

## **CNM School of Communication, Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS)**

### **PHIL 1130: Contemporary Moral Issues**



#### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Penelope Haulotte

**Term:** Summer 2024

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Course/Section:** Phil 1130-[TBA]

**Office Hours:** 9-11 a.m. Mondays

**E-mail:** phaulotte@cnm.edu

#### **II. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce students to and engage them in the philosophical analysis of contemporary moral issues. Students will read and discuss texts dealing with various controversial social issues, which might include health care access, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, the death penalty, incarceration, war, and terrorism.

Pre- or corequisite: Reading & Writing Skills 2

If you disenroll from one of your co-requisite classes, you may be dropped from the other course.

### **III. TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS**

There is no required textbook for this course, everything will be available online.

### **IV. COURSE OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and analyze various textual arguments on contemporary moral issues.
2. Demonstrate the ability to critically read, write, and discuss contemporary moral issues from the standpoint of a variety of ethical theories.

Essential Skills: Critical Thinking, Personal & Social Responsibility, Information & Digital Literacy.

### **V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Your grade will consist of three kinds of assignments.

- Discussion Forum – 33%
- Short Papers – 33%
- Final Exam – 33%

#### **Weekly Reading Responses**

This class is asynchronous and online. This means that we do not have the opportunity to see one another and discuss philosophy in person, which means we must settle for second-best: writing. Each week (specifically, I aim for every Monday) I will (1) make an announcement, (2) post lectures for the week, and (3) open a discussion forum thread. You will be expected each week to post **one** 1-3 paragraph reply on each discussion forum thread by Sunday night of each week (so before the next batch drops). This is to ensure that you don't run behind and so that other classmates can benefit from your discussion posts.

I realize that often these discussion forum posts are a real pain and a waste of time. I would like us to try take this space seriously. A lot of the learning that happens in philosophy classes doesn't just come from the instructor talking, but students learning from each other, and other than discussion forum posts, there's simply no easy way to make this happen. I do not (and will not) require you to respond to one another, but I would encourage you to think of your classmates as potential sources of keen insight. I try to think of the discussion forum posts as like talking in class – you are allowed to be informal, unsure, and so on. Try to aim the discussion toward everyone, including your peers, and I would encourage you to read what your fellow students have to say. I promise I will match your effort!

These assignments are largely graded on completion. You are not “graded” on how well you answer the prompt I write each week. I'm more looking for what you think about what we just read. Sometimes you won't have much to say other than to ask questions, and that is totally fine. Asking questions is actually very helpful, since your classmates probably have similar questions and will benefit from you voicing it! I would encourage you not to think of your grade while writing these and instead just grapple with the philosophical content.

#### **Short Papers**

Short papers will be a 2-4-page reflection on some aspect of the material for the class. A more detailed rubric will be posted online. There will be three required unit papers over the course of the semester.

### **The Final Exam**

The final exam will be a combination of factual questions about the readings and a short essay component. A more detailed rubric will be posted online.

### **Other Policies**

Please see the CNM Attendance Policy: <https://www.cnm.edu/depts/enrollment/academic-records/academic-standards/attendance>

Students who are dropped by an instructor for non-attendance will be notified at their CNM e-mail address. If the student believes a mistake has been made, he or she must contact the instructor within two working days of receipt of the drop notification.

Qualified students with special learning needs are encouraged to notify the instructor at the beginning of the class about any specific assistance that may be required to support the student's learning. It is the instructor's intent to assist qualified students with special learning needs by making course modifications that will ensure a successful learning experience for the student. Students are asked to contact the CNM Disability Resource Center (DRC) office in order for support staff to assist the instructor with course modifications. The Disability Resource Center contact information is: (505) 224-3259; TTD Line 224-3262; Fax 224-3261. When students are assigned to a support counselor, individual email contact information is also provided. For further information: <https://www.cnm.edu/depts/disability-resource-center>

## **VI. GRADING**

CHSS grading scale:

90-100%=A

80-89%=B

70-79%=C

60-69%=D

below 60%=F

It is CHSS policy that all courses require final examination/project.

In the event CNM closes during the final week of classes, final grades for students will be calculated based on all work assessed up to that point in the course.

Students should become familiar with the CNM Academic Integrity Policy: <https://www.cnm.edu/depts/dean-of-students/academic-integrity-policy>

## **VII. OTHER RULES**

### **Online**

This class is entirely online. Moreover, every required aspect of the course is asynchronous *except* my weekly office hours. As a result, this course will require a lot of individual initiative. Since there are not scheduled class times, I will be posting a lecture on the readings assigned for every week. It is required that you watch all these lectures in their entirety, as they will allow you to check your understanding. **If you do not listen to the lectures, you will probably not get a good grade.** Moreover, weekly reading responses posted on learn will be your primary opportunity to ask questions related to the course. I highly encourage you to post whatever questions come to mind, as it will not only allow you to receive an answer, but it will also help your classmates and create a cooperative atmosphere as well! Philosophy is best done in a collective and cooperative atmosphere, which requires that we each take initiative. I promise to meet you halfway.

