

# COURSE OUTLINE

## OXNARD COLLEGE

### I. Course Identification and Justification:

- A. Proposed course id: PHIL R116  
Banner title: Contemporary Moral Issues  
Full title: Contemporary Moral Issues

B. Reason(s) course is offered:

To enhance the Philosophy program's existing course offerings, and to offer students curriculum that is timely and relevant to many related academic fields and programs. Further, this course will provide general education credit in the Humanities areas of CSU GE-Breadth and IGETC, and be added to the AA-T in Philosophy as a C-ID descriptor- required elective or as an elective.

### II. Catalog Information:

- A. Units:  
*Current:* 3.00

B. Course Hours:

- In-Class Contact Hours:  
Lecture: 52.5    Activity: 0    Lab: 0
- Total In-Class Contact Hours: 52.5
- Total Outside-of-Class Hours: 105
- Total Student Learning Hours: 157.5

C. Prerequisites, Corequisites, Advisories, and Limitations on Enrollment:

- Prerequisites  
*Current:*

- Corequisites  
*Current:*

- Advisories:  
*Current:*

- Limitations on Enrollment:  
*Current:*

D. Catalog Description:

*Current:*

This course provides an overview of recent and historical ethics, theory and practice, as well as methods of reasoning about values. Typical topics include abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, affirmative action, gender relationships, privacy, animal rights, the environment, war, world hunger, censorship, cloning, and the like. Interdisciplinary and global perspectives will be emphasized.

- E. Fees:  
*Current:* \$ None

- F. Field trips:  
*Current:*

Will be required: [ ]  
May be required: [X]  
Will not be required: [ ]

- G. Repeatability:  
*Current:*  
A - Not designed as repeatable
- H. Credit basis:  
*Current:*  
Letter Graded Only [X]  
Pass/No Pass [ ]  
Student Option [ ]
- I. Credit by exam:  
*Current:*  
Petitions may be granted: [ ]  
Petitions will not be granted: [X]

### III. Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Apply philosophical concepts in reasoning to matters of value.
- B. Identify basic ethical theories such as duty theory, utility theory, virtue theory, etc.
- C. Compare and contrast basic ethical theories such as duty theory, utility theory, virtue theory, etc.
- D. Relate ethical theories, contemporary and historical, to current moral problems.
- E. Examine ethical dilemmas which reflect problems/issues in society/(the world) today.
- F. Develop an interdisciplinary understanding, (economic, political, historical, social, scientific, etc.) to better understand causes and consequences related to moral issues.
- G. Develop critical skills in order to weigh evidence and reach conclusions on the basis of facts and reasoned argument.
- H. Increase awareness of and/or sensitivity to the nuances and details of moral matters as well as the reasoning used to articulate them.
- I. Formulate ethical positions, and develop arguments based upon clear premises and sound inferences.
- J. Conduct library (and learning resource) research as needed/when appropriate.

### IV. Course Content:

Topics to be covered include, but are not limited to:

- A. Introduction and foundational issues: e.g. the nature of ethics/moral philosophy; relation of ethics to other areas in philosophy.
- B. Normative vs. theoretical ethics. The nature of ethical statements; Is vs. Ought.
- C. The nature of moral reasoning, argument, judgment, analysis; moral dilemmas.
- D. Moral skepticism; subjectivism and objectivism; absolutism and relativism.
- E. Main traditions in ethics: virtue ethics, egoism, utilitarianism, deontological ethics/theories of moral duty; rights ethics, etc.
- F. Abortion; reproductive technologies.
- G. Capital punishment.
- H. Euthanasia/physician-assisted suicide.

