

Course Outline of Record

Los Medanos College 2700 East Leland Road Pittsburg CA 94565

Course Title: Contemporary Moral Issues Subject Area/Course Number: PHIL-122

New Course OR Existing Course

Author(s): Edward Haven

Subject Area/Course No.: PHIL-122

Units: 3

Course Title: Contemporary Moral Issues

Discipline(s): Philosophy, Biology, Business, Journalism, Library Sciences

Pre-Requisite(s): None

Co-Requisite(s): None

Advisories: Completion of ENGL-100

Catalog Description:

This course is an introduction to morality and its application to contemporary moral issues that our society presently faces such as environmental protection, reproductive rights, consumer rights, and privacy. Students will learn how thinking critically and engaging in a productive dialogue about these challenging issues.

Schedule Description:

Do you want to learn strategies to work through ethical issues? In this class you will choose an ethical issue to examine and try various strategies to determine a solution that you can support with evidence and sound value considerations.

Hrs/Mode of Instruction: Lecture: 54 Scheduled Lab: HBA Lab: Composition: Activity: Total Hours 54

Credit Credit Degree Applicable (DA)
 Credit Non-Degree (NDA)

Grading Pass/No Pass (P/NP)
 Letter (LR)
 Student Choice (SC)

Repeatability 0
 1
 2
 3

Last date of Assessment: Spring 17 Cohort #: 1

Please apply for:

LMC General Education Requirement(s): Arts and Humanities

Transfer to: CSU UC IGETC Area 3B CSU GE Area C2 C-ID Number

Course is Baccalaureate Level: Yes No

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Signatures:

Department Chair _____ Date _____
Librarian _____ Date _____
Dean (Technical Review) _____ Date _____
Curriculum Committee Chair _____ Date _____
President/Designee _____ Date _____
CCCCD Approval Date (Board or Chancellor's Office) _____ Date _____

STAND ALONE COURSE: YES NO

Course approved by Curriculum Committee as Baccalaureate Level: YES NO

LMC GE Requirement Approved by the Curriculum Committee: _____

FOR OFFICE OF INSTRUCTION ONLY. DO NOT WRITE IN THE SECTION BELOW.

Begin in Semester _____ Catalog year 20____/20____ Class Max: _____
Dept. Code/Name: _____ T.O.P.s Code: _____ Crossover course 1/ 2: _____
ESL Class: Yes / No _____ DSPS Class: Yes / No _____ Coop Work Exp: Yes / No _____

- | | | | | | |
|------------|--|----------|--|-------------------|---|
| Class Code | <input type="checkbox"/> A Liberal Arts & Sciences | SAM Code | <input type="checkbox"/> A Apprenticeship | Remediation Level | <input type="checkbox"/> B Basic Skills |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> B Developmental Preparatory | | <input type="checkbox"/> B Advanced Occupational | | <input type="checkbox"/> NBS Not Basic Skills |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> C Adult/Secondary Basic Education | | <input type="checkbox"/> C Clearly Occupational | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> D Personal Development/Survival | | <input type="checkbox"/> D Possibly Occupational | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> E For Substantially Handicapped | | <input type="checkbox"/> E* Non-Occupational | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> F Parenting/Family Support | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> G Community/Civic Development | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> H General and Cultural | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> I Career/Technical Education | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> J Workforce Preparation Enhanced | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> K Other non-credit enhanced | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Not eligible for enhanced | | | | |
- *Additional criteria needed
- 1 One level below transfer
 2 Two levels below transfer
 3 Three levels below transfer

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Institutional Student Learning Outcomes:



General Education SLOs:

At the completion of the LMC general education program, a student will:

1. read critically and communicate effectively as a writer and speaker.
2. understand connections among disciplines and apply interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving.
3. think critically and creatively
4. consider the ethical implications inherent in knowledge, decision-making and action.
5. possess a worldview informed by diverse social, multicultural and global perspectives.



None

Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs):

Proposed:

1. Citizenship – Developing and applying ethical responsibility and care in academics, the workplace, and global and local communities, while respecting and engaging with a diversity of beliefs, cultures, values, abilities, genders, races, ages, and sexual orientations.
2. Critical Engagement – Becoming critical co-investigators of a pluralistic world towards the agency to apply critical thinking to themselves, their communities and their societies, imparting an ethical imperative.
3. Philosophical Enquiry – Applying the methodologies of philosophy and critical thinking to describe and analyze philosophical and interdisciplinary problems and issues, including in historical context.
4. Philosophical Expression – Express complex philosophical ideas and arguments in clear, coherent and cogent written and oral communication.

Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs):

1. Analyze and evaluated a culturally diverse body of contemporary moral issues, found in interdisciplinary contexts such as political, biological, journalistic and cultural (GE 2, 3, 4, 5; PSLO 1, 2, 3)
2. Evaluate philosophical theories and concepts through their application to a culturally diverse body of contemporary moral issues, found in interdisciplinary contexts such as political, biological, journalistic and cultural (GE 2, 3, 5; PSLO 1, 2, 3)
3. Express arguments and the techniques of argumentation through written papers and oral presentations. (GE 1, 3 ; PSLO 2, 4)

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Assessment Instruments:

Through the course of the semester students will receive both formative and summative assessments to evaluate their progress towards mastery of the student learning outcomes. Assessments may take on many forms, not limited to the required assessments below. All assessment will focus on critical engagement with the material in the course, student comprehension of the underlying interconnected philosophical issues and their ability to articulate a well founded position within the philosophy field of discourse. Students' course work will be assessed by but are not limited to the following methods:

	<u>Writing Assignments</u>	<u>Ethical Inquiry Final Paper and Oral presentation</u>	<u>Reading Assessments</u>	<u>In Class Activities</u>
CSLO 1	X	X	X	X
CSLO 2	X	X	X	X
CSLO 3	X	X	X	X

Writing Assignments: In order to help students analyze a particular topic or philosophy in depth, evaluate those philosophies, and express their own philosophical conclusions, students will be required to write paper relating to the various issues covered in the course. Paper length will vary depending on the length of the section but will total at least 9 pages (MLA format) over the course of the semester and will contain direct quotations from assigned text for the course. These papers may included an Argument Paper, Personal Ethical View Point Paper, Self Analysis Paper, Ethical Theory Paper or Ethical Consideration Paper.

In the Argument Paper students are given an article to read where they will identify the arguments of each side of the controversy and, identify the type of evidence used to brace these arguments (Religion, Science, History, etc). This allows students to separate the essential part of the argument from polemics and unrelated information.

In the Personal Ethical View Point paper students write a 2 to 3 page paper where they reflect on their core beliefs and values and identify how they acquired these beliefs and values looking at parental influences, religious practices, culture, past experiences, media, socioeconomics and subcultures. This allows students to explore their biases and begin to define their ethical standards.

In the Self Analysis Paper students read an article about an ethical issue and write about their biases in relation to the ethical issue expressed in the article. Students analyze how their biases inform their perspective on the ethical issue. This allows students to connect their own biases to an examination of an ethical issue and reflect on how this impacts their analysis of the issue.

In the Ethical Theory Paper students will read an article about an ethical controversy and students will use ethical theories that draw on interdisciplinary sources (psychology, sociology, religion, anthropology, environmentalism, etc) to analyze the controversy and explain how different ethical theories lead to different ways of understanding and solving an ethical controversy. This allows

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students to practice working with different ethical theories derived from various interdisciplinary studies and identify a theory that they can use to systematically examine other ethical issues.

In the Ethical Consideration Paper students read an article regarding an ethical issue, they identify ethical considerations that are embedded in the claims made by competing parties, weigh these considerations, then state which consideration is most important in resolving the ethical issue.

Sample writing prompts:

1. Can terrorism ever be morally justified? Why or why not? Consider its use in war.
2. Is passive euthanasia morally different than active euthanasia? Can either form of euthanasia be moral?
3. How has your culture, traditions and upbringing effected your moral decision making? What core moral principles do you hold true? Where did you learn them?

Ethical Inquiry Final Paper and Oral presentation: In the Ethical Inquiry Final Paper students put all the components learned in previous class assignments into this culminating paper. Students choose an ethical controversy and in a paper they present the controversy clearly and succinctly, identify the arguments and cultural values of each side, describe the ethical considerations related to solving the problem and identify what they believe is most important consideration and state why, and then advocate for a potential solution.

The oral presentation of the Ethical Inquiry Final Paper will be called "Work in Progress." Students will share their research in class focusing on above mentioned Ethical Inquiry components. They will be asked questions and be expected to defend their ethical reasoning regarding the controversy they have chosen to research.

Reading Assessments: Learning to critically engage with philosophical readings is an important part of philosophy. In order to facilitate a critical reading and analysis of the primary texts, students will be required to write about the assigned readings. These may take different forms, from journals to study questions to in class presentations. In all cases, the instructor will use these reading assessments to teach important skills for reading academic texts, such as identifying key passages, mapping the overarching argumentative structures and distinguishing between an evaluation and analysis.

In Class Activities: In philosophy it is important to share ideas, raise questions and express objections in order to make progress towards understanding the material and for students to begin to form their own ideas and sense of self. For this reason student participation in class is important. In order to reflect this, in class participation activities will be given in class. These will be small in class assignments. These activities give the student the opportunity to engage with new material, while building communication skills with their classmates, to better form an understanding of the material in context.

