

"Losing an illusion makes you wiser than finding a truth." Ludwig Börne

PHIL 7 - Contemporary Moral Issues Section 5505, Spring 2020 Course Syllabus

Welcome!

How are we to live in an increasingly diverse, contentious and distracting world? We'll do our best in our conversations to address issues of gender and sex, violence, race and ethnicity, environmental degradation, and others from an ethical perspective. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join these class discussions, bringing your inherent interests and insights. The more diverse views we can have participating and engaged, the more fruitful the conversations are likely to be. I look forward to meeting you.



"A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world."
Albert Camus, philosopher

Course Description

This course will introduce theories of ethics related to morality, virtue, values and natural law with an emphasis on the critical evaluation of contemporary issues. The course will include both modern and classical perspectives and theories. Students will study selected philosophical texts drawn from natural law, virtue ethics, divine command theory, utilitarian ethics, Kantian theory, Feminist ethics of care, and psychological resources, among others (modified from official course description).



"The needs of a society determines its ethics." Maya Angelou, poet

What we're going to do over the semester is to investigate the good life from a philosophical perspective. The aim is for you to have more clarity, freedom, and power in your thinking about ethics, and hence in your relationships to others and life. We will use discussions, podcasts, readings, and homework assignments to examine how philosophy has tried to answer the questions about value(s) in life. The primary aim of this course is not merely to give you information about typically philosophical questions and answers, in both one's personal and social life, but to provide an environment in which you can have some insight into your own reasoning about complex and difficult moral issues, which you can then develop beyond this particular classroom experience.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Form well-reasoned judgments about philosophical arguments concerning moral issues.
2. Apply philosophical theories to current moral issues.

Objectives

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of basic concepts in ethics.
2. Describe, analyze, and evaluate moral theories.
3. Analyze and evaluate specific philosophical arguments involved in representative contemporary moral issues.
4. Compare, contrast, and evaluate the application of modern and classical moral theories to contemporary moral issues.



"To encounter the sacred is to be alive at the deepest center of human existence." N. Scott Momaday, Kiowa writer

Class Meetings

Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00AM - 10:20AM
Room 1509, Santa Rosa Campus - Emeritus Hall

Instructor Contact

Email: scampbell@santarosa.edu

You may also use the [Canvas Conversations Inbox](#) to send me a message.

Office Hours:

Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:00AM - 9:00AM, Emeritus 1509

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30PM - 2:00PM, Emeritus 1513



"A feminist is anyone who recognizes the equality and full humanity of women"

I usually respond to emails within 24 hours, and often quite a bit sooner. I may not respond on weekends, so please expect a response to those messages on Monday.

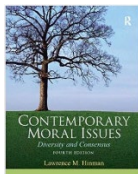
and men." Gloria
Steinem, feminist

Course Web Site

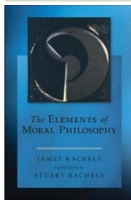
Students will use the Canvas course web site for all aspects of this course: assignment instructions, submitting assignments, class resources, and viewing grades.

Textbooks

- The textbooks for this course are:



Hinman, Lawrence M. *Contemporary Moral Issues: Diversity and Consensus, 4th ed.*. New York: Routledge, 2016. (ISBN: 9780205633609) [[Amazon](#); [Addall](#)] A copy is on reserve in Doyle Library: The call number is **BJ 1031 .H65 2013**, which you will need to check it out.



Rachels, James *The Elements of Moral Philosophy: 8th Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2015. (ISBN: 9780078119064)
[NOTE: You will need this Rachels textbook at the beginning of class, so please make sure to allow the time necessary to get it.] [[Amazon](#); [Addall](#)]

Reading and Listening Assignments

There will be regular reading assignments, both in the textbooks and also readings available in the Modules section. You are responsible for knowing and completing those reading assignments, whether or not you attend the class session when they are announced. Anytime you are absent from class, you should contact me via email to find out what assignments you missed; it would also be a good idea to come to an office hour to learn what course content you missed.

