

PY 3155: Society, Ethics and the Law

George W. Matthews

Fall 2020

Contact info

Email: this is the most reliable way to contact me. Address available on Moodle and in Outlook.

Virtual Office: I'll online for this class on a regular basis. If you need to speak one on one let me know and we can arrange a suitable time.

Phone: Listed on course Moodle page. Please state your name if you send a text! And avoid leaving voicemail messages since Verizon tends to deliver them days after you leave them.

Online Schedule

M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU
	Video 9:30 - 10:30 AM		Video 9:30 - 10:30 AM			
text6-7 PM		text6-7 PM				

Textbook

There is no textbook for this course. Required readings and other assignments are available at the Society, Ethics and the Law course blog. We will be making extensive use of the blog in this course so please check it out and bookmark it now. In the beginning of the course there will be a workshop on how to use the blog.

SECTION	Online	Justice Comments	Blog Post	Blog Comments	Project
1. 8/24 - 9/6	2	2		5	
2. 9/7 - 9/20	2	2	1	5	
3. 9/21 - 10/4	2	2	1	5	
4. 10/5 - 10/18	2	2	1	5	begin
5. 10/19 - 11/1	2	2		5	work
6. 11/2 - 11/20	2	2	Project	5	POST

Assignments

Online

- I'll be online in the video chatroom twice and in the text chatroom twice in each section of the course. You have to attend any two of these.
- The format of both is open, although at times I'll have specific things to talk about. Do expect to participate and come prepared by having looked at some recent course material.

30 points

Justice Comments

- Every section contains 4 25 minute long lectures from Michael Sandels "Justice" course at Harvard.
- This semester we are going to follow this lecture series as a supplement to reading the text.
- Your assignment is to pick two of the four videos in each section and write a longish comment (300-500 words long) to it.
- Your comments can take whatever form and style you want them to.
- Write these comments below and if you are not the first poster you must respond to something from a previous comment.

5 points each, maximum 50 points.

Blog Posts

- Everyone in the course will be required to post three original articles to the course blog. Posting deadlines will be determined by which group you are in. See course calendar for details.

30 points

Blog Comments

- These should be evenly divided between comments on your classmates' blog posts and the reading and other content listed for each section.
- These should be evenly divided between supporting, neutral and critical. Be constructive in your criticism.
- Blog posters note: you can always revise their work. Reply in a comment when you change things.
- Five comments are due at the end of each section.

1 point each up to 30 points

Action Project

- This is a project on any topic that has to do with active citizenship.
- It can involve: building a coalition, contributing to the blog, making a documentary video, composing a photo essay.
- We'll discuss this in class.

10 points

Grades

There are **150 possible points** in the course.

- **To pass** you need to earn **80 points** (55% of total).
 - **For a C** you need to earn **105 points** (70% of total).
 - **For a B** you need to earn **120 points** (80% of total).
 - **For an A** you need to earn **135 points** (90% of total).
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Accessibility

Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should contact Campus Accessibility Services (CAS), located in Speare (535-3300) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. According to University policy accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with CAS. If you have authorized CAS to electronically deliver a Letter of Accommodations for this course, please let me know and we can work out how to meet your needs.

In addition, I have designed and chosen web-based learning material with accessibility in mind. If you find any shortcoming in this regard please let me know and I can fix things.

Catalog Course Description

Utilizes scientific methodologies to investigate, analyze, and interpret data to propose answers, offer explanations, and make predictions to philosophically analyze the power and limitations of science. Distinguishes science from irrational opinion and superstition. Explores the extent to which science is a way to knowledge, and finds philosophical principles that can guide us in evaluating controversial beliefs.

Course learning outcomes

1. Utilize scientific methods to plan, investigate, collect, analyze, and interpret data to propose answers and explanations about reality.
2. Engage in significant field or lab work to study and analyze phenomena and make predictions about experiences in contemporary environments.
3. Identify the power and limitations of scientific methodologies.
4. Distinguish between science, pseudoscience, and superstition.
5. Identify philosophical principles that can guide us in evaluating controversial beliefs.
6. Distinguish between scientific reasoning and irrational opinion.

ADA Statement

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