

## SYLLABUS

Chadron State College – North Platte Campus  
COLG 430 – Applied Ethics  
Dr. Wolar  
Spring 2006 - First Eight Weeks  
Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Room 131

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

James Rachels, The Elements of Moral Philosophy. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: McGraw Hill, 2003.  
Kelly James Clark and Anne Poortenga, The Story of Ethics: Fulfilling Our Human Nature. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2003.  
Harry G. Frankfurt, On Bullshit. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

### ON RESERVE:

The Jerusalem Bible.

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

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/>

### COURSE SCHEDULE:

January 14: Introduction – Placing Ethics within the context of the discipline of Philosophy. Case Studies for discussion. Read Rachels, Chapter 1: “What is Morality?”; Chapter 2: “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism”; and, Chapter 3: “Subjectivism in Ethics”. Discuss morality and cultural relativism/case studies.

January 21: Discuss ethical subjectivism and psychological egoism/case studies. Read Rachels, Chapter 5: “Psychological Egoism”; Chapter 6: “Ethical Egoism”; and, Clark, Chapter 1: “The Ancient World”. Optional submission of Ethical Journal.

January 28: Discuss ethical egoism and divine command theory/case studies. Read Rachels, Chapter 4: “Does Morality Depend on Religion?”; and, Clark, Chapter 2: “The

Medieval World". Also, read Genesis 2:15-3:24; Matthew 7:1-5,16-27; and, The Book of Judith in the Apocrypha of the Bible (The Jerusalem Bible). Optional submission of Ethical Journal.

February 4: Discuss divine command theory and utilitarian/case studies. Read Rachels, Chapter 7: "The Utilitarian Approach"; Chapter 8: "The Debate over Utilitarianism"; and, Clark, Chapter 3: "The Modern World" and Chapter 4: "The Late Modern World".

February 11: Discuss consequentialism/utilitarianism and associated case studies. Read Rachels, Chapter 9: "Are There Absolute Moral Rules?"; Chapter 10: "Kant and Respect for Persons"; and, Chapter 11: "The Idea of a Social Contract".

February 18: Discuss Kant/case studies. Read Rachels, Chapter 12: "Feminism and the Ethics of Care"; Chapter 13: "The Ethics of Virtue"; and, Clark, Chapter 5: "The Postmodern World". Submission of Critical Book Summary of On Bullshit. Discussion of On Bullshit.

February 25: Discuss feminism and virtue/case studies. Read Rachels, Chapter 14: "What Would a Satisfactory Moral Theory Be Like?"

March 4: Discuss moral theory. Final Examination. Submission of ethical journals.

#### DEADLINE DATES:

January 21: Optional Ethical Journal Submission.

January 28: Optional Ethical Journal Submission.

February 18: Critical Book Summary.

March 4: Submission of Ethical Journal.

#### EVALUATION:

The student will develop an "Ethical Journal" of the assigned readings and class discussions. At the option of the student, the journal may be informally evaluated at the end of the second and/or third week of the course. While no grade will be recorded, the student will be informed as to the progress of the journal. The journal will be turned in on March 4, and will be evaluated at 35% of the final course grade. Journal submissions may be completed by email. The journal must thoroughly discuss the various issues, concepts, schools of moral thought, etc., which are included within the assigned readings/handouts/class discussions.

A critical book summary of On Bullshit will account for 15% of the course grade. Structurally, the critical book summary will conform to the model submitted to students, and it is expected to be approximately 1-2 single-spaced pages in length. The critical book summary will be due on February 18.

Class participation will account for 25% of the course grade. It is essential that you regularly attend class sessions, involve yourself in the discussions, and read the assigned materials (text and handouts).

The final examination will account for 25% 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 final examination will be written in pen within the confines of an examination Blue Book. Examination Blue Books can be purchased at the South Campus bookstore.

Late "Ethical Journal" submissions will not be accepted, unless the student is subjected to an extraordinary circumstance beyond his/her control and has informed the instructor prior to the appropriate deadline date. A make-up final examination will not be considered unless the above-mentioned criteria are met.

All electronic devices are prohibited in class unless the instructor grants, upon good cause, prior consent for such use. Cell phones are to be turned 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 = below 60

#### OFFICE HOURS:

MWF – 10 a.m.

T/Th – 11 a.m.

Room 145A

308-535-3763

[wolarg@mpcc.edu](mailto: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.

## A PERSONAL NOTE:

I am not a professionally trained philosopher. I am a professionally trained attorney and historian, with terminal degrees in both disciplines. Within the confines of the legal field, I have taken legal ethics courses, passed an ethics test within the confines of a bar examination, and must continue to take a certain number of continuing legal education credits in ethics to maintain my professional license. It is a profession that is continually beset with ethical issues, and I was greatly challenged along these lines while practicing law. From a personal perspective, I have been intellectually subsumed by moral issues my entire life. The ultimate challenge for each of us is not just to maintain a particular belief system, but to make every good faith effort to conform our behavior to the belief system we hold so dearly. If that effort is lacking, it is my contention that our belief system becomes stale, irrelevant, worthless, and potentially dangerous. The moral life is the noble life. Our behavior toward one another says considerably more about our being, our consciousness, and our essential character than anything else. Moral decision making is a challenging endeavor and, oftentimes, a very painful process. In moral struggle, however, is housed the potential to attain deep meaning and growth. It has occurred to me, over the years, that morality may reflect the breath of God.

“Two things grieve my heart, and a third excites my anger:

a soldier in distress through poverty,  
the wise treated with contempt,  
and someone deserting right conduct for wrong –  
for such a one the Lord will get ready the sword.”

Ecclesiasticus 26:28

“No one who practices deceit  
shall dwell in my house;  
no one who utters lies shall  
Continue before my eyes.”

Psalm 101:7

“To abstain from evil,  
to cultivate the good, and  
to purify one’s mind – this is the  
teaching of the Buddhas.”

Dhammapada (v. 183)

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