Ethics is an investigation of what constitutes the “good life.” Villanova University requires that all students in the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Commerce and Finance take this course. That fact suggests that this course is a fundamental one in your liberal arts education. We are all pursuing the good life, a life that is created by the choices that we make. Ethics wonders about how these choices that are made; it wonders about the values that guide these choices; it invites us to reflect upon our character as free and responsible beings, active participants in the world, both natural and human. What we are as a people is a consequence of the choices that individual human beings, acting in concert, have made in the past and are making today. What we might become, as individuals and a society, is the subject matter of Ethics.

One goal of the course is to introduce students to the history of ethical reflection, both philosophical and religious. To that end we will look at a variety of perspectives to take in answering the question: What is the good life? Another goal of the course is to think about contemporary issues in light of this history. Students will be given the opportunity to formally debate their peers on a contemporary issue. A last goal is to give students an opportunity to think about their own character, decision-making process and life choices. This opportunity will present itself in the writing assignments and our discussions in class.

Required Texts


Office Hours

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 12:30 till 2:30PM, or by appointment
Course Objectives

After taking this course, a student should be able to:

1. Discuss the Western tradition of ethical reflection.
2. Thoughtfully and adequately speak and write about contemporary moral issues in light of the above.
3. Appreciate the ways in which the Judaeo-Christian experience offers wisdom and guidance in contemporary debates on substantial issues.

Reading Assignments

Students are expected to read all assigned pages. I understand that you are perhaps taking a second course during this session and/or are working as well. I have tried to keep the reading to a manageable amount. So, I expect you to have the reading done before we begin talking about it in class. I expect each student to come to class willing and able to speak to the issues discussed in the assigned readings. In reading the various texts, I ask you to keep in mind the following questions:

a. What are the most important points in the chapter (at least three)? Why are these important?
b. In what way are you most in agreement with the ideas presented? Why?
c. In what way are you most in disagreement with the ideas presented? Why?

Students are expected to be able to answer these questions in class if called upon.

Grading Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #1</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation (including paper)</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Numerical Grade Conversion

The grades on individual components of this course will receive letter grades. At the end of the semester, each grade is converted into its numerical equivalent. The following is the breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A=4.00</td>
<td>A+=3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-=3.66</td>
<td>B+=3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B=3.00</td>
<td>B-=2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-=2.66</td>
<td>C+=2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C=2.00</td>
<td>C-=1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-=1.66</td>
<td>D+=1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D=1.00</td>
<td>D-=.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-=.66</td>
<td>F=0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I then multiply each assignment by its worth. I add up the components of the final grade. Then, I reconvert to the equivalent letter grade. If a number does not fall directly on one of the above numbers, I round to the closest. For example, if the amount is 3.267, I will round this up to a 3.33.
Writing Requirement

Although this is a summer session, the course is writing enriched. As such the students will be asked to write two papers for evaluation, and perhaps smaller in class or at home assignments. The first writing assignment is due on June 6. The final project/presentation is due on the day assigned. More specific directions for each assignment will be forthcoming.

ALL ELEMENTS OF THE PAPER ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE HANDED IN ON THE DAY INDICATED. LATE PAPER ELEMENTS WILL CAUSE THE STUDENT TO LOSE A STEP ON HIS/HER GRADE FOR THE ASSIGNMENT. NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE DUE DATES OF THE ASSIGNMENTS.

The following are guidelines for the writing assignments for this session. Please refer to them when you do prepare a paper for this class.

1. All papers are to be typed, double-spaced, with 1” margins. You are to use the Times New Roman typeface no larger than 12 point.
2. Use a cover page. On the cover page create a title for the assignment. DO NOT put your name on the pages following the cover page. Use a staple in the top left-hand corner to keep the pages of the assignment together. DO NOT use plastic covers or other such devices. DO NOT use paper clips!
3. You are to maintain a floppy disk for this course. On this disk you will keep a copy of all your work, including any rough drafts.
4. On the date assigned, you will hand in a hard copy of your writing assignment. Extensions will be given only if a student speaks to me at least one class before the due date.
5. I expect the papers to be free of grammatical and spelling errors.

Presentation

You will be placed in groups of two for the purposes of a presentation on a contemporary ethical issue. We will make use of cases in these presentations. We will talk in class about the cases and determine what the groups are and what case each group will present.

