PHI 125 Ethics Section: Fall 2017
PHIL125:  3 credit hours

Professor: Shanti Chu  
Office Hours: Posted on BB

Email: SChu@clcillinois.edu  
Office: B279  
Phone: 847-543-2960

Required Texts:

For the texts that are provided as PDFs you are required to print them out and bring them to class. Part of being prepared for class means that you need to bring the reading to class. If you don’t have the reading with you your participation grade will be negatively affected.

Course Description:
In this course, students critically evaluate general moral theories, fundamental moral concepts, and contemporary moral issues such as animal rights, environmental rights, abortion, terrorism, war and peace, racism, sexism, and heterosexism. Students work to develop and defend their own views on these matters, and to understand and evaluate others’ views, by studying and applying moral theories such as virtue ethics, utilitarianism, deontology, and the ethics of care. Throughout the course, students learn about moral concepts such as sound reasoning, autonomy, impartiality, utility, rights, responsibility, and justice. Specific attention is given to moral issues relevant to and philosophical contributions made by members of traditionally underrepresented groups.

Course Outcomes:
We are living