- I. Racial and/or sexual equality; affirmative action.
- J. The use of non-human animals: animal experimentation, carnivorism, etc.
- K. Bio-medical research/genetic engineering/cloning.
- L. Environmental issues
- M. War
- N. Hunger
- O. Censorship

V. Lab Content:

VI. Methods of Instruction:

Methods may include, but are not limited to:

- A. Lecture (e.g. on the pros and cons of the death penalty)
- B. Text Analysis (e.g. on passages from Aristotle's Ethics)
- C. Class discussion (e.g. on application of differing theories to the topic of world hunger)
- D. Multi-media presentation (e.g., PowerPoint with integrated audio and visual components as well as practice problems on "How to apply logical analysis to matters of value")
- E. Review web pages on historical, political, economic, etc. analyses of war.
- F. Watch a film that explores multi-perspectival themes related to the topic of abortion, or attend a play on campus which examines racial or gender issues
- G. Small group discussions (e.g. small groups discussing philosophies of duty vs. utility, and then later arguing for and/or against the strengths and weaknesses of each approach)
- H. In-class student presentations (e.g. a student creatively exploring issues from the field of bio-ethics and discrimination by discussing scenes or topics from the movie \*Gattaca\*)
- I. Guest speakers (e.g. a guest speaker explaining how his/her religion addresses/answers questions related to ethics, and a specific ethical issue, such as homosexuality)

VII. Methods of Evaluation and Assignments:

- A. Methods of evaluation for degree-applicable courses:
  - Essays
  - Problem-Solving Assignments (Examples: Math-like problems, diagnosis & repair) [  ]
  - Physical Skills Demonstrations (Examples: Performing arts, equipment operation) [  ]

For any course, if "Essays" above is not checked, explain why.

- B. Typical graded assignments (methods of evaluation):
  1. Multiple-choice tests on key topics in Kant's and Mill's ethical philosophies.
  2. Quizzes on, for example, interdisciplinary facts, beliefs regarding euthanasia.
  3. Essays on the topic of truth, self, freedom, etc. as discussed by one or more traditional philosophers.
  4. Interdisciplinary research papers exploring global impacts on indigenous peoples and the environment.
  5. Projects: create a video or short play/skit demonstrating a Socratic-(back-and-forth)-style dialogue on a significant current ethical issue, e.g., legal/illegal drug use in society.
- C. Typical outside of classroom assignments:
  1. Reading
    - a. Primary Sources
      - i. Ch. on Duty Theory
      - ii. Ch. on Utilitarianism

- b. Pro-Con (text/articles)
    - i. Cloning
    - ii. Global wealth/poverty
  - c. Journal Articles
    - i. "Impact of death penalty (or lack thereof) in States"
    - ii. Economic analyses of cost of maintaining prisoners on death row
2. Writing
- a. (Analyze an ethical issue): "Is basic health care a universal human right?" (3-5 pg.)
    - i. Identify what is meant by the terms, "health care," "human right," "universal," etc.
    - ii. Briefly discuss historical background/antecedents /(assumptions) related to the issue.
    - iii. Reconstruct arguments both for and against a main position on the issue.
    - iv. Criticize/critique perspectives to better understand strengths/weaknesses, (when rigorously scrutinized)
    - v. Summarize conclusions, results, and what was learned, and/or what would be next studied (if the exploration was continued)
  - b. (Short-answer writing for a quiz): "Explain the ethical theory of egoism in 50 words or less."
  - c. Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of arguments for and against the topic of Immigration. Include interdisciplinary perspectives from history, politics, economics, sociology/culture, and natural sciences (when applicable), (ex. forensics) (7-10 pg.)
3. Other
- a. Review video open-source university lectures on topics in ethics
  - b. Research electronic databases, e.g., a prominent university's webpage for its Center for Ethical Studies, (dept.), for additional material on a subject

VIII. Textbooks And Instructional Materials:

A. Textbooks/Resources:

1. Vaughn, Lewis (2012). Doing Ethics: Moral Reasoning and Contemporary Issues Norton .
2. Van Camp, J.; Olen, J.; Barry, V. (2011). Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings Cengage.
3. Thiroux, J. (2012). Ethics: Theory and Practice Pearson.

B. Other Instructional Materials:

IX. Minimum Qualifications and Additional Certifications:

A. Minimum Qualifications:

1. Philosophy (Masters Required)

B. Additional Certifications:

1. Description of certification requirement:
2. Name of statute, regulation, or licensing/certification organization requiring this certification:

X. Approval Dates

CC Approval Date: 11/25/15

Board Approval Date: 12/08/15

Course ID: 1799