I understand that because of the (still ongoing) coronavirus pandemic, online courses can be a little bit of a hassle. I am in general an understanding instructor, but it is important that you stay in contact with me about any problems you have with the course. If you are unable to complete a response or assignment on time because of external circumstances, it is **imperative** that you let me know via email **beforehand**, if possible. The most important part of succeeding in this course is not going AWOL (absent without official leave). Circumstances notwithstanding, please try to stay in communication with me about your ability to fulfill the requirements of the course. Barring exceptional circumstances, if you do not complete an assignment, and do not let me know about your circumstances ahead of time, **you may receive a 0 for the assignment and will not be allowed to make it up later.**

**Finally, no form of ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence software is allowed to be used in any way for any assignment whatsoever.** The assignments are designed with the intention of me being able to assess your knowledge and skills. There is no value in me grading the mindless output of artificial intelligence, and when you use this software, you make a mockery of the entire enterprise of education as a whole. Therefore, **I will not tolerate any form of academic misconduct, including the use of ChatGPT, and all cases of plagiarism will be reported.** I also reserve the right to give a 0 to any paper, project, or exam that strongly suggests the use of artificial intelligence, such as ones that (a) does not reference our course materials, (b) compares our course materials to something irrelevant, (c) writes on course material that we have not yet covered as a class, (d) provide inane descriptions of what critics or others believe rather than providing an actual argument, etc. These papers are bad, and it is doubly bad to use terrible papers to cheat in college classes.

### **Other Rules for the Course**

1. All grades are final and non-negotiable. If you have a question about a grade for a particular assignment, eMail with me to discuss it.
2. No incompletes will be given for the semester unless you can demonstrate valid and compelling reasons.
3. There will be no additional extra-credit assignments besides what is offered in the syllabus.
4. If you fail to turn in a final, you will fail the course.
5. No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the university administration. (If you plagiarize, I will catch you. I have caught people **almost every single semester** I have been an instructor!)

6. You must demonstrate the appropriate respect for all fellow inquirers.
7. I promise to do my best in responding to your eMails and questions right away, typically within 1-2 business days.
8. No use of ChatGPT or any other form of artificial intelligence at any stage will be permitted or tolerated.
9. I reserve the right to give you a 0 for an assignment if it plainly fails to address the question of the assignment, even if it contains some correct information.

## **Content Warning and Conduct Expectations**

This class aims to address the most important questions for each of us about how to live our lives. Accordingly, the material for this class will sometimes address serious and severe topics such as violence and suicide. Please be sensitive to the fact that these are pressing practical questions for some even if they strike you as highly theoretical. In short, because we address and concern ourselves with problematic, urgent, pressing, and sometimes graphic descriptions because of their importance to a complete and robust introduction to philosophy. Always try to be sensitive to the fact that the people being discussed in the literature we are about to read together typically are in the room.

## **VIII: CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **Section 1: Moral Theories**

Week 1 (5/13): Utilitarianism

- Schafer-Landau

Week 2 (5/20): Deontology

- Rachels

Week 3 (5/27): Virtue Ethics

- Annas

Week 4 (6/3): Existentialism

- Sartre

## **FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE 6/9!**

### **Section 2: Moral Debates**

Week 5 (6/10): Is it ever right to violate the law?

- Plato
- King
- Last Week Tonight: Police

Week 6: (6/17): Is it permissible to eat animals?

- Singer
- Kant
- Last Week Tonight: Chickens

Week 7: (6/23): Is it ever permissible to lie or do wrong?

- Kant
- Fichte
- Last Week Tonight: Homelessness

Week 8 (7/1): Is it ever permissible to put someone to death?

- Kant
- Fichte
- Last Week Tonight: Death Penalty

## **SECOND SHORT PAPERS DUE 7/7!**

### **Section 3: Moral Problems**

Week 9 (7/8): Climate Change

- Hayward
- Last Week Tonight: Environmental Racism

Week 10 (7/15): Alienation

- Marx
- Dostoyevsky
- Last Week Tonight: Solitary Confinement

Week 11 (7/22): Gender Freedom

- Beauvoir
- Feinberg
- Last Week Tonight: Transgender Rights II

Week 12 (7/29): Colonialism and its History

- Hartman
- Deloria
- Last Week Tonight: U.S. History

**THIRD SHORT PAPER DUE 8/3**

**FINAL EXAM DUE 8/3**