

S.S.S. Syllabus for Summer 20, Philosophy 1104:

PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL ETHICS

Instructor: Christopher Rahlwes

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Class: MoTuWeThFr 1:00 P.M.- 2:40 P.M.

Class Location: BBCollaborate

Office Hours: Fr 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

Office Hours Location: Webex Meeting Room

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide an introduction to social and ethical philosophy. We will investigate various ethical traditions (virtue ethics, care ethics, consequentialism, deontology, and negative ethics) and various ethical and social questions. These questions will be framed with an eye towards ethical and moral dilemmas, and you will engage with these dilemmas using the resources of these various ethical traditions. The course will conclude with the application of ethics in the domain of engineering and business.

COURSE GOALS:

- By the end of the course you will have a working understanding of various ethical traditions and a better understanding of how you would respond to moral and ethical dilemmas in your personal life, social life, and career.
- You will be able to more clearly, precisely, and objectively argue (both verbally and in writing) for a position regarding ethical dilemmas.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Content Quiz 1 (10%)
- Content Quiz 2 (10%)
- Content Quiz 3 (10%)
- Content Quiz 4 (10%)
- Paper 1 (15%) 500 Words
- Paper 2 (15%) 500 Words
- Paper 3 (20%) 1500 Words; must be a revision of Paper 1 or 2.
- Participation/In Class Exercises/ Breakout Sessions (10%)

Letter grade cut-offs:

A 93% C 73%
A- 90%
B+ 87%
B 83%
B- 80%
C+ 77%

These are cut-off points:

decimals will not be rounded up.

Note: 72.9% or below will be calculated as an Audit.

POLICIES AND GENERAL NOTES:

1. **Disabilities:** *The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that*

we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020, or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

2. **Academic Integrity:** *This course expects all students to act in accordance with the Guidelines for Academic Integrity at the University of Connecticut. Because questions of intellectual property are important to the field of this course, we will discuss academic honesty as a topic and not just a policy. If you have questions about academic integrity or intellectual property, you should consult with your instructor. Additionally, consult UConn's [guidelines for academic integrity](#).*
3. **Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence:** *The University is committed to maintaining an environment free of discrimination or discriminatory harassment directed toward any person or group within its community – students, employees, or visitors. Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. In addition, inappropriate amorous relationships can undermine the University's mission when those in positions of authority abuse or appear to abuse their authority. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate amorous relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Additionally, to protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report sexual assaults, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking involving a student that they witness or are told about to the Office of Institutional Equity. The University takes all reports with the utmost seriousness. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with University officials who can help.*
 - a. **Etiquette:** This class is concerned with ethical dilemmas and how we should respond to them. Ethical dilemmas (especially controversial ethical dilemmas) will always cause people to have different strong opinions. Differing opinions and arguments are encouraged. You should never feel embarrassed or ashamed about your opinion, concern, or question, but you must put it forth in a respectful manner. **Do not mock someone for their opinion. Do not speak when someone else is speaking. Do not use slurs.**
4. **Copyright:** *My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my lecture in order to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. I will inform you as to whether you are authorized to record my lectures at the beginning of each semester. If you are so authorized to record my lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me.*
5. **Attendance:** Following SSS guideline's attendance is **mandatory** and is fundamental in your understanding and application of the material. If there arises an issue that causes you to miss class (e.g. becoming ill), please email [myself](#) and/or your mentor and/or counselor so that we can make a plan to help you succeed in the summer program.
6. **Resources:** College is difficult, but you do have multiple resources to ensure your success. The SSS has many of these resources. Please avail yourself of all the services that will help your mental, emotional, and physical well-being. I am available as a resource as well, but please note that **I am not a confidential source of counseling**. I will **not** make public anything you tell me, but I may need to bring in others like counselors, deans, or administrators depending on the sensitivity of the info.

READINGS:

Shafer-Landau, Russ. (2019) *A Concise Introduction to Ethics*. Oxford University Press.

Other readings will be uploaded onto HuskyCT.

NOTE: It is very important to do all the readings for the course. Readings in week 4 will require knowledge and understanding of readings from week 1.

GENERAL CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to change):

1:00-1:10: Greetings and room for general comments and concerns on BBCollaborate

1:10-2:00: Listen to asychronic lecture posted on HuskyCT

2:00-2:20: Small group discussion/assignment in breakout groups on BBCollaborate

2:20-2:40: Class discussion (based on small group discussion) on BBCollaborate

Weekly Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1

(7/6) Introduction

Required Readings: None

(7/7) Moral Reasoning

Shafer-Landau, "What is Morality"

Shafer-Landau, "Moral Reasoning"

(7/8) Meta-Ethical Issues

Shafer-Landau, "Skepticism about Morality"

(Recommended) Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"

(7/9) The Good Life and Virtue Ethics

Shafer-Landau, "Virtue Ethics"

Shafer-Landau, "The Good Life"

(7/10) Confucian Virtue Ethics

McLeod, "Analects of Confucius"

Content Quiz 1 Due

Week 2

(7/13) Consequentialism, Utilitarianism, and Egoism

Shafer-Landau, "Consequentialism"

(Recommended) Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

(7/14) Kant and Deontology

Shafer-Landau, "Kantian Ethics"

(Recommended) Stohr, "Pretending Not to Notice: Respect, Attention, and Disability"

- (7/15) Care Ethics
 Shafer-Landau, "Feminist Ethics and the Ethics of Care"
 (Recommended) Kittay, "The Ethics of Care, Dependence and Disability"
- (7/16) Beyond Morality: Meta-Ethics as Practice
 Moeller, "Indifference and Negative Ethics"
 (Recommended) McLeod, "Zhuangzi and the Daoist Tradition"
- (7/17) Moral Dilemmas
 Matilal, "Moral Dilemmas: Insights from Indian Epics"
Content Quiz 2 Due

Week 3

- (7/20) Social Injustice
 MLK, "Letter from Birmingham City Jail"
Paper 1 Due
- (7/21) Social Injustice
 Fanon, "Concerning Violence"
 (Recommended) Fanon, "Black Skin, White Mask" selections.
- (7/22) Abortion
 Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"
 (Recommended) Giubilini and Minerva, "After-birth abortion: why should the baby live?"
- (7/23) Abortion
 Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"
- (7/24) Death Penalty
 van den Haag, "The Ultimate Punishment: A Defense"
Content Quiz 3 Due

Week 4

- (7/27) Death Penalty
 Cholbi and Madva, "Black Lives Matter and the Call for Death Penalty Abolition."
 (Recommended) Mills, "White Ignorance"
Paper 2 Due
- (7/28) Ethics in Engineering.
 Gordon, "Building Moral Robots: Ethical Pitfalls and Challenges"
- (7/29) Ethics in Engineering
 Nair et al., "Pragmatics and Care in Engineering Ethics"
- (7/30) Ethics in Business
 West, "Multinational Tax Avoidance: Virtue Ethics and the Role of Accountants"
 (Recommended) Shafer-Landau, "Social Contract Theory"
- (7/31) Ethics in Business
 Naude, "Decolonising Knowledge: Can Ubuntu Ethics Save Us from Coloniality?"
Content Quiz 4 Due

Week 5

- (8/3) Bad Faith
 Sartre, "Bad Faith"
- (8/4) Review and Wrap up: *What does it mean to be ethical?*
- (8/5) Paper 3 Due at 2:40 P.M.**