Each group will be responsible for preparing a 30 minute presentation in which the group will explore the ethical dimensions of the case under discussion. Each group is required to make use of PowerPoint for their presentation. On the day of the presentation each group will hand in a copy of their PowerPoint presentation on a disk, any handouts they make use of, and a 12 page paper that represents their research. This paper should be a joint project.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Coming late to class is unacceptable! Whether the absence is excused or not, you are responsible for making up any work missed and for getting handouts that you miss. If you must miss a class, please talk to me ahead of time. If you miss a class inadvertently, please contact me as soon as possible after the class meeting. You can contact me at my office, at home, or via email. More than two (2) unexcused absences will lower your final grade by a step.
**Academic Integrity**

Each student is expected to do his or her work. This is a question of honesty. When a student has finished this course, it is expected that he or she will receive a grade for the work that he or she did. To seek help from outside sources is certainly an ordinary way of studying. However, that outside help must be credited. Violations of academic integrity are punishable by failure for the entire course. Violations are also to be reported to the Dean of the student’s College. For a full discussion of academic integrity, see the *Student Handbook* and/or the *2000-2001 Villanova University Catalog*. Responsibility for reporting violations of academic integrity does not rest solely with the faculty. Students are encouraged to report the academic integrity violations that they witness to the appropriate faculty member.

**Learning Disabilities**

It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability please contact me after class or during office hours and make arrangements to register with the Learning Support Office by contacting 610-519-5636 or at nancy.mott@villanova.edu as soon as possible. Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.

### A SCHEDULE OF PROBABLE ACADEMIC EVENTS

**EMP**: *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*

**RTD**: *The Right Thing to Do*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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</table>
| May 28     | Hour I: Introduction of Course  
Hour II: Movie: *Morality: Moral Judgments and Actions* (32 min.)  
**Assignment**: EMP, chapter 2; RTD, chapter 3 |
| May 29     | Hour I: Relativism  
Hour II: Movie: *Mutilation of female genitalia* (20 min.)  
**Assignment**: EMP, chapter 3 |
| May 30     | Subjectivism  
**Assignment**: Spohn article (handout)  
Gospel of Matthew, chs. 5-7, 25 (bring bible to class on June 2)  
Writing Assignment: Your six year old son asks you why he should try to be a good person. Write a one page, typed, double-spaced response to that question. Due on June 2. |
| June 2     | Scripture and Ethics  
**Assignment**: EMP, chapter 4.3; RTD, chapter 5, 15, 16 |
| June 3     | Hour I: Natural Law  
Hour II: Homosexuality  
**Assignment**: EMP, ch. 11; RTD, chapters 28, 29 |
| June 4     | Hour I: Social Contract Theory  
Hour II: Civil Disobedience  
**Assignment**: EMP, chapters 9-10; RTD, chapters 9, 19, 20  
WA #1 assigned: Protest and the War with Iraq |
June 5  
Hour I:  Kant  
Hour II:  Movie: *No Heroic Measures* (23 min.)/Euthanasia  
    Assignment:  

June 6  
Hour I:  Euthanasia continued  
Hour II:  Review for midterm  

June 9  
Hour I:  Midterm Exam  
Hour II:  Movie: *Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring* (60 mins.)  
    Assignment:  EMP, chs. 7-8; RTD, chs. 8, 17, 18  

June 10  
Hour I:  Utilitarianism  
Hour II:  Feeding the Hungry  
    Assignment:  EMP, chapter 13; RTD, chapter 4; Tolstoy (handout)  

June 11  
**Writing Assignment #1 Due in Class**  
Hour I:  Virtue Ethics  
Hour II:  Greed  
    Assignment:  three handouts  

June 12  
Hour I:  Anger  
Hour II:  Moral Cowardice and Courage  
    Assignment:  RTD, ch. 25  

June 13  
Movie: *Dead Man Walking* (122 min.)  
    Assignment:  Read EMP, chapter 12; RTD, chapter 10  

June 16  
Hour I:  The Death Penalty  
Hour II:  Feminist Ethics of Care  
    Assignment:  Dalai Lama (handout)  

June 17  
Hour I:  Dalai Lama  
Hour II:  Prep time for Presentations  

June 18  
Hour I:  Presentation #1  
Hour II:  Presentation #2  

June 19  
Hour I:  Feedback/Discussion of Cases  
Hour II:  Presentation #3  

June 20  
Hour I:  Presentation #4  
Hour II:  Presentation #5  
    Assignment:  RTD, chapter 22  

June 23  
Hour I:  Feedback/Discussion of Cases  
Hour II:  Animal Rights  
    Assignment:  RTD, chapter 23  

June 24  
Hour I:  Environmental Ethics  
Hour II:  Review for Final Exam  

June 25  
Final Exam