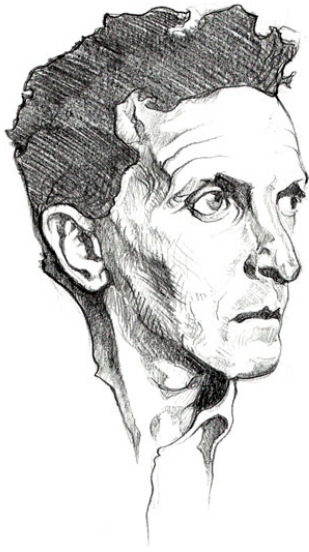


1889-
1951



“If a [person] could write a book on Ethics which really *was* a book on Ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world.”

—Ludwig Wittgenstein, “Lecture on Ethics”

CEP 461 A&B: ETHICS AND IDENTITY
FINAL SYLLABUS

Winter 2019
MW 8:30-10:20
Gould 100

Professor:
Mark Purcell
Gould 410F
mpurcell@uw.edu

Office Hours:
By appointment—just check with me!

Course website:
on Canvas

Introduction

There are two main aims in this course. The first is to help you develop *critical literacy* in the major debates about ethics and morality. This means being aware of, really understanding, and critically evaluating the various arguments that people make about ethics and morality. The second aim is to help you gain experience developing, articulating, applying, and defending your ethical arguments as a member of a larger community.

Course Goals

- Develop critical literacy in key arguments about ethics and morality.
- Gain experience articulating those arguments and negotiating them together with other people.
- Develop a better understanding of how those arguments work in everyday practice.
- Improve academic communication, reading, writing, and analytical skills.
- Form a viable and sustainable learning community among ourselves.

Student Responsibilities

In CEP, students have significant responsibilities, and the success of the course ultimately depends upon how well those responsibilities are met. Your first responsibility is to one another and to one another's education. In this class you and your classmates will generate knowledge through discussion, deliberation, and debate. In order for the class to be successful, *you* must be an active participant in both teaching and learning. In class, each of you will participate by contributing, discussing, listening, facilitating, and analyzing the material, while outside of class, each of you will participate by reading the material and carefully completing each assignment and turning it in on time.

At the end of the quarter, each student must also complete a narrative evaluation of his/her performance in the course.

In order to meet the above requirements, of course, you must attend. I expect each student to attend and participate fully in every class. Attendance will be noted at all scheduled meeting times, and participation will be evaluated for every class. Part of this means ***arriving on time***. This means *at or before* 8:30. Not *around* 8:30.

Instructor Responsibilities

I play several roles in the class and can be relied upon to provide the following:

1. A safe and rigorous learning context: My first job is to set the learning context for the course. In this case that means establishing much of the structure of the course. Setting the context also means that I will work to make sure that the learning environment is a safe, respectful, and productive environment for all of us. As a community, the class should maintain these standards by regulating itself, but if a student continues to feel that these standards are not being met then he or she should speak to me so that we can find ways to resolve the problem.
2. Timely feedback, advice, and instruction on course assignments and other course requirements: Students should expect me to provide timely and considered feedback on course assignments and projects. I will also be available to answer questions about the material, provide advice and information, and otherwise aid students in their learning.
3. Assigning final credit for the course: I will be responsible for assigning final course grade consistent with the grading basis (numerical grade or CR/NC) you have selected.

Assessment

Your final assessment in this course will be based on your performance on the following:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Date Due</i>
Class Participation	30	Every class and outside class
Reading assignments	35	Almost every class
Facilitation	10	See sign-up sheet
Final Essay Check-in	5	March 6
Final Essay	20	March 19
Self-evaluation	0	March 25
Total	100	

For those of you taking the course CR/NC:

University guidelines state that the instructor must determine the minimum performance level that can earn a grade of credit. In this course, the minimum level is 75 percent. In other words, if you earn between 75-100 percent, you will receive a grade of “credit.” If you earn less than 75 percent you will receive a grade of “no credit.”