1. Analyze and evaluated a culturally diverse body of contemporary moral issues, found in interdisciplinary contexts such as political, biological, journalistic and cultural (GE 2, 3, 4, 5; PSLO 1, 2, 3)

A. When completing the writing assignment students will be challenged to use not only the information from the course, but to provide their own context to the questions. Paper prompts will

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be formed to encourage engagement with social, political and ethical issues. This will help students better understand their role as citizens both in their own community and in larger geopolitical communities (e.g. writing about ethical solutions to terrorism or applying ideas from care ethics to the nurse/patient relationship).

B. Ethical Inquiry Final Paper and Oral Presentation will seek to be a synthesis of all of the material from the course, asking students to evaluate a moral issues, from multiple perspectives and as it appears in a diversity of contexts (e.g. writing about the many different sides of terrorism, considering both international and domestic cases, identifying the role of the freedom fighter, and from the nuance of the argument, present a coherent stance on how a society should best address terrorism).

C. Reading assessment will provide a formative assessment of student's ability to map the reading onto their own lives and experience with social, political and ethical issues. This will be done by providing prompts that encourage a critical engagement through questions aimed at exploring the commonalities between the philosophical questions in the reading and the questions in the students lives and experience in a social, political and ethical context. (e.g. challenging students to describe a moral dilemma from their own life and apply the theory to it; reading Confucius' Analects and applying them to contemporary political debate).

D. In class activities will include a social, political or ethical element. The activities should encourage students to think about the implications of the discussions they are making and the larger impact these decisions would have on society. (e.g. discuss the ethical implications of current political debates and issues; ask students to provide ethical dilemma in their own lives and challenge the student to come up with advice from the theories covered; or have students do a quick write about opinions they have heard about euthanasia).

2. Evaluate philosophical theories and concepts through their application to a culturally diverse body of contemporary moral issues, found in interdisciplinary contexts such as political, biological, journalistic and cultural (GE 2, 3, 5; PSLO 1, 2, 3)

A. Writing assignments will ask students to draw from a diverse body of viewpoints across cultures and traditions of thought, including ideas the student may not agree with, in order to analyze and evaluate ideas presented across the primary texts. (e.g. writing a paper about the best response to terrorism, a doctor's ethical obligations in euthanasia, or which ethical theory provides a life well lived).

B. In the Ethical Inquiry Final Paper and Oral Presentation student will need to identify, analyze and apply the theories learned in class, in order to effectively evaluate a contemporary moral issues that is key to their lives, helping them construct their own moral code and identity (e.g. present on how they will use Utilitarianism to fund their proposed action plan for bring healthy food to their community schools; or writing about how Care Ethics can help them resolve workplace disputes).

C. Reading assessments will not only require the students to analyze the texts at hand, but also to evaluate the ideas in comparison to the previous texts and/or evaluate the ideas present in a temporary context (e.g. answering questions about Bonnie Stienbock's "The Intentional

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Termination of Life” as a response to James Rachels’ “Active and Passive Euthanasia”, writing a short journal analyzing an excerpt from John Stuart Mills, or orally presenting a summary of an assigned case study relating to abortion).

D. In class activities will ask students to consider the different perspectives from the course readings in relationship to each other as part of a larger discourse. These activities will provide a formative assessment of students comprehension of the philosophical underpinnings that connect the material (e.g. a group performance of moral skits, as evaluated by different philosophers or groups all tackle philosophical dilemma's and the class discusses which theories they found most useful).

3. Expressing arguments and the techniques of argumentation through written papers and oral presentations. (GE 1, 3 ; PSLO 2, 4)

A. Writing Assignments will require students to formulate a written argument for their own ideas on the particular topic for the course section. In doing so students will receive assistance in moving from their ideas, to being able to clearly and concisely articulate an argumentative stance on the topic. (e.g. writing a term paper in which the student provides a solution to the no rest objection to utilitarianism or writing a section paper about how to accurately ethically categorize terrorism).

B. The Ethical Inquiry Final Paper and Oral presentation, will include a written component in which they will need to construct their own argument, demonstrating a master of the techniques of argumentation learned from the readings and discussion in class. It will also include an oral presentation in which they will present their theory, ideas or solutions to a moral issue in their own life, and receive questions and feedback form their classmates as well as the instructor, including a grade for the assignment (e.g. orally present a their plan for end of life care of their parents; or orally present their own code of ethics and demonstrate how it applies to the moral issues covered in the course).