There will also be a number of podcasts to listen to.

Both the reading and listening assignments will be the basis of the homework and class discussion work.

Important Dates

Day Class Begins: Monday, January 13, 2020

Day Class Ends: Wednesday, May 13, 2020

Last Day to Add without instructor's approval: Sunday, January 19, 2020

Last Day to Drop with refund: Sunday, January 26, 2020

Last Day to Add with instructor's approval: Sunday, February 2, 2020

Last Day to Drop without a 'W' symbol: Sunday, February 2, 2020

Last Day to Opt for Pass/No Pass: Sunday, February 23, 2020

Last Day to Drop with a 'W' symbol: Sunday, April 19, 2020

Final Exam Monday, May 18, 2020 7:00AM - 9:45AM	Required Software <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chrome is the recommended browser for Canvas• There is also a Canvas Phone App, but it has limited functionality, and I recommend it only for reading things, not submitting assignments.
Dropping the Class If you decide to discontinue this course, it is your responsibility to officially drop it. Students <i>may</i> be dropped for lack of attendance.	Participation Students are expected to participate in class during the semester, and attendance will be graded.
Instructor Announcements The instructor will post announcements on the Announcements page in Canvas throughout the semester. Canvas notifies students according to their preferred Notification Preferences.	Late Policy All assignments are due by the due date. Some assignments may be accepted late (as stated in the assignment instructions), and they will be assessed a 20% penalty (two grades).

Grading Policy

Click the “[Grades](#)” link in Canvas to keep track of your grades.

Grading will be assigned as follows:

<u>POINT VALUES:</u>		<u>COURSE GRADES:</u>	
Assignment	Points	Points	Grade
14 Homework Assignments	520	783-870	A
Midterm	50	696-782	B
Final Exam	100	609-695	C
Semester essay	100	522-608	D
Participation	100	below 522	F
TOTAL	870		

These totals are approximate, and subject to change. In general I grade on the percentage of total possible points earned.

Standards of Conduct

Students who register in SRJC classes are required to abide by the SRJC Student Conduct Standards. Violation of the Standards is basis for referral to the Vice President of Student Services or dismissal from class or from the College. See the [Student Code of Conduct page](#).

It is the responsibility of each student to come to class fully prepared with written and reading assignments completed, and to actively participate in class and group discussions.

Santa Rosa Junior College trusts each student to maintain high standards of honesty and ethical behavior. All assignments submitted in fulfillment of course requirements must be the student's own individual work, with the exception of the group projects. Failure to abide by the college's ethical standards may result in anything form failure of a particular assignment or exam, to expulsion from the school. In short, plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Any instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the school administration. See these links:

[SRJC Writing Center](#)

[SRJC's statement on Academic Integrity](#)

Assignments and Readings (See [Course Plan & Schedule](#))

The specific assignments and handouts for this course will be available through the *Modules*.

Essay:

There will be a research essay due on the last day of the semester, May 22nd, by 11:59PM. **Late essays will not be accepted.** The aim of the essay will be to apply the concepts and skills we will be developing during the semester. We will be discussing this in more detail later in the semester, and there will be handout at that time.

Discussions:

There will be a new lecture each week, and students will be expected to have read those lectures, and come to class prepared to participate in class conversation based on those lectures, reading assignments, and podcasts (when assigned).

Assignments:

You will be required to turn in approximately fourteen individual homework assignments, in addition to participating in regular classroom discussions. I will specify the requirements and options for each assignment at the time the assignment is made. You are responsible for knowing what the assignments are, and they are due on the assigned due date. Some of the time, late assignments will be accepted (no later than one class after due date), and they will be downgraded 10% (essentially one letter grade). All homework assignments will be submitted through Canvas.

Special Needs:

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) at (707) 527-4278. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible.