



Trinity Western University
Undergraduate Course Syllabus
Course Number: PHIL 210
Course Name: Contemporary Ethical Issues
Semester and Year: Spring 2021

Professor: Paul Chamberlain, Ph.d.

Lab Facilitator: Emmanuel Denguessi

Contact Information: Paul.Chamberlain@twu.ca

Office Hours: TBD

Co-requisites or Pre-requisites: Second year standing or instructor's consent.

Semester Hours: Three hours

Lab session times: TBA

Course Description:

An examination of some basic ethical theory and a critical focus on some current moral issues like consumerism, technoculture, environmental ethics, responsibility to distant peoples, genetic engineering and cloning, and the promise and peril of nanotechnology. The emphasis is on clarifying the issues, exploring various views on these and relevant supporting arguments, and exposing important underlying assumptions.

❖ *Note that topics listed in the course description above may differ from those in this course. See the Course Schedule below for specific topics in this offering of PHIL 210.*

Course Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing the course, you will be able to:

- Apply foundational ethical principles to actual situations in the search for correct moral action.
- Identify key assumptions undergirding contemporary moral discourse.
- Discuss knowledgeably a few important metaethical issues: e.g., moral subjectivism, moral objectivism, the unique features of moral discourse, etc.
- Describe a number of normative ethical theories: e.g., ethical egoism, utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, Utilitarianism, Social Contract morality, etc.
- Reflect on your beliefs and assumptions throughout the course regarding a few significant ethical questions including sexual morality, freedom of speech, abortion, end-of-life moral dilemmas, torture, terrorism, and world hunger & foreign aid.
- Explain how the teachings of Jesus re-frame certain social issues covered in this class.

TWU Student Learning Outcomes:

<p>1. Knowledge and its application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad foundational knowledge of human culture and the physical and natural world. • A depth of understanding in any chosen field(s) of study. 	<p>By the end of this course, students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key assumptions undergirding contemporary moral discourse. • Discuss knowledgeably a few important metaethical issues: e.g., moral subjectivism, moral objectivism, the unique features of moral discourse, etc. • Describe a number of normative ethical theories: e.g., ethical egoism, utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, Utilitarianism, Social Contract morality, etc.
<p>2. Cognitive complexity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills including: critical and creative thinking, quantitative reasoning, communication, research, and information literacy. • An ability to articulate various interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary perspectives, integrating informed Christian perspectives. • An ability to respond with wisdom, humility and charity to questions, issues, and problems of the human condition. 	<p>By the end of this course, students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply foundational ethical principles to actual situations in the search for correct moral action.
<p>4. Inter-and Intra-Personal Wellness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A holistic awareness of their personhood, purpose, and calling within the context of the communities in which they live and study. • Personal and social health. • An appreciation of the role of community in wellness. 	<p>By the end of this course, students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply foundational ethical principles to actual situations in the search for correct moral action. • Reflect on your beliefs and assumptions throughout the course regarding a few significant ethical questions including sexual morality, freedom of speech, abortion, end-of-life moral dilemmas, torture, terrorism, and world hunger & foreign aid.
<p>5. Spiritual Formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further understanding of God. 	<p>By the end of this course, students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how the teachings of Jesus re-frame certain social issues covered in this class.
<p>6. Social Responsibility and Global Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resources, skills, and motivation to become engaged global citizens who serve locally, nationally, and globally in socially and economically just ways. • A commitment to informed and ethical reasoning. 	<p>By the end of this course, students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on your beliefs and assumptions throughout the course regarding a few significant ethical questions including sexual morality, freedom of speech, abortion, end-of-life moral dilemmas, torture, terrorism, and world hunger & foreign aid.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for the dignity and rights of all persons. • Respect for creation and its sustainable use and care. | |
|--|--|

Required Texts and Materials:

1. **Readings Text:** Wolff, Jonathan. *Readings in Moral Philosophy*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.
2. **Intro Text:** Wolff, Jonathan. *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.

Course Activities/Requirements:

Activities include participation in discussions, assignments, and various ungraded learning activities designed to prepare students for assessments. See course outline below for details on assignments.

Reflective Journal (10% of total grade)

Throughout this course, you will be invited to write about what you are learning in a Reflective Journal. You should consider your journal as a place for you to try out new ideas, to test your assumptions, and respond to the prompts in the course units.

For the reflective journals, base your comments around a few key ideas from the course text reading of the week.

