

PHI 2600: Ethics and Critical Thinking

Valencia College

COURSE SYLLABUS

General Information

Reference Number: 26729

Meeting Location and Times: Valencia College West Campus Bldg. 5 Rm. 229

Tuesday and Thursday 11:30 AM- 12:45 PM

Credits: 3

Term: Spring 2014

Format: Face-to-Face

Course Description: ETHICS AND CRITICAL THINKING

Study of major theoretical principles on which claims to good life and moral action have been based, such as hedonism, utilitarianism and rationalism. Each theory illustrated by representative selections from works of great philosophers from classical period to 20th century.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Jeffrey A. Hinzmann M.A.

Office: Adjunct Work Area WC 6-325 (above the library)

Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00 to 4:00 or by appointment

Google Voice Telephone: 407-900-6457

E-mail: jhinzmann@mail.valenciacollege.edu or JAHinzmann@gmail.com

Valencia College Core Competencies

The faculty of Valencia College has identified four core competencies that define the learning outcomes for a successful Valencia graduate. These competencies are at the heart of the Valencia experience and provide the context for learning and assessment at Valencia College. You will be given opportunities to develop and practice these competencies in this class. The four competencies are:

1. **Think** - think clearly, and creatively, analyze, synthesize, integrate and evaluate in the many domains of human inquiry

2. **Value** - make reasoned judgments and responsible commitments
3. **Communicate** - communicate with different audiences using varied means
4. **Act** - act purposefully, effectively and responsibly.”

Course Objectives

- Identify key assumptions and implications of major moral theories and concepts.
- Define moral concepts.
- Identify key assumptions and key arguments in the public debate surrounding contemporary moral issues.
- Evaluate moral arguments in the public debate for coherence, consistency, and plausibility, using understanding of moral theories.
- Construct moral arguments.
- Reflect on the connection between moral perspectives and personal and civic responsibilities.
- Demonstrate college-level writing.

Instructor's Course Description

Philosopher Bertrand Russell once lamented that “most people would rather die than think, in fact, most do.” Put simply, the purpose of this course is to prove Russell wrong by making sure you can think before you die.

This is a philosophy course, but with a very practical orientation, we are going to get good at determining whether lots of things we deal with everyday involve moral complexities or not.

Ethics, specifically, is the study of the good, both as a concept and a fact of life. Philosophical theories of goodness are explored to sharpen our moral sensibilities, gain insight into contemporary moral conflicts, and appreciate alternate conceptions of the good underlying cultural or practical disagreements.

Prerequisites: College reading and writing skills are required.

Instructor's Course Objectives

- Develop a familiarity with the mechanics of good reasoning
- Learn to analyze assigned readings and identify good and bad reasoning
- Learn to form better arguments and express one's self more clearly
- Improve overall writing
- Learn citation, scholarship, and college paper-writing skills.
- Learn major ethical theories.

- Learn to apply major ethical theories to everyday problems encountered by normal people
- Learn to better understand and articulate your own moral views

Course Materials

Textbook: Barbra MacKinnon *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues, Concise Second Edition* (Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage, 2013)

Additional Materials: Additional documents pertaining to assignments will be posted on Blackboard. Such postings are listed on the calendar and I will notify you of any changes or additional readings.

Graded Assignments

Students will write 2-3 page essays answering the study questions following assigned narratives. These essays will indicate a command of the concepts recently studied, and serve as an opportunity to improve student writing and critical thinking skills.

Reading and Essay Assignments: 50%	A 2 to 3 page paper that applies something learned in the most recently read chapter to the analysis of an essay indicated by the instructor and assigned and provided before the due date.
Attendance: 25%	Only 3 unexcused absences permitted. Every absence after 3 takes 5 points off your attendance grade
Final Paper 25% Rough Draft 10% Final Draft 15%	A 5 to 6 page essay, based on readings announced closer to the end of the semester. It consists of a rough draft and a final draft, each of which receives a separate grade.

Grading Procedures

Grading Scale

- A= 100- 90
- B= 89- 80
- C= 79- 70
- D= 69- 60
- F= 59- 0

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

- Attendance is required. I will take attendance every meeting, and it is based on this that you will get credit for attendance which counts toward your final grade. You only get 3 unexcused absences. Each one after that deducts 5 percentage points from your final attendance grade. I also do not mind leaving early if you tell me at the beginning of class and have a reason, but don't show up just to get counted and then leave! This will result in your being marked absent.
- To have an absence excused, I ask that you communicate with me about the absence ahead of time if possible (if you have a family event or a school event) or, failing that, talk to me ASAP about the absence. Beyond this, I require some kind of documentation to excuse the absence, just talking to me or sending me an email is not enough. I am, however, pretty flexible about what will count as documentation.
- I expect hard-copies of assignments to be submitted in class.
- It's in your best interest to attend since you will turn in assignments during class, and also receive your graded work back. It's also pretty hard to learn this stuff just from the book.
 - Picking up your graded work is an important source of feedback that will improve your class performance. Please do not let the whole semester go by without picking up your graded work!
- Students receiving financial aid are advised to discuss with a Financial Aid advisor the impact of not attending class on their financial aid or veterans benefits.

