

PHIL210-001: Current Ethical Issues

Updated November 22, 2008

Mon-Fri.: 12:00-12:50 am, LL 106E

University of Central Washington, Ellensburg, Fall Quarter, 2008

Instructor: Dr. William Michael Kallfelz

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Note to the Student: Toward the end of the first week of the quarter (classes beginning September 24th) or the beginning of second week (September 29th) materials (including assignments, additional readings, in pdf or doc format, notes, announcements, and ppt slides) will be made available on **Blackboard**. I will be circulating the announcement via email. *It is therefore important to check your email address specified in the Safari System frequently!*

Course Overview & Statement of Purpose

This course will teach students to think critically about many contemporary and clearly contentious moral issues, including euthanasia, abortion, capital punishment, war, and terrorism. Such questions these topics engender will be addressed from a disciplined philosophical perspective. In exploring such questions within such a framework, the student will be introduced to the basics of philosophical analysis focused upon questions of value in both concrete and in abstract sense, i.e. “applied ethics” and “metaethics.”

No philosophical prerequisite material or ability is assumed or expected from the student, other than an openness for rational reflection and inquiry. This would entail some critical thinking and analysis, i.e. a willingness to critically examine basic presuppositions and entertain others. Most important, the student must apply such skills to the points made in the selected readings and articles, which would require he or she successfully analyzing (redacting) and critically engaging the *essential* arguments in the articles. As in most philosophical activity, the goal is not so much arriving at fixed “answers”, but instead to develop a systematic framework for disciplined dialectic and critical inquiry; or to acquire methods for systematically *questioning* in a coherent and consistent way.

Student Learning Objectives

In the light of the above Statement of Purpose and Course Overview, the student learning objectives include:

1. Acquiring the objective content of the assigned readings, which will be assessed through a short expository focus paper (due before the middle of the quarter), the midterm exam, and in the final examination.

2. Based on point 1. above, acquiring the skills necessary for *informed* critical reflection on the reading assignments and on general discussion questions, exemplified and assessed through writing assignments: An analytical paper (assigned after the middle of the quarter) as well as essay questions in the final exam.
3. Based on points 1. and 2. above, acquiring the appropriate skills for philosophical inquiry particular to the nature and level of this course, assessed through *participation in the discussion periods* and attendance.

Course Assignments & Grading Policy:

You are expected to attend class regularly, to carefully study assigned readings, and to complete all assignments:

Focus Papers

- **Expository Focus paper 1 (2-3 pages)**: assigned **October 10th, 2008** & due **October 24th, 2008** (25% of grade)
- **Analytical Focus paper 2 (3-5 pages)** assigned **October 31th, 2008** & due **November 24th, 2008** (30% of grade)

Exams

- Midterm Exam **October 31th, 2008** (20% of grade)
- Final exam, (25% of grade)

Mon-Fri @ 12:00pm Tuesday, Dec 9th 12:00 pm-2:00pm

(Check Safari: <http://www.cwu.edu/~regi/schedules/0809FinalCal.pdf> for any possible updates or changes). Link for the Fall Academic Calendar: <http://www.cwu.edu/~regi/schedules/Fall2008AcadCal.pdf>

Participation

- In addition to the above written assignments, with their respective percentage of the grade, note that your participation (namely in the form of the quality of your questions posed during discussion days) will be taken into consideration, if your final grade is borderline (i.e. within 1-2% of the next grade up).

Final Grade Scale

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class: **A:** 89.5%-100.0%; **B:** 79.5.0% -89.4% ; **C:** 69.5% - 79.4%; **D:** 59.5%-69.4%; **F:**< 59.5%

Incomplete Grade and Late Policy

- An "I" grade shall only be awarded, based on the discretion of the instructor. Subject to this discretion, the student must have **satisfactorily** completed a **sufficient** portion of the course by the end of the term. For further details, see p. 30, *CWU Catalog for the Academic Year 2008-2009*.
- Assignments submitted late will receive a penalty of one letter grade (10%) per school day late.