For those of you taking the course for a standard numerical grade:

I will similarly follow all university guidelines, but in your case that will result in a numerical grade rather than CR/NC.

Course Readings

In the Course Reader, available at Rams Copy Center, 4144 University Way NE, (206) 632-6630.

Academic honesty

The University takes the offenses of cheating and plagiarism very seriously, and so do I. Cheating is taking advantage of the work of others. Plagiarism is representing the work of others as your own, without giving appropriate credit. If you are unsure what is OK or *not* OK, make sure to ask me!

Class Schedule

Week 1:	
Monday, January 7	Introduction to Course, Finalizing Course Design
Wednesday, January 9	Topic: Introduction to Consequentialist Approaches Reading: Almeder, R. (2000) <i>Human Happiness And Morality: A Brief Introduction to Ethics</i> , Amherst, NY, Prometheus Books., pp. 23-49 Assignment: Reading Assignment #1
Week 2:	
Monday, January 14	Topic: Introduction to Deontological Approaches Reading: Almeder, pp. 49-89 Assignment: Reading Assignment #2
Wednesday, January 16	Topic: Introduction to Virtue Ethics Reading: Vaughn, L. (2008) <i>Doing Ethics</i> , New York , Norton, Chapter 7 Assignment: Reading Assignment #3
Week 3:	
Monday, January 21	MLK Day – No Class Required Reading: King, “Letter From Birmingham Jail” Optionally Watch: video of “I Have A Dream” speech
Wednesday, January 23	Topic: Platonic Ethics Reading: Plato, selections from <i>Gorgias</i> ; all of <i>Euthyphro</i> (the introductions to both are included and recommended) Assignment: Reading Assignment #4
Week 4:	
Monday, January 28	Topic: Virtue Ethics Readings: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I (the Crisp introduction to Aristotle is included and recommended) Assignment: Reading Assignment #5
Wednesday, January 30	Topic: Virtue Ethics Readings: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book II Assignments: Reading Assignment #6

Week 5:	
Monday, February 4	Snowpocalypse II
Wednesday, February 6	Topic: Natural Law Readings: St. Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologica</i> , First Part of the Second Part, Questions 90-108 (the McDermott introduction is included and recommended) Assignment: Reading Assignment #7
Week 6:	
Monday, February 11	Topic: Consequentialist Ethics Readings: Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapters 1, 2, and 4 (the Pojman introduction to Mill is included and recommended) Assignment: Reading Assignment #8
Wednesday, February 13	Topic: Deontological Ethics Readings: Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals</i> , Preface; Chapter 1; Chapter 2, pp. 74-80 (the Pojman introduction to Kant is included and recommended) Assignment: Reading Assignment #9
Week 7:	
Monday, February 18	Presidents' Day – No Class Optional Reading: the Emancipation Proclamation Optional Reading: <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> Optionally Watch: <i>12 Years a Slave</i> Optionally Watch: <i>Lincoln</i>
Wednesday, February 20	Topic: Deontological Ethics Readings: Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals</i> , Chapter 2, pp. 80-113; Chapter 3 (pp. 114-131) Assignment: Reading Assignment #10
Week 8:	
Monday, February 25	Topic: Emotivist Ethics Readings: Hume, <i>Treatise of Human Nature</i> , Book 3, Part 1, Sections 1 & 2 (both the Pojman and Rachels introductions to Hume are included and recommended) Assignment: Reading Assignment #11
Wednesday, February 27	Topic: Emotivist Ethics Readings: Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals</i> , Sections 1-5 and Appendix 1 Assignments: Reading Assignment #12

Week 9:	
Monday, March 4	<p>Topic: Nietzschean Ethics</p> <p>Readings: <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>, Preface and Part 1 (the Welchman introduction to Nietzsche is included and recommended)</p> <p>Assignment: Reading Assignment #13</p>
Wednesday, March 6	<p>Topic: Nietzschean Ethics</p> <p>Readings: Nietzsche, from <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i>, Preface and First Essay (the Ansell-Pearson introduction to <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> is included and recommended)</p> <p>Assignment: Reading Assignment #14, Essay check-in</p>
Week 10:	
Monday, March 11	<p>Topic: Feminist Ethics</p> <p>Readings: Noddings, <i>Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics</i>, Introduction and Chapter 4 [Optional Reading: Tong, <i>Feminist Ethics...a good intro to the various approaches in FE</i>]</p> <p>Assignment: Reading Assignment #15</p>
Wednesday, March 13	<p>Topic: Feminist Ethics</p> <p>Readings: Butler, <i>Precarious Life</i>, Chapter 2: Violence, Mourning, Politics</p> <p>Assignment: Reading Assignment #16</p>
Exam Week	
Tuesday, March 19 8:30-10:20am Same Room	<p>Topic: Retrospective</p> <p>Readings: None</p> <p>Assignment: Final Essay</p> <p>Note: we do not have an exam during this period. We do, however, have <i>class</i>, probably our most important class, in which we try to make sense of the overall lessons we have learned about ethics.</p>

Reading Assignments

Overview

For each discussion, you will prepare yourself by reading the text and preparing a written assignment. The idea of the assignment is to provide you an opportunity to develop a better critical understanding of a particular reading. You should not write a lot—you should think your answers through and write concise and insightful paragraphs.

Part One is always required. Then, for each assignment, you are required to do *one* of Part Two, Part Three or Part Four.

Part One: You will answer a specific question (or questions) that I pose about the reading. Each reading is different, and so each has a specific question tailored to it. The questions for each reading are available on the course website under the “Assignments” tab. In general, Part One should not be more than 200 words (for reference, the following paragraph is about 175 words long...).

Part Two: Write a discussion question that asks your peers to discuss what you feel is the most pressing issue in the reading. Your question should be written in a way that generates discussion. Good discussion questions are “open-ended.” They have a complex answer and/or a range of possible answers. They are usually not “closed-ended,” meaning that there is a particular, discrete answer. Good discussion questions are also genuine. That means you have not already made up your mind what the answer is. For example if you ask, “Is reason the best way to do ethics?” and you really have not made up your mind whether reason is the best way or not, your question is genuine. You are really *asking*. If, on the other hand, you ask, “Kant can't really believe reason is the best way to do ethics, can he?!” you have made up your mind that reason is *not* the best way to do ethics. You are really *telling*, not asking. For the purposes of these discussion questions, try to ask, not tell.

Good, genuine questions can be descriptive. These ask about what actually is happening in the reading or in the world. Examples: “Does Hume mean to say...?” or “What does Mill mean by higher pleasure?” Good, genuine questions can also be normative. Normative questions ask what should be going on in the readings or in the world. For example, the genuine question above about whether we should use reason to do ethics is normative. Normative questions open up the issue of values, of what people think the world *should* be like. You can ask either descriptive or normative questions for your discussion question.

Part Three: In addition to thinking about the readings in isolation, we also want to connect their arguments to concrete situations in the world around us. How do the ideas in the text *work* in everyday experience? How could I *use* Kant’s Kingdom of Ends (for example) in think about the decisions I face in my own life, or the decisions we face as a community? Do I like what I come up with when I do that? Why or why not? For this part of the assignment, you should write about how one might *apply* the ideas in the reading to decisions you face, or your community faces, or America faces, or the world faces. [For example, Kant helps us think universally in a way that supports human-rights interventions in other countries.] Alternatively, you could write about how such concrete decisions could inform (and even help us rethink) the ideas in the readings. [For example, you could demonstrate how a particular case you are familiar with shows why Kant's ethics can be disastrous.¹] In general, Part Three should not be much more than 300 words or so (for reference, this paragraph is about 240 words).

1 That would be exciting!

Part Four: Use this part as a kind of journal in which you reflect on a particular quality of the reading, or of the author's argument, or of your reaction to the reading, or how the class discussions are going, or... There are many different topics you could cover here: whatever seems particularly important to you but that you were not able to address in your answers for the other parts.