- First pick out 3-4 key ideas (terms, concepts, analogies, viewpoints expressed in the text, etc.),
- Second, explain them concisely in a few words or sentences. Show you understand them, and
- Third, give your own reflections on them. Here are some suggestions for how to do that:
 - Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - Do you find the issue esp. difficult, or quite straightforward? Why?
 - Do you have any experiences which might provide guidance for you in working through the ethical questions in the text?

You are asked to bring your Reflective Journal to each Learning Lab and share your responses with your peers. Take notes of key discussion points, as you are asked to share 1-2 more ideas in your journal response, highlighting what you learned from the discussion with your peers.

Active participation in critical discourse is an essential component of this course. You are expected to show respect for all members of the class, both in your speech and manner, and for the facilitated process of critical thinking and dialogue.

The Reflective Journal is worth 10% of your course grade. You will complete a Reflective Journal entry for Units 2 and 8 (5% each).

Ethics Committee Responses (40%) & Self-Reflection (5%)

Throughout this course, you will work with a group of your peers, assuming the role of an Ethics Committee. This committee will meet four times throughout this course to discuss issues and then create a summary report.

- 1) Group members work together to produce their report; it is one report created by each group.
- 2) Discuss the case together after reading the relevant pages. Then follow this basic structure for your report:
 - a. Begin by **stating concisely the ethical issue, question, dilemma, or case** you are addressing as a committee. For example: "The issue we are addressing in this report is. . ."
 - b. Then give a brief **explanation of the case** to show you understand it.
 - c. Then state **your recommendation AS A COMMITTEE**. Do not use "I" in this report. Use "We" since the report is the recommendation of the whole committee after discussing it.
 - d. Concisely state **WHY you recommend this**. "We recommend this course of action because ..." If possible, connect your recommendation to one of the ethical approaches covered in the course text.

Each report is worth 10%, for a total of 40% of your course grade. You will complete a Ethics Committee Response for Units 1, 3, 5, and 7.

At the end of this course, you will also complete a self-reflection that is worth 5%.

Ethics Video (15%)

For this assignment, you'll be asked to create a 2 minute video articulating a moral viewpoint on one of the following issues: free speech, sexual morality, abortion, euthanasia, or torture. (Units 5-9 topics). Then, drawing upon the readings, make a concise case for this viewpoint.

Partner Project Presentation (30%)

For this partner project, you will choose a specific ethical issue to address. Please note that this is an argumentative project and not simply a discussion project. Your presentation should be 12-15 minutes in length and have a visual element (e.g. PowerPoint). You will also have an additional 10 minutes at the end of your presentation to answer questions and facilitate a class discussion.

Course Evaluation:

Assessment	Grade	Assesses Course Learning Outcome
Reflective Journal	10% (2 @ 5% each)	1,5
Ethics Committee Responses & Self-Reflection	40% (4 @ 10% each) 5%	1,2,3,5
Ethics Video	15%	1,3,4,5
Partner Presentation Project	30%	1,2,3,4,5

Course Schedule:

Unit Topics	Reading List	Assessment
Unit 1: The Nature of Moral Inquiry	Ch.1-2: <i>An Introduction to Moral Philosophy.</i>	Ethics Committee Response (10%)
Unit 2: Foundational Moral Concepts	Ch.3-4: <i>An Introduction to Moral Philosophy.</i>	Reflective Journal (6%)
Unit 3: Why Be Moral?	Ch.6-7: <i>An Introduction to Moral Philosophy.</i>	Ethics Committee Response (10%) Partner Project Presentation Sign Up (30%) (<i>Due weeks 5-10 – sign up in class for time</i>)
Unit 4: How to Determine What is Moral Topics	Pp: 125-160: <i>Readings in Moral Philosophy.</i>	
Unit 5: Free Speech and its Limits	Pp: 252-278: <i>Readings in Moral Philosophy.</i>	Ethics Committee Response (10%) Ethics Video (10%) (<i>on week 5-10 topics – Due Week 9</i>)
Unit 6: Sexual Morality	Pp: 293-328: <i>Readings in Moral Philosophy.</i>	
Unit 7: Animal Rights	Pp: 426-443: <i>Readings in Moral Philosophy.</i>	Ethics Committee Response (10%)
Unit 8: End-of-Life Moral Dilemmas	Pp: 372-406: <i>Readings in Moral Philosophy.</i>	Reflective Journal (5%)
Unit 9: The Ethics of Torture and Terrorism	Pp: 488-511: <i>Readings in Moral Philosophy.</i>	(Ethics Videos due, 15%)
Unit 10: World Hunger and Foreign Aid	Pp: 612-638: <i>Readings in Moral Philosophy.</i>	Ethics Committee Self-Reflection (5%)