Make-Up Policy

If you will be (or have been) absent for an exam or a class in which an assignment is due, you will need to provide a university-approved justification for your absence in order to be allowed to take a make-up exam or quiz, or to hand in the assignment late.

Proscribed Behavior & Classroom Courtesy

Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, overt and covert behavior violating CWU's policy on diversity, as well as meeting any item(s) constituting sexual harassment. For further details, please consult the Appendices of *CWU Catalog for the Academic Year 2008-2009*. Other forms of proscribed behavior would violate the norms of courtesy, as judged by the discretion of the instructor. Aside from obvious norms, such as refraining from unruly behavior (whether in the form of verbal outbursts or other) such norms of courtesy would also include:

- Refraining from “grandstanding” and/or “sermonizing” during discussion sections. Remember that oral participation in philosophy entails *well-thought out* questions posed in a rational framework. If necessary, write your question down and/or rehearse it silently before sharing it in class. Make an effort to be succinct, clear, and concise. (Note: If you prefer, you may also email questions for discussion section. More details concerning email policy shall be posted in the **Announcements** section of the Blackboard site for this course).
- Refraining from private conversation and/or other forms for communication among peers both inside and outside of class during lectures or discussion days.
- **Switching cell phones off during class.**
- Avoiding eating and drinking in class. If you *must*, do so noiselessly and with utmost discretion.

Failure to comply with *any* of the above standards may result in your physical removal from class; whether by explicit request from the instructor or by escort from Campus Security (for serious violations thereof), in addition to further disciplinary measures as set forth by the policies stated in the Appendices of *CWU Catalog for the Academic Year 2008-2009*.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

There are four types of academic dishonesty: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes dishonesty of these four types. For further information, please consult the policies stated in the Appendices of *CWU Catalog for the Academic Year 2008-2009*. Incidents of academic dishonesty are taken very seriously, and will be forwarded to the office of judicial programs any cases of it that come to attention.

Special Accommodations/Disabilities

Students with disabilities who wish to arrange for academic adjustments in this class are encouraged to provide me with a copy of their Confirmation of Eligibility of Academic Adjustments and meet with me as soon as possible to discuss their needs and the manner in which their accommodations will be delivered.

Course Textbook

- **(Required)** Lewis Vaughn, *Doing Ethics: Moral Reasoning and Contemporary Issues* (4th edn), W. W. Norton & Co., 2008. ISBN-13: 973-0-393-92710-8

Note that the above textbook as well as an abridged source or anthology concerning some contemporary responses by ethicists regarding the aforementioned topics. In addition from selected readings from this textbook, other articles and sections from books will be made available in the form of photocopied handouts, Blackboard postings, library e-Reserves, and books in the library's Reserve shelf. Such selections will come from the following:

The American Medical Association's Code of Ethics, "Withholding Life-Sustaining Treatment/ Euthanasia", (1990) and The Hippocratic Oath (~500 BC)

US Supreme Court Justice H. Blackmun's Majority Opinion (excerpts), *Roe vs. Wade*, 1974.

Phillip Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent : The Wars of the Twenty-First Century*, NY: Alfred Knopf, 2008.

David Boonin & Graham Oddie, *What's Wrong? Applied Ethicists and Their Critics*, NY & Oxford, UK: Oxford U. Press, 2005.

Peter Carruthers, "The Animals Issue," manuscript (1992)

Joel Feinberg & Russ Shafer-Landau, eds., *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy (11th edn)*, Wadsworth, 2002.

Larry May, Shari Collins-Chobanian, Kai Wong, eds. *Applied Ethics: A Multicultural Approach* (2nd edn.) Upper Saddle River, NJ.: Prentice Hall, 1998.

Nina Rosenstand, *The Moral of the Story: An Introduction to Ethics (5th edn.)*, McGraw-Hill, 2005.

Joel Rudinow & Anthony Graybosch, eds., *Ethics and Values in the Information Age*, Wadsworth, 2002.

Stephen Satris, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Moral Issues (10th edn.)* Dushkin, McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Anthony Weston, *Creative Problem-Solving in Ethics*, NY & Oxford, UK: Oxford U. Press, 2007.