Communication Policy

- I will do my best to answer all your questions in-class. If you have a question or need to communicate with me outside of class, I strongly recommend that you use the Valencia email address listed in the instructor information.
 - I have also included a gmail address and a google-voice phone number:
 - You can send urgent matters to the gmail address **as well as** the Valencia email address. Please do not send anything to the gmail address without also putting the Valencia address.
 - The google voice number calls my cell phone but is not my cell number. Please reserve this option for extreme emergencies.
 - Please **do not** rely on any other tools to communicate, such as the blackboard email system or leaving messages with personnel in the humanities department. I will be expecting communication in the forms I have explained above and will not monitor anything else very carefully.

- Please allow at least 48 to 72 hours for a response to an email. If the matter is urgent, you can follow the suggestions above and try to also contact the gmail address or the google voice number.

Make-Up Policy

- I only accept email submissions of assignments when you are absent for an excused reason.
 - Even if you have an excused absence, I still expect the hard-copy when you return to class if possible. The email is simply to prove you had done the assignment on time.

Student Responsibilities

- You are responsible for being familiar with the syllabus and all my posted policies.
- You are responsible for checking for updates to the syllabus or any sudden changes of plans. I will usually announce such things in class, but Blackboard is official.
- You are responsible for providing documentation for your absences.
- You are responsible for making sure your work is turned into me and received by me. Don't just email it and assume I have received it.
- You are responsible for providing me a hard-copy of the assignment when you return to class.
- You are responsible for including all relevant information on the heading of your assignments (i.e. homework or essay number, date due, etc...)
 - Include the Following:
 - Name
 - Assignment Type and Number
 - i.e. Essay #5
 - Date Turned In
- Please be prepared for each section by completing the readings assigned thus far. I realize I can't make you read, nor can I really check whether you have read. However, using the discussion section to substitute for doing your reading will result in wasting everyone's time, and it will **really** irritate me. I reserve the right to give quizzes when I see student participation dropping.
- If for any reason you want to withdraw for the course, it's your responsibility to notify me to that effect and withdraw yourself if possible. If you need my help, feel free to ask but either way I prefer notification.

Classroom Conduct Policy

- Classroom Behavior
 - Please make sure to be courteous and respectful of each other. In discussing philosophical topics, you might learn things about what people think that you disagree with or dislike. Please do not let this affect your behavior toward your classmates.
 - When addressing a perspective you disagree with (especially one expressed by a classmate) please refrain from any abusive characterizations of that perspective. In other words; don't make it sound stupid just because you don't like it. This is not only a logical fallacy but it's also rude and needlessly antagonistic.
- Social Interactions and Conflicts of Interest
 - Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites are great, but don't add me as a friend on there (as if you would anyways) until after the semester is over (which means you have received your final grade). Doing so before the class is over is a clear conflict of interest and I will not accept any such request.
 - I will refrain from any activities that may involve a conflict of interest with my role as instructor, for example:
 - Serving in an extracurricular organization or event which includes currently enrolled students of mine.
 - Even if I get along with a student, I will refrain from any intentional socializing with them outside of class until the semester ends
 - If I encounter anyone outside of class unintentionally, the teacher-student relationship takes precedence. I won't be unfriendly or ignore anyone, and there's no need to suck-up or be on your best behavior, but I will refrain from any behavior that would represent a conflict of interest.

College Policies

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide a notification from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) and discuss specific needs with the instructor, preferably during the first two weeks of class. The Office for Students with Disabilities determines accommodations based on appropriate documentation of disabilities. The West Campus Office is located in the SSB Room 102.

Baycare Behavioral Health's Student Assistance Program

Valencia is committed to making sure all our students have a rewarding and successful college experience. To that purpose, Valencia students can get immediate help that may assist them with psychological issues dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment difficulties, substance abuse, time management as well as relationship problems dealing with school, home or work. Students have 24 hour unlimited access

to the **Baycare Behavioral Health's confidential student assistance program** phone counseling services by calling **(800) 878-5470**. Three free confidential face-to-face counseling sessions are also available to students.

Support Services

- Tutoring services are available in bldg. 7-240 (extension 1633)
- Valencia College offers a variety of SkillShops:
 - These are short seminars covering a variety of topics which deal with student success, goals and purpose. To check out Valencia's Skillshop offerings, go to: <http://valenciacollege.edu/student-services/skillshops.cfm>

