

## **PHIL 1025: Contemporary Moral Issues**

**Summer 2018**

Class: MW 6:00pm-7:30pm, McMicken Hall 205

Instructor: Andrew Evans, [evans3ah@mail.uc.edu](mailto:evans3ah@mail.uc.edu)

Instructor Office Hours: Wednesdays 5:00PM to 6:00PM in McMicken Hall Room 257 (Philosophy Graduate Student Office)

### **Purpose of Course:**

This course will focus on several topics including poverty, racial bias, police shootings, misogyny, sexual harassment, and social media. I chose these topics because they seemed to me to be among the most relevant contemporary issues we are grappling with today. Together we will dive into philosophical essays, social science research, and popular media surrounding these moral issues. We will discuss how these topics relate to the philosophical field called ethics, in addition to how they relate to our everyday lives. Hopefully we will have collaborative, respectful, challenging, and insightful conversations that involve diverse views and arguments.

### **Assignments:**

#### Notecards/Quizzes:

Most days in class I will have a stack of notecards. Take one and put your name and the date on it. I will ask you to write something on that notecard during class. Sometimes that will just be some idea or question that occurs to you during class. Other times we might do an activity. However, a few times in the semester we will do a pop quiz on the notecard, so always be prepared for that possibility.

Each card is worth one point and you will have twenty-two chances to turn one in. So if you get full credit for all twenty-two notecards, you essentially get two extra credit points for the class. While there is no way to make up points you miss from not coming to class and not handing in a notecard, since it is possible to get 22 points, even if you miss two classes it is still possible to get the full 20 points for notecards.

#### Midterm Exam:

On Blackboard will be a document called "Study Guide". I will periodically add questions to this document leading up to the midterm exam. Students should use this growing list of questions as a study guide for the midterm. It is a good idea to start thinking about (and even writing) answers to these questions when they appear, that way you are preparing for the midterm. The midterm will be given in class and will contain all essay questions.

#### Final Exam:

Just like for the midterm exam there will be a "Study Guide" on Blackboard, and the final exam will also be based on that list. The final exam is not cumulative and so will only cover material from after the midterm exam. The final exam will be given in class and contain all essay questions, just like the midterm.

Formative Essay:

Each student will write a 1,500-2,500 word essay that will make a philosophical argument relating to the class material. I will provide some possible essay topics, but you can also come up with your own idea. If you come up with your own idea, please contact me to discuss the idea before starting on your essay. The formative essay is meant to be a rough draft. It is here that you can try out a philosophical argument and learn how to write a philosophy paper. You will receive feedback on your formative essay, which you will use to complete your summative essay. **Please turn in your essay in either Microsoft Word or Apple Pages format if possible!**

Summative Essay:

Each student will write a 2,000-3,000 word essay that will be a revision of their formative essay. The summative essay should incorporate the comments provided by the instructor and be a significant improvement over their formative essay. The summative essay will be graded more critically than the formative essay and it is also worth more points.

**Point Distribution:**

- Notecards/Quizzes: 20 points
- Midterm Exam: 20 points
- Final Exam: 20 points
- Formative Essay: 10 points
- Summative Essay: 30 points
- Total: 100 points**

**Grade Scale:**

A 93%-100%	B 83%-86.5%	C 73%-76.5%	D 63%-66.5%
A- 90%-92.5%	B- 80%-82.5%	C- 70%-72.5%	D- 60-62.5%
B+ 87%-89.5%	C+ 77%-79.5%	D+ 67%-69.5%	F 0%-59.5%

**Late Work Policy:**

Essays will be turned in on Blackboard. Late work can be turned in up to one week after the due date and will be penalized 20%. After one week, late work will not be accepted. If you have an emergency of some kind (for example illness) that prevents you from turning your work in on time, then please discuss this with me and we will come to a solution. If you have any other questions or concerns regarding this policy, please let me know.

**Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:**

Do not plagiarize or cheat in any way. Follow the university’s policies on academic misconduct, which are linked below. If I discover that you have broken the university’s policies on academic

misconduct, I am required to report it. Punishments range from failing the assignment to expulsion from the university.

### Academic Misconduct

#### **Inclusion:**

This classroom will be a safe space for people of all ages, races, national origins, ancestries, political affiliations, disability statuses, medical conditions, gender identities, gender expressions, sexes, sexual orientations, marital statuses, veteran statuses, and other forms of difference. No discrimination will be tolerated. On the first day I will ask you to state what pronouns you prefer. Please let me know (via email or in person) if there are any other inclusion-related considerations that I should be aware of.

#### **Accessibility Resources:**

Regarding accessibility, I will do everything I can to ensure that accommodations will be made when needed.

The University of Cincinnati is committed to providing all students with equal access to learning opportunities. Accessibility Resources (formerly Disability Services) is the official campus office that works to arrange for reasonable accommodations for students with an identified physical, psychological or cognitive disability (learning, ADD/ADHD, psychological, visual, hearing, physical, cognitive, medical condition, etc.) Students are encouraged to contact Accessibility Resources to arrange for a confidential meeting to discuss services and accommodations. Contact should be initiated as soon as possible to allow adequate time for accommodations to be arranged.

Here are some helpful links:

[Accessibility Network](#)

[Accessibility Resources](#)

#### **Other Helpful Resources:**

[Academic Excellence and Support Services](#)

[Academic Writing Center](#)

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

[Title IX website](#)

[Women Helping Women](#)

[LGBTQ Center](#)

[UC Public Safety](#)

#### **Communication:**

The best way to communicate with me is email. My email address is: [evans3ah@mail.uc.edu](mailto:evans3ah@mail.uc.edu). I am usually able to respond to an email within 48 hours. Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns you have. I may suggest we meet during my office hours if I think that would be an easier way to address your question or concern. My office hours will be Wednesdays from 5:00PM-6:00PM in McMicken Hall Room 257 (Philosophy Graduate Student Office), unless otherwise

noted. I am also available to meet outside of my office hours. If you email me, we can arrange an appointment.