Detailed Class Schedule

- Below are the details for week 1. The reading schedules shall be posted at the beginning of each week. The course is essentially structured around four lectures (Mon-Thu) followed by a discussion/review day (Fri).
- The Assigned Readings are for the topic covered in class on that day, as homework. I will take roughly 5-10 minutes to answer questions you may have on the readings in the

following class period. If you have further questions, please see me during office hours, or bring them up on Fridays.

Topic	Date	Assigned Readings
<i>Course Introduction1: A 'crash course' in Metaethics</i>	09/24/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro & Relativism, Subjectivism, Objectivism (Vaughn: 1-33/ Optional: 34-40) Evaluating Arguments (Vaughn 43-60)
<i>Course Introduction2: Basic Moral Theories</i>	09/25/08	Moral Theories (Vaughn 76-93/ Optional: 94-99 ; 100-113 / Optional: 114-133 ; 134-141 / Optional: 142-158)
	9/26/08	Discussion & Q/A
<i>Ethical issue I. Abortion</i>	9/29/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roe vs. Wade Decision (posted in Blackboard) Overview (Vaughn: 161-173) optional reading-recommended Weston (posted in Blackboard) chapters 1,2 (1-34) & 6 (61-75) optional-highly recommended, chapters 3-5 optional reading-recommended. Note that this is a very small book but with large print, so it's not much reading. Add to that: you can read it throughout this week (not all on Monday). You'll find it very accessible, entertaining, and valuable. "Personhood, Rights and Justice" (Rosentand-posted in blackboard), pp. 299-303, 306-326. Skip Boxes 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 optional-highly recommended
	9/30/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judith J. Thompson: "A Defense of Abortion," (Vaughn: 173-183) "First, Second, and Third-Wave Feminism" (Rosentand-posted in blackboard), pp. 575-588. optional reading-recommended
	10/01/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don Marquis: "Why Abortion is Immoral" (Vaughn: 192-204)
	10/02/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mary Ann Warren: "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion" (Vaughn: 183-192)
	10/03/08	Discussion & Q/A
<i>Ethical issue II. Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide</i>	10/06/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AMA Policy on Euthanasia (available in Oct 3 handouts folder, in Blackboard) The Hippocratic Oath (available in Oct 3 handouts folder, in Blackboard) Vaughn (pp. 209-215 up to Moral Arguments section) Vaughn (pp. 215-220) optional reading-recommended.
	10/07/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> James Rachels "Active and Passive Euthanasia" (Vaughn: 220-224) J. Gay-Williams "The Wrongfulness of Euthanasia" (Vaughn: 224-226) Helga Kuhse, "A Modern Myth... That Letting Die is not the Intentional Cause of Death..." (in Blackboard) optional reading-highly recommended.

	10/08/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Hardwig “Is there a Duty to Die?” (Vaughn: 235-245)
	10/09/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dan W. Brock “Voluntary Active Euthanasia” (Vaughn: 227-235)
	10/10/08	Discussion & Q/A
	10/13/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winston Nesbitt: “Is Killing No Worse Than Letting Die?” (Boonin & Oddie: pp. 48-51) (in Blackboard) • Shelley Kagan, : “The Additive Fallacy” (Boonin & Oddie: pp. 55-62) (in Blackboard)
Ethical issue IIIa. War: Declaration and Prosecution	10/14/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaughn (pp. 447-456) • Bush Doctrine (2002): Introduction and Overview (pp.1-4, in Blackboard) • Phillip Bobbit: “The Illusion of Strategic Doctrine,” (ch. 9 from <i>Terror and Consent</i>), pp. 429-451, (in Blackboard) Optional: Highly recommended
	10/15/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Walzer “Against ‘Realism’”(Vaughn: 477-487)
	10/16/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Douglas P. Lackey “Pacifism” (Vaughn: 456-468)
	10/17/08	Discussion
	10/20/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaughn (pp. 494-504) • Jan Narveson, “Morality and Violence: War, Revolution, Terrorism,” (Rosenstand, pp. 662-665) (in Blackboard) • David Rodin, “Terrorism Without Intention,” (Rosenstand, pp. 665-668) (in Blackboard)
Ethical issue IIIb. War and Terrorism	10/21/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Walzer: “Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses,” Vaugh (pp. 504-510)
	10/22/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haig Khatchadourian: “The ‘Morality’ of Terrorism,” Vaugh (pp. 511-521)
	10/23/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Sterba: “Terrorism and International Justice,” Vaugh (pp. 522-532)
	10/24/08	Discussion
	10/27/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaughn (pp. 249-259) • Ernest van den Haag: “The Ultimate Punishment: A Defense,” Vaugh (pp. 260-277)
Ethical issue IV. The Death Penalty	10/28/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeffrey H. Reiman, “Justice, Civilization, and the Death Penalty” (pp. 264-270)
	10/29/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Igor Primoratz, “A Life for a Life” (pp. 271-277)
	10/30/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hugo Adam Bedau, “Against the Death Penalty: The Minimal Invasion Argument” (pp. 277-281)
	10/31/08	MIDTERM