Computer/Equipment Use Policy

- Use of computers in the Business, IT, and Public Services classrooms at Valencia College is restricted to those activities designated by the instructor to enhance the class materials. Any other use is strictly forbidden. Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:
 - Use of computer to send E-mail or access Internet sites not specifically assigned in class.
 - Use of computer for job, internship, homework or other activities not assigned in class.
 - Modifying any hardware or software system configuration or setting.
 - Activities not in accordance with the Valencia Student Code of Conduct
 - Use of computers in the Business Students open lab (Bldg. 2, Room 304) is limited to those activities involved with preparing homework or coursework in the IT or Business departments and is subject to the same restriction as listed above.
- Computer use is remotely monitored; any student using computers inappropriately may be subject to dismissal from class or banishment from the lab. Subsequent offense may be sent to the campus administration for further disciplinary action.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes the following actions, as well as other similar conduct aimed at making false representation with respect to the student's academic performance:

- Cheating on an exam
- Collaborating with others on assignments that are presented as your individual work. (This does not include group or collaborative assignments),

- Submitting, work previously submitted in another course, unless specifically approved by the instructor,
- Plagiarism-- Academic work, submitted by students is assumed to be the result of their own thought, research or self-expression. When students borrow ideas, wording or organization from another source they are expected to acknowledge that fact in the appropriate manner. Failure to do is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism will result for certain as an F (0) on the assignment and possibly an F in the course.
- Knowingly assisting another student in any of the above actions

My preference when addressing plagiarism is to fail any assignment that is a clear and provable instance of plagiarism, and to fail any student who plagiarizes again from the entire course. These are only my preferences, I can proceed as I fit depending on the specifics of the case.

Withdrawal Policy

Deadline for student withdrawal with a “W” is 03/21/2014.

A faculty member is permitted to withdraw a student from the faculty member's class up to the beginning of the final exam period, for violation of the faculty member's attendance policy, as published in the faculty member's syllabus. A student is not permitted to withdraw from this class after the withdrawal deadline; if you remain in the class after the withdrawal deadline, you can only receive a grade of A, B, C, D, F or I. An I grade will only be assigned under extraordinary circumstances that occur near the end of the semester. If you receive an I, the work missed must be made up during the following semester, at which time you will get an A, B,C,D or F. Failure to make up the work during the following semester will result in you getting a grade of F in the course. Any student who withdraws from this class during a third or subsequent attempt in this course will be assigned a grade of “F.”

Complete Course Calendar

Date	Reading	Important Info
January 7	Blackboard: Syllabus	Discuss Course Policies
9	Textbook: Chapter 1 (1- 14)	Discuss Critical Thinking, Philosophy, and Ethics

14	Textbook: Chapter 2 (15-22)	Moral Relativism Last day to drop course with 100% refund.
16	Blackboard: Clifford Geertz “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture”	Moral Relativism
21	Blackboard: selections from Kwame Anthony Appiah, <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> (Chapter 4 and 5)	Moral Relativism
23	Textbook: Chapter 3 (23-29)	Egoism
28	Blackboard: Selections from Niccolo Machievelli, <i>The Prince</i>	Egoism Paper 1 due
30	Blackboard: Ayn Rand “The Age of Envy”	Egoism
February 4	Textbook: Chapter 4 (30-40)	Utilitarianism
6	Blackboard: John Stuart Mill <i>Utilitarianism</i>	Utilitarianism
11	Blackboard: John Stuart Mill <i>Utilitarianism</i> cont.	Utilitarianism
13	Textbook: Chapter 5 (42-52) Blackboard: selections from Immanuel Kant <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i>	Deontology Paper 2 due
18	Blackboard: selections from Immanuel Kant <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , cont.	Deontology
20	Textbook: Chapter 6 (53-54) Blackboard: selections from Thomas Hobbes <i>Leviathan</i>	Contractarianism
25	Blackboard: selections from Thomas Hobbes <i>Leviathan</i> , cont.; selection from John Rawls <i>A Theory of Justice</i>	Contractarianism

27	Textbook: Chapter 7 (55-62)	Natural Law Theory Paper 3 due
March 4-9	Spring Break!	
11	Blackboard: Aristotle selection from <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	Natural Law Theory/ Virtue Ethics
13	Textbook: Chapter 8 (63-66) Blackboard: Selection from Nancy Potter <i>Mapping the Edges and the In-Between</i>	Virtue Ethics
18	Textbook: Chapter 9 (67-75)	Care Ethics
20	Blackboard: Annette Baier "What do Women Want in a Moral Theory?"	Care Ethics Paper 4 due Deadline for student withdrawal with a "W" is 03/21/2014.
25	Textbook: Chapter 10 (79-96)	Euthanasia
27	Textbook: Chapter 11 (97-110)	Abortion
April 1	Textbook: Chapter 13 (123-140)	Equality and Discrimination
3	Textbook: Chapter 14 (142-154)	Economic Justice
8	Textbook: Chapter 15 (155-168)	Legal Punishment Paper 5 due
10	Textbook: Chapter 16 (170-186)	Environmental Ethics

15	Textbook: Chapter 18 (199-216)	Stem Cell Research, Cloning, and Genetic Engineering
17	Discuss Final Paper/Share Rough Drafts	Rough Draft of final paper Due in Class
April 24	Final Paper Due	Final Due in Online Dropbox

Schedule and content of syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. In the event of such changes, notification and an updated syllabus will be provided.