Format

In order to make reading these easier for me, some standardization helps. The reading assignments must be **typed** and turned in on paper during class on the day they are due. The only exception to that rule is that if you choose to do Part Two (the discussion question), you need to post that on the course website, on the Discussions tab. But Part One (and Part Three and Four, if you choose to do them) should be on paper and handed in in class.

Make sure your **name** and the **assignment number** is on the page. You should try to fit it all onto **one** page. If you find yourself going over one page (because you are writing a long Part Four), by all means use the back side of the page to save paper.

See the Canvas site for the specific due dates of each assignment. Make sure to label each Part, so I know what is what.

Grading

The entire assignment will be graded on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). The grading for Part One will be very much like it was in CEP 301. For Part Two I will want to see you asking a question that will get discussion going. For Part Three, I will examine whether you have been rigorous and thoughtful in linking course ideas to the concrete context you choose. For Part Four, I will want to see that your reflections are serious and sincere.

No late work will be accepted for credit, but I am always happy to read and give feedback on late work to help you in your effort to understand the material, so don't hesitate to turn an assignment in if you have completed it but it is after the deadline.

Class Participation

Participation makes up a significant portion of your course grade. It is important. And there is no way around participating. As the syllabus lays out, each of you has a *responsibility* to others in the class to share your ideas and insights. The way this happens is by you speaking during class. If you do not actively listen and share your questions and ideas with everyone, they can't benefit from what you have to offer. Each of you has important questions and ideas to share that we can all learn from. Therefore, since you all have something important to contribute, you all have a responsibility to contribute it.

You will be graded on participation class-by-class. Effective participation in a given class period is not measured by amount. If you consistently share your ideas and questions and concerns in an honest effort to explore the material in the spirit of intellectual curiosity, you will receive a good grade for participation.

So, the strategy for participation is this: do not hesitate to share your thoughts. Do not think that they have to be fully formed and 100% defensible before you offer them. Do not think that they have to be brilliant or dazzling. Do not think you should remain quiet because you have different ideas about a topic than most others in the class (that's when we need you most). And, most importantly, do not think that you have to *know* before you speak. *Honest questions and true struggles within yourself that you have not yet resolved are the best way to contribute.*

Remember also that *listening* is as important as talking. Asking *genuine* questions (for which you have not already decided on an answer) is a good way to listen. If you ask a question that you do not already have an answer for, you will genuinely want to *hear* what your classmates have to say. The worst thing for discussion is a series of unrelated monologues. What we are shooting for are true *dialogues* in which you engage the comments and questions of others rather than following them up with unrelated comments and questions. Be *curious* about what others have to say.

I understand that oral participation in class is a struggle for some. I am willing to explore any and all ways to help you participate. If you feel uncomfortable with speaking in class, for whatever reason, you should come see or e-mail me so we can think of ways to make it more comfortable. I stand ready to help you find ways to speak, but the responsibility for participating is yours.

Discussion Facilitation

We will use a mixed format for facilitation this quarter. I will facilitate the first half of each class, and one of you will facilitate the second half. Each student will facilitate once during the quarter, either solo or with one other student.

You will sign up for facilitation on the sign-up sheet on the course website (under “Collaborations”). As the facilitator, you will be responsible for preparing a series of key themes and questions to guide discussion of the reading in the second half of class. Clearly in order to do this work well, each facilitator will have to start early and spend considerable time doing the work of planning their facilitation. The facilitators' job will be to serve as a particularly well-prepared participant who is responsible for keeping the discussion moving, and keeping it on track.

As part of the process, the facilitator will check in with me about 15 minutes before class, and I will provide feedback on your plan. In making your plan, of course, you will need to do the reading in advance, and then develop a plan you think will best facilitate discussion of that reading.

Grading

Each facilitator will be graded on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Both before-class preparation and in-class performance will be taken into account, and I will focus particularly on how each facilitator's plan and the facilitator's actions in class helped to stimulate thoughtful discussion among class members.