C. Reading assessment will provide a formative assessment of students’ writing skills or oral skills when they are asked to articulate their beliefs and opinions about the assigned reading. On a week by week basis the instructor will be given the opportunity to assess the students’ writing and speaking to modify the assignment to help shape student learning towards mastery of written arguments on major philosophical questions. (e.g. reading an excerpt from John Stuart Mills’ Utilitarians and drawing their own chart organizing the different kinds of pleasures/happiness; orally presenting a summary of “The case for Animal Rights” by Tom Regan in class to begin class discussion on the text; or reading Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”, to write about social justice and the ethical imperative for justice).

D. When participating in class activities students will be asked to present their ideas and arguments in an oral form, to other students in a group, to the class and instructor, through presentations, or in a debate. This will give an opportunity for a formative assessment not only of a students’ understanding of the material but also of the students’ competency for presenting complex philosophical ideas and arguments in an oral form. (e.g. a group performance of moral skits, as evaluated by different philosophers; respond to a video about human impact on the environment; or present an assigned case study to the class).

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Method of Evaluation/Grading:

Each section will be composed of in class activities to help the students better engage with the material, reading assessments for the assigned readings in the section, and will culminate in a short paper. Additional assessment may be made by the instructor as needed. A sample break down of grade weight by approximate percentage value could be:

Ethical Inquiry Final Paper 25%

Ethical Inquiry Oral Presentation 10%

Writing Assignments 30% (15% per paper, with the lowest paper grade dropped)

Participation 20% (over ~20 – 30 graded activities)

Reading assignments 20% (10 assignments each worth 2%)

Upon completion of the course, a percentage of completed course work will be calculated using the assessments from the course. A letter grade will be assigned as follows:

A 90 - 100%

B 80 - 89%

C 70 - 79%

D 60 - 69%

F 0 – 59%

A student who earns an 'A' grade will have achieved mastery in the course-level learning outcomes, demonstrating exceptional ability for critical engagement with the material in the course, comprehension of the underlying interconnected philosophical issues and their ability to articulate a well founded position within the philosophy field of discourse.

A student who earns a 'B' grade will have achieved near mastery or mastery in some but not all of the course-level learning outcomes, demonstrating a strong ability for critical engagement with the material in the course, comprehension of the underlying interconnected philosophical issues and their ability to articulate a well founded position within the philosophy field of discourse.

A Student who earns a 'C' grade will have achieved a satisfactory completion of the course-level learning outcomes, demonstrating satisfactory ability for critical engagement with the material in the course, comprehension of the underlying interconnected philosophical issues and their ability to articulate a well founded position within the philosophy field of discourse.

A student who earns a 'D' grade will have achieved near satisfactory completion or satisfactory completion in some but not all of the course-level learning outcomes, demonstrating below standard ability for critical engagement with the material in the course, comprehension of the underlying interconnected philosophical issues and their ability to articulate a well founded position within the philosophy field of discourse.

A student who earns a 'F' grade will lack satisfactory completion of the course-level learning outcomes, demonstrating a deficiency in ability for critical engagement with the material in the course, comprehension of the underlying interconnected philosophical issues and their ability to articulate a well founded position within the philosophy field of discourse.

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Course Content:

The course will be divided into at least four sections, each covering a different contemporary moral issue, which can be illuminated by philosophical theory. While there are many contemporary moral issues that could be covered, here is one example of a course outline.

Introduction

Challenges of Morality

- James Rachels: Can Ethics Provide Answers?
- Tom Regan: How Not to Answer Moral Questions
- The Case Against Moral relativism
- Egoism and Moral Skepticism

Terrorism

- Haig Khatchadourian: the Morality of Terrorism
- Michael Walzer: Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses
- Andrew Calls: Can Terrorism Be Justified?

Medical Ethics

- Paternalism and Patient Autonomy
- Human Research
- The Beneficence Argument for Genetic Enhancement

Abortion

- Mary Anne Warren: On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion
- John T Noonan, Jr: An Almost Absolute Value in History
- Judith Jarvis Thomson: A Defense of Abortion
- Francis J Beckwith: Arguments from Bodily Rights: A Critical Analysis
- Margret Little: Abortion and Sex Equality

Euthanasia

- The Killing and Letting Die Argument
- The Autonomy Argument for Euthanasia
- The Slippery-Slope Argument Against Euthanasia

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Lab By Arrangement Activities (If Applicable):

Instructional Methods:

- Lecture
- Lab
- Activity
- Problem-based Learning/Case Studies
- Collaborative Learning/Peer Review
- Demonstration/Modeling
- Role-Playing
- Discussion
- Computer Assisted Instruction
- Other (explain) _____

Textbooks:

1. Selections from primary sources (Open Educational Resources)
2. Chan, Steven M. (2018) Exploring Moral Problems (1st ed.) New York: Oxford University Press
3. Vaughn, Lewis (2016) Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases (3rd ed.) New York: Oxford University Press