PHILOSOPHY 102 – CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEMS – Spring, 2015 SYLLABUS

N.B. The academic portion of this syllabus is not a legally binding contract on the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to make any changes in the material covered, dates and times, and assignments at his discretion.

INSTRUCTOR – Steven M. Duncan, Ph.D. Adjunct Philosophy Faculty, Bellevue Community College Office: B100A
E-Mail: sduncan@bellevuecollege.edu - this is the best way to contact me. Office Hours: By App't.


COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK ONE - Ethics and Moral Reasoning (M, Chapters 1, 3, 4, Hobbes)
WEEK TWO – Moral Theory I (M, Chapters 5, 6, as directed)
WEEK THREE - Moral Theory II (M, Chapters 2, 7, 8, Gay-Williams, Rachels)
WEEK FOUR - Euthanasia (M, Chapter 10, Gay-Williams, Rachels)
WEEK FIVE - Animal Rights (M, Chapter 17, Singer, Steinbock)
WEEK SIX - Equality and Discrimination (M, Chapter 13, Appiah, Allen)
WEEK SEVEN - Economic Justice (M, Chapter 13, Rawls, Nozick)
WEEK EIGHT – Legal Punishment and Human Rights (M, Chapter 14, Davis, Steffan)
WEEK NINE - Environmental Ethics (M, Chapter 15, Baxter, Devall and Sessions, Guha, Supplementary Essay: A Native American Perspective on the Environment)
WEEK TEN - Violence, Terrorism and War (M, Chapter 18, King, Walzer, supplementary essay: Frantz Fanon on Revolutionary Violence)

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING- Assignments will be listed weekly in the Assignments area for each week. Grading will be based on the quality of student answers to the review and discussion questions, summaries and on the frequency and quality of student contributions to class discussion via the weekly discussion forum. Consult the class calendar for information concerning specific dates, etc. In addition, there will be a 3-5 page term paper required of each student. Topics are to be approved no later than the end of week VII; the completed paper is due during week XI. Consult the course calendar for the exact due dates. The text of the Paper Topic Assignment can be found in the Week II discussion forum. Each of the weekly assignments will be graded on a 0-5 point scale. The term paper will be worth 100 points, and the discussion postings will be worth a maximum of 50 points. There will also be a midterm and final self-evaluation that each student must submit; consult the course calendar for the exact due dates. The total maximum for the course will be about 300 points.
(For purposes of continuing with the work of the course, you may stop reading here.)

Description:

Provides philosophical consideration of some of the main moral problems of modern society and civilization such as abortion, euthanasia, war, and capital punishment. Topics vary. Fulfills social science or humanities credit at BC.

Course Outcomes:

After completing this class, students should be able to:

- Formulate, clarify and evaluate arguments.
- Analyze and assess views that make ethics a matter of convention, including moral relativism and Divine Command Theory.
- Explain and evaluate substantive ethical theories including utilitarianism and respect for persons and the ethics of care.
- Explain how substantive ethical theories including utilitarianism, respect for persons and the ethics of care incorporate the value of cultural diversity. Explain the ethical foundations for sustainability.
- Apply substantive ethical theories including utilitarianism and respect for persons to a range of specific problem areas like the death penalty, physician assisted suicide, animal rights, poverty, environmental protection and free speech.
- Write argumentative essays containing clear thesis claims, strong arguments for the theses, reasonable consideration of opposing views, and conforming to the presentation/writing standards set forth in the “BC Philosophy Writing Guidelines.”

