book summary form incorporating various expectations for briefly reviewing Bok’s monograph. The summary will extend no more than approximately two single-spaced pages. Chapters XIII and XV of Bok’s Lying are optional.

All deadlines are to be strictly met. Late “Ethical Journal” submissions will NOT be accepted. Email submissions are acceptable, as long as the email submissions are forwarded no later than 9 p.m., C.S.T., on the appropriate deadline date. Materials may be mailed through the USPS, but must be postmarked no later than the appropriate deadline date.

A make-up final examination will NOT be considered unless the student is subjected to extraordinary a circumstance beyond his/her control and has informed the instructor accordingly.

All electronic recording devices are prohibited in class unless the instructor grants, upon good cause, prior consent for such use. Turn cell phones off during class.

For evaluative purposes, the following grade scale is used:

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 50-59

WITHDRAW FROM CLASS PROCEDURE:

If the student fails to attend class, he/she must complete the withdrawal form with the Student Services office. A “W” will appear on the transcript. Students failing to formally withdraw from the course may receive an “F” as a letter grade on the permanent transcript.

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism occurs when a student secures the ideas and/or writings of another without attribution to the original author. Plagiarism jeopardizes the integrity of the scholarly experience and is not to be tolerated.

DISABILITIES:

Mid-Plains Community College is committed to providing a discrimination-free environment for its students with disabilities. Students with learning or physical disabilities are encouraged to request assistance from administrative staff at: 535-3710, 535-3637, or 345-8146.

OFFICE HOURS:

MWF - 10 a.m.

T/Th – 8:30 a.m.

Room 145A

308-535-3763

wolarg@mpcc.edu

<http://www.geocities.com/gwolar/>

If the above office hour is unsatisfactory, please arrange to meet me at another time. Leave a phone number or email address by which you can be reached. Alternatively, arrange to meet with me immediately prior to, or immediately subsequent to, class. Do not hesitate to contact me as soon as it becomes apparent that you are experiencing academic difficulty.

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