Ideas for Structuring a Discussion

Here are some ideas for structuring a discussion. Of course this list is not exhaustive. Other ideas are welcome.

Whole group—everyone engages in discussion together at one time. This is good because you can get a greater range of ideas and opinions with a larger group. Large groups are sometimes tricky to manage well though, so having a good set of stimulating questions is important so you can shape the discussion to move in insightful directions that you have thought out beforehand. Large-group can also be a more intimidating setting in which to speak.

Small-group discussion—the class is broken up into small groups to discuss. They can have the same topic to discuss, or they can have different topics. In **jigsaw**, the groups each discuss different aspects of a larger topic, and then they rejoin into a whole group to see how each group's issues/conclusions fit together.

Inverse pyramid (invented by students leaders in Geography 301, Fall 2002)—a version of jigsaw where the class starts out in eight small groups and each uses their discussion questions to come up with what they think is the most thought-provoking question. The groups then pair off, and the groups in each pair exchange their question with each other. Each group then discusses alone the new question they have been given. Then, the paired groups come together to discuss their responses to the two questions. These paired groups then formulate one question they want to ask the whole class. Then the class comes back together to explore the joint questions of each paired group.

Rotate (invented by student leaders in Geography 301, Spring 2001)—each leader develops questions on a particular sub-topic of the day's topic. The class is divided up into small groups so that there are the same number of small groups as there are discussion leaders. Then, the leaders move in shifts from group to group so that each leader has a chance to lead each group. That way, each group gets a chance to discuss each aspect of the day's topic. At the end, you can bring the group back into whole-group to share insights.

Structured debates—where two sides of a specific issue are pitted against each other, usually given roles to play, and their interaction is moderated by a moderator.

Four-square—the leaders set aside four corners labeled “agree,” “tend to agree,” “tend to disagree,” and “disagree.” They then make a statement, for example: “nationalism is a good thing.” Then each person in the class goes to the corner they decide best describes their reaction to the statement. The group in each corner discusses for a while why they agree/disagree/etc. with the statement. The class then goes back into large group to engage in debate over the issue. At the end, the leaders ask if anyone would like to change corners. Those that do are asked to share why their position changed during the debate.

Brainstorming—the leaders ask the class to come up with ideas about a given topic (say, “reasons why you oppose the war in Afghanistan” and “reasons why you support the war in Afghanistan”). The product of that brainstorming (usually written on the board) can then serve as the basis for discussion, or it can be a way to sum up a discussion. This is a classic planning method commonly used in community planning sessions. It can be expanded in many different directions.

Fishbowl—here one small-group engages in discussion and the rest of the class observes their discussion. Different small-groups can rotate into the fishbowl—they can discuss different topics or the same topic.

Role-playing—is a general technique that can be applied to any of the above methods. A person or group is given a role to play (rather than playing themselves), which gives them a certain point of view to argue from. This is particularly helpful when there is an issue you think most people (when playing themselves) will agree on; you can have people play roles that are in opposition to the common opinion.

Final Essay (15 points)

The idea of this assignment is to practice linking the ideas of the course to concrete ethical questions, and also to practice articulating those links in a written essay. In this assignment, you will write a compelling essay about the relationship between one (or *maybe* more) of the ideas in the course (e.g. Hume's social utility) and a concrete ethical question (e.g. drone strikes to eliminate U.S. enemies). In making the link, your essay can go either way; that is, you can either show how the concrete question helps us think better, or differently, about the idea from the course, or you can show how the idea from the course helps us make better decisions in the concrete ethical case. Either way, the essay will need to both effectively describe the concrete case and give a skillful account of the ethical idea from the course. And it must also offer a compelling *argument* about how they are connected.

The case should probably not be "epic," which is to say that it should not be a hugely complex issue with lots of moving parts (like global warming in general or the entire Palestine-Israel conflict). I don't want you to do a whole lot of outside research and spend a lot of words in the essay describing the many intricacies of the case. Something that is simpler, or a smaller question inside one of the bigger ones, is likely to be a better bet.