### Rubrics for Grading Written Work

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Acceptable/Good</th>
<th>Minimally Adequate</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent 5.00</strong></td>
<td>Addresses all parts of the question but fails in accuracy, skips one or more key points, lacks focus and due care in spelling and grammar, and betrays lack of full understanding of what is being asked.</td>
<td>Gives only perfunctory answers to the question, or incorrect ones, or betrays lack of genuine understanding through the use of vague expressions, talking around the question, misuse of technical terms, parroting of the question as one’s answer.</td>
<td>Submitted after the midnight Friday deadline.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptable/Good 4.00</strong></td>
<td>Answers correctly addresses all parts of the question, correctly summarizes the text, covers all the main points required for an adequate answer, and does so using complete sentences, proper grammar and spelling.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment not completed – one or more questions are skipped, left unfinished, or not answered relevantly.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minimally Adequate 3.00</strong></td>
<td>Betrays lack of understanding of the questions, theories, or arguments needed to answer the question adequately, lack of due consideration/rational reflection on the question, careful consideration/reflection on the question, understanding of the issues, an adequate understanding of opposing views, makes relevant points and uses arguments and creative examples to illustrate and justify those points.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Incomplete 1.00</strong></td>
<td>Answers are too brief, betray inadequate understanding of the material or the question, a merely intuitive/emotional reaction to the relevant subject matter, no understanding or respect for opposing views, and evinces a polemical, dogmatic tone.</td>
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### Weekly Review Questions (RQ’s)

- Questions show evidence of command of the relevant concepts and arguments, rational reflection on the question, careful consideration/reflection on the question, understanding of the issues, an adequate understanding of opposing views, makes relevant points and uses arguments and creative examples to illustrate and justify those points.

### Weekly Discussion Questions (DQ’s)

- Questions show evidence of command of the relevant concepts and arguments, rational reflection on the question, careful consideration/reflection on the question, understanding of the issues, an adequate understanding of opposing views, makes relevant points and uses arguments and creative examples to illustrate and justify those points.

### Summaries (Weeks I–IX – grades)

- Shows clear understanding of the text: understanding of the author’s text, giving
- Shows signs of inadequate reading or understanding of the text: sketchy, vague rendition of the author’s text, giving
- Presents a short, sketchy vague rendition of the text: minimal
- Submitted after the midnight Friday deadline.
- Assignment not completed – one or more questions are skipped, left unfinished, or not answered relevantly.

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*Rubrics for Grading Written Work*

**Criteria** | **Scales** | **Acceptable/Good** | **Minimally Adequate** | **Incomplete** |
---|---|---|---|---|
**Excellent 5.00** | Addresses all parts of the question but fails in accuracy, skips one or more key points, lacks focus and due care in spelling and grammar, and betrays lack of full understanding of what is being asked. | Gives only perfunctory answers to the question, or incorrect ones, or betrays lack of genuine understanding through the use of vague expressions, talking around the question, misuse of technical terms, parroting of the question as one’s answer. | Submitted after the midnight Friday deadline. |
**Acceptable/Good 4.00** | Answers correctly addresses all parts of the question, correctly summarizes the text, covers all the main points required for an adequate answer, and does so using complete sentences, proper grammar and spelling. | | Assignment not completed – one or more questions are skipped, left unfinished, or not answered relevantly. |
**Minimally Adequate 3.00** | Betrays lack of understanding of the questions, theories, or arguments needed to answer the question adequately, lack of due consideration/rational reflection on the question, careful consideration/reflection on the question, understanding of the issues, an adequate understanding of opposing views, makes relevant points and uses arguments and creative examples to illustrate and justify those points. | | |
**Incomplete 1.00** | Answers are too brief, betray inadequate understanding of the material or the question, a merely intuitive/emotional reaction to the relevant subject matter, no understanding or respect for opposing views, and evinces a polemical, dogmatic tone. | | |
under "weekly Assignments" in Grade Book. All the main ideas and arguments, grasps the structure of the author's text, covers the main points made in the text, ability to make application instead of one's own of the text to other contexts, covers author's ideas to novel contexts not covered by the author, and uses one's own words to reconstruct the author's text.

Term Paper (Due week X)
Assignment is posted in Week II discussion forum.