<i>Ethical issue V. Do Animals Have Rights?</i>	11/03/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaughn (pp. 401-408) Optional: 409-411 (Moral Arguments Section) • Peter Carruthers: “The Animals Issue” (BB)
	11/04/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Singer: “All Animals Are Equal,” Vaughn (pp. 411-420)
	11/05/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights,” Vaughn (pp. 421-428) Optional • Mary Anne Warren, “Difficulties With the Strong Rights Position,” Vaughn (pp. 428-434)
	11/06/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Rachels, “Drawing Lines,” Vaughn (pp. 435-443)
	11/07/08	Discussion
<i>Ethical Issue VI. Human Values and The Environment</i>	11/10/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaughn, pp. 360-369 • Film Clip: Godfrey Reggio’s <i>Powaquatzí</i>
	11/11/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul M. Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” Vaughn (pp. 374-388)
	11/12/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Baxter, “People or Penguins,” Vaughn (pp. 370-373)
	11/13/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Schmidtz, “Are All Species Equal?,” Vaughn (pp. 389-396) • Optional: Shari-Collins-Chobanian “Environmental Racism, American Indians, and Monitored Retrievable Storage Sites for Radioactive Waste,” (in May, et. al. (1998) 160-169) • Optional: Vandana Shiva “Development, Ecology, and Women,” (in May, et. al. (1998) 170-179)
	11/14/08	Discussion
<i>Ethical Issue VII. Affirmative Action and Equality</i>	11/17/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaughn (pp. 326-332) Optional: 332-334 (Moral Arguments Section) • Lisa H. Newton, “Reverse Discrimination as Unjustified,” Vaughn (pp. 335-338)
	11/18/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Fullinwider, “Affirmative Action and Fairness,” Vaughn (pp. 338-342)
	11/19/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louis Pojman, “The Case Against Affirmative Action,” Vaughn (pp. 342-354)
	11/20/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Plous, “Ten Myths About Affirmative Actions,” Vaughn (pp. 354-357)
	11/21/08	Discussion: **Read the “Cases for Analysis” (Vaughn 357-359) beforehand.
<i>Ethical Issue VIII. Privacy, Censorship, and Pornography</i>	11/24/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaughn (pp. 285-290) Optional: 290-293 (Moral Theories and Arguments Section) • “The Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography: Final Report,” Vaughn (pp. 294-299)
	11/25/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catharine A. McKinnon, “Pornography, Civil Rights, and Speech,” Vaughn (pp. 299-311)

12/01/08	• Wendy Kaminer, “Feminists Against the First Amendment,” Vaughn (pp. 311-317)
12/02/08	• Wendy McElroy “A Feminist Defense of Pornography,” Vaughn (pp. 318-322)
12/03/08	• James Moor, “Toward a Theory of Privacy in the Information Age,” in Rudinow & Graybosch (pp. 287-288), (BB)
12/04/08	Discussion
12/05/08	FINAL EXAM REVIEW

- **Note: The Content of the Syllabus is liable to change, please check the Blackboard postings and other announcements for updates.**