### **Class Participation:**

Due to the nature of this class it is important for everyone to participate in class discussions. Productive philosophical conversation will help us to deepen our understanding of these issues and challenge our preconceptions. I understand that some people are more comfortable than others regarding class participation. If you are having trouble participating in class discussions, please let me know and we can talk about it.

### **Technology:**

While there is technically no required technology, several of the readings are only available online. Having access to the internet will be necessary. If you cannot get access to a reading that is on the internet let me know. You will be allowed to have laptops and tablets in class to take notes with or to use in other class-related ways. Do not abuse this policy by using your technology for non-class-related reasons, it can be distracting for your fellow classmates and for me. If you need to use your phone during class that is okay, but please leave the room to do so.

### **Required Readings:**

There is no textbook for this class. You will not have to purchase any of the readings. The required readings are all listed in the schedule section below. Many of the readings are hyperlinked to a website that contains the reading. If a reading is not hyperlinked, then it will be on Blackboard. All the readings listed for a day should be read before the class on that day. Remember that there will be pop quizzes! I reserve the right to change the scheduled readings and I will notify you if I do so.

### **Content Warning:**

Some readings and other content in this course will include material that some students may find traumatizing, triggering, and/or offensive. I will do my best to verbally warn students about material I think might be potentially disturbing leading up to the class in which that material is covered. If you are concerned about some particular material that we are covering please feel free to talk with me about it. If at any point during class you do not feel comfortable due to the disturbing nature of the material or discussion feel free to leave the room if you need to.

### **A Note on Disagreement and Respect:**

It is very likely that you will disagree with some of the material in this course. You may even find some of the material offensive. When we have conversations about this material it is likely that you will disagree with something that I or a fellow student says. Disagreements and debates are part of philosophy and are to be expected due to the controversial nature of these topics. However, it is vitally important that conversations stay respectful and civil. I ask all students to help create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity.

### **Schedule:**

Date	Readings, Videos, and Assignments
<b>Introduction</b>	
Monday, May 7	Read the syllabus before coming to class
Wednesday, May 9	Excerpt from <i>Being Ethical</i> book, “Theoretical Foundations”
<b><u>Part I: Global Poverty, Responsibility, and Effective Altruism</u></b>	
Monday, May 14	Peter Singer <i>The Life You Can Save</i> excerpt and listen to “The One Percent Solution” (choose #6 from the list on this website and it will open the podcast in iTunes)
Wednesday, May 16	John Arthur “World Hunger and Moral Obligation”
Monday, May 21	Peter Singer <i>The Most Good You Can Do</i> excerpt
Wednesday, May 23	Amia Srinivasan “Review of <i>Doing Good Better</i> ”
Monday, May 28	No class, do not come to class!
Wednesday, May 30	<u>“Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper”</u>
<b>Part II: Racism, Black Lives Matter, and Implicit Bias</b>	
Monday, June 4	J.L.A. Garcia “The Heart of Racism”
Wednesday, June 6	Tommie Shelby “Is Racism in the ‘Heart?’”
Monday, June 11	<u>Alicia Garza “A Herstory of the BlackLivesMatter Movement”</u> and <u>Black Lives Matter “What We Believe”</u> and look over the <u>Washington Post Police Shooting Data</u> <i>We will discuss the Formative Essay in class.</i>
Wednesday, June 13	<u>Heather Mac Donald “The Ferguson Effect”</u> and <u>Dara Lind “The ‘Ferguson effect,’ a theory that’s warping the American crime debate, explained”</u>
Monday, June 18	Holroyd et al. “What is Implicit Bias?” and Spencer et al. “Implicit Bias and Policing” <i>Midterm Exam Review</i>
Wednesday, June 20	Midterm Exam
<b>Part III: Misogyny, Sexual Harassment, and Me Too</b>	
Monday, June 25	<u>Kate Manne “The Logic of Misogyny”</u>
Wednesday, June 27	Anita M. Superson “A Feminist Definition of Sexual Harassment”
Monday, July 2	“Stop Thinking So Much About ‘Sexual Harassment’” and <u>Emily Smith “Hey Baby! Women Speak Out Against Street Harassment”</u> <b><i>Formative Essay Due</i></b>
Wednesday, July 4	No class, do not come to class!
Monday, July 9	<u>Jessica Bennett “The ‘Click’ Moment: How the Weinstein Scandal Unleashed a Tsunami”</u> and <u>Anna North “Measuring MeToo”</u>

Wednesday, July 11	<u>Judith Levine “Will Feminism’s Past Mistakes Haunt MeToo?”</u> and <u>Richard Beck “MeToo is Not a Witch Hunt”</u>
<b>Part IV: Social Media, Well-Being, and Friendship</b>	
Monday, July 16	Zeiser and Beasley “For Better or For Worse: The Influence of Social Media on Individual Well-Being”
Wednesday, July 18	<u>Stephen Marche “Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?”</u>
Monday, July 23	Froding and Peterson “Why Virtual Friendship Is No Genuine Friendship” and Alexis Elder “Excellent Online Friendships: An Aristotelian Defense of Social Media”
Wednesday, July 25	No reading. Watch <i>Black Mirror</i> episode “Nosedive” in class and student-led discussion.
Monday, July 30	Final Exam
Wednesday, Aug 1	No class, <b><i>Summative Essay Due</i></b>