Course Policies:

Inclusive Classroom:

TWU is committed to an ethic of inclusion centred on the principles of hospitality, reciprocity and reconciliation. We seek to produce generous learning spaces that are based on respect for difference and are open to diverse views, opinions, and identities. We welcome and value all voices, including those that have been silenced on account of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical or mental variations, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, family status, sex, and sexual orientation, or on any other grounds identified in applicable human rights law.

Grading Guidelines

Following is a description of the letter grading:

A range = Superior, exceptional, outstanding. A+ 90-100% A 85-89% A- 80-84%	The assignment demonstrates critical, informed, and creative theological inquiry that reflects superior understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student demonstrates depth of insight beyond what is normally expected. Carefully nuanced reasoning and writing, free from material, structural and grammatical error are presupposed in this grade.
B range = Good. B+ 77-79% B 73-76% B- 70-72%	The assignment demonstrates ready command of full range of concepts and shows some critical, informed, and creative inquiry that reflects above average understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student has produced an assignment that is free from material, structural and grammatical errors.
C range = Acceptable. C+ 67-69% C 63-66% C- 60-62%	The assignment demonstrates satisfactory ability to describe overall picture and essential concepts. This means the student has completed the assignment in a manner involving no significant errors. Material may not be free from structural and grammatical errors. Nuanced reasoning is not demonstrated.
D range = Below average. D+ 57-59% D 53-56% D- 50-52%	The assignment demonstrates reasoning that is neither carefully nuanced nor coherently presented; writing is insufficient in depth of insight and/or use of texts; presentation is not free from material error in structure, spelling and grammar. This means that the student failed to respond adequately to the assignment and its intentions.
F = Unsatisfactory. F -50%	In one or more of the following ways the student: 1) failed to turn in the assignment; 2) did not respond to the assignment as given; 3) submitted work so thoroughly flawed as to indicate that the student did not make a serious effort, 4) was involved in plagiarism or cheating.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

One of the core values of Trinity Western University is the integration of academic excellence with high standards of personal, moral, and spiritual integrity. The University considers it a serious offence when an individual attempts to gain unearned academic credit. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about what constitutes academic dishonesty. For details on this, and on identifying and avoiding plagiarism go to the [University Homepage > Academics > Academic Calendar > Academic Information > Academic Policies > Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism](#).

- <https://prezi.com/od62fxnkbmxh/plagiarism-how-to-get-it-out-of-your-life/> (presentation)
- <http://bit.ly/1p00KX3> (Google Slide presentation offering more comprehensive information)

University Standard Grading System

The Standard Grading System can be found at the University Homepage > Academics > Academic Calendar > Academic Information > Grading Practices [University Homepage > Academics > Academic Calendar > Academic Information > Grading Practices](#).

Facilitated Learning Lab Requirements:

Participation & Engagement: The interaction between a facilitator and student will be a key piece in successful completion of this course, allowing the student to ask questions, interact with course materials and concepts in a supportive and engaging space. Facilitators are knowledgeable in critical thinking skills and research and writing resources in an academic environment. As such they can further enhance your course learning through activities, discussions and practical support aimed at drawing out deeper observations and reflections.

Media Devices/Digital Etiquette: No cell phones allowed during labs unless directed by the facilitator. They must be turned to silent and stored during class time. If the student is unable to store their phone or asked more than once, they will be asked to leave the lab thus counting as an absent and receiving an attendance mark of 0. Additionally, there will be times that students will be asked to close laptops and engage in interactive discussions or activities. As well, internet activities other than classroom assigned activities (whatsapp, facebook, online shopping, etc...) are **NOT** to be engaged in during the lab. This will assist in all students being able to fully engage and not distract the other students around them.

Students with a Disability

Students with a disability who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and include the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office outlined in the Student Life section of the University Calendar.

Attendance Policy

Regular and consistent participation is expected for all classes.

Final Examinations

There are no final examinations in this course

Late Assignments Policy

Assignments are expected on the due date. Requests for extensions must be communicated in advance of the due date. Special circumstances may warrant additional consideration