Outline (due at the end of Week VII) submitted on time and final paper shows evidence of engagement with instructor comments. Directions for submitting the paper were obeyed. Adequate research, as reflected in footnotes and bibliography, is in evidence.

Paper topic was not approved. No evidence of scholarship, no footnotes or bibliography. Lack of significant research using reliable academic resources. Focuses little research on historical, legal, or sociological information rather than on philosophical engagement with the issue.

Paper is focused, not padded, and displays significant philosophical content – employs prior opinions of the author’s pre-reflective prior opinions on the topic. The text illustrates a limited awareness of formal tone. The text attempts to use language, vocabulary, and

The text contains limited words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text illustrates a limited or inconsistent tone. The text uses...
philosophical terminology, logical reasoning, and applies the theories and concepts presented in the text and readings. Stays within the page limitation for the assignment. Objectively discusses varying points of view.

Discussion postings (Every week, 50 points total for quarter)

- Saturday and Sunday
  - You should make at least three discussion postings a week.
  - Presents reasoned disagreement with the work of others.
  - Maintains civility and creates an atmosphere of mutual investigation rather than a contest of wits.
  - Avoids polemics but also is forthright in disagreement.
  - Does not critically engage the opinions of others.

- Objectively discusses varying points of view.
- Discussion is directed toward establishing a preconceived opinion or point of view. Paper is too long.

- Some techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy.
- Imprecise language, vocabulary, and limited techniques.

Student Concerns (and other legal matters)

Should you have concerns about any aspect of the class, I invite you to bring them to me. In any of your classes, if for any reason you don’t feel comfortable speaking with your instructor, the usual next step would be to talk with the program chair. Since I am the program chair for philosophy, if for any reason you don’t feel comfortable raising your concerns with me, you can bring concerns about this class to the Arts and Humanities Division Dean, Maggie Harada (maggie.harada@bellevuecollege.edu) or the Assistant Dean, Scott Bessho (scott.bessho@bellevuecollege.edu) in the Arts and Humanities division office (R230). An additional resource for concerns you find aren’t being addressed by faculty or
administration is the Ombuds Office: (http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/ombuds/default.html (Links to an external site.)).

Affirmation of Inclusion
Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination. We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect. http://bellevuecollege.edu/about/goals/inclusion.asp (Links to an external site.)

Division Statements
You should also the Arts and Humanities Expectations posted here: http://bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/policy.html (Links to an external site.) Information about Bellevue College’s copyright guidelines can be found at: http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/links/copyright.html (Links to an external site.) A good resource for Plagiarism is the Writing Lab: http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/Plagiarism.html (Links to an external site.)

Student Code
“Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one’s own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code, Policy 2050, in its entirety is located at: http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050_Student_Code.asp (Links to an external site.)

Important Links

Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC
All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to MyBC. To create your account, go to: https://bellevuecollege.edu/sam (Links to an external site.)

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the Computing Services website.

Disability Resource Center(DRC)
The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible. If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter. The DRC office is located in B 132 or you can call our reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc (Links to an external site.)

Public Safety
The Bellevue College (BC) Public Safety Department’s well trained and courteous non-commissioned staff provides personal safety, security, crime prevention, preliminary investigations, and other services to the campus community, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Their phone number is 425.564.2400. The Public Safety website is your one-stop resource for campus emergency preparedness information, campus closure announcements and critical information in the event of an emergency. Public Safety is located in K100 and on the web at:http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/ (Links to an external site.)
Final Exam Schedule
http://bellevuecollege.edu/classes/exams (Links to an external site.)

Academic Calendar
The Bellevue College Academic Calendar is separated into two calendars. They provide information about holidays, closures and important enrollment dates such as the finals schedule.
Enrollment Calendar - http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/deadlines/ (Links to an external site.). On this calendar you will find admissions and registration dates and important dates for withdrawing and receiving tuition refunds.
College Calendar - http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/holidays/0910.asp (Links to an external site.).
This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, quarter end and start dates, and final exam dates.