[Alternative option: instead of working with a concrete ethical case, you could instead bring the ideas from the course into conversation with other authors on ethics whom we have *not* read in the course (of whom there are, of course, many). For example, you might bring Mill's utilitarianism into a conversation with contemporary authors who work with, against, or beyond Mill. The structure would be the same, it would just substitute this beyond-the-syllabus ethical writing for the concrete case.]

[Additional alternative option: if you have a strong desire to carry out a group (2 or more) version of this essay, you are welcome to. To do so, you will need to put the group together, and then let me know ahead of time that you are doing a group version, so I can help you be as effective as possible.]

To give you a sense of how long these should be, so you don't worry about that issue, let's set the word maximum at 2,000 words. Please use a sane 12pt font, double-space, one-inch margins, number the pages, put your name on it, and have a title.

Grading

In grading your essay, I will be particularly interested in how you handle the ethical ideas. But I will also look to see if you communicate the details of the case clearly and in a way that best speaks to the ethical ideas you want to address. Lastly, I will evaluate whether you have made a clear and compelling *argument* about the relationship between the ethical ideas and the case.

Final Essay Check-in (5 points)

In Week 9, you will “pitch” an idea for an essay to me, in writing (no more than a page), that articulates: what idea from the the course you plan to use, the gist of the case you will examine, and some idea of the argument you plan to make about how they are linked. The idea of this check-in is both to compel you to start early on your essay, and to give you the opportunity to have an informed preview audience (me) who can give you feedback that will help you improve the final product. So, for this check-in to be successful, you will need to have done most of the legwork, so that you have a solid grasp of the course ideas and the details of the case. If you just throw an idea together at the last minute, you will have missed the point of this exercise, and your final paper will be diminished as a result.

Some Concrete Ethical Cases (also available on the “Case Studies” page on Canvas)

Here are some examples of ethical issues that are currently being debated in U.S. society. These might help prompt some ideas for your final essay, but mostly I am including them here as cases we might consider throughout the quarter as we try to connect the ethical ideas in the course to concrete ethical questions. There are, of course, many other cases we might discuss as well.

Cities and Urban Planning

What rules should govern how police use violence against citizens?

Is gentrification OK if it is generating economic growth? Why/not?

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/codeswitch/2014/12/27/373284989/icymi-2014-soccer-field-standoff-highlights-gentrification-tension>

Is it OK for planners to tell people how to live/ behave (by setting planning rules), if it is for their own good?

Should the government control liquor sales, or should it be left to the free market?

Should the City expand space for bicycles and pedestrians even if it reduces space for cars and worsens traffic?

(Inter)national

Should the government use torture if it will help thwart terrorist plots? Why/not?

Virtue Ethics: what kind of country do we want to be?

Deontology: are there rules we may not break even if doing so would have good consequences?

Consequentialism: what are the pluses and minuses of the CIA program?

Emotivism: what does your ‘breast’ tell you about torture?

Should the government spy on personal communications to thwart terrorist plots? Why/not?

Is it ok for one government to hack another?

Is hacking OK more generally? If so, when?

Should the government pay to get hostages back?

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/28/world/middleeast/the-cost-of-the-us-ban-on-paying-for-hostages.html?_r=0

Should the U.S. government use deadly force to combat ISIS?

Should the U.S. government use deadly force to depose Assad and bring peace to Syria?

Should the U.S. government have summarily executed Osama Bin Laden?

Should the U.S. government use drones to summarily execute other (probable) enemies?

Science/Technology

Should we manipulate the genes of non-human species? What about humans?

Should we try to use gene therapy to cure diseases in humans?

Should we aim to eradicate cancer? Disease in general? What if we need them somehow?

Should we give large tech corporations access to our data in exchange for the conveniences their services provide?

Social

Should parents have liberty to discipline their children as they see fit?

Should others intervene in cases of domestic violence? If so, how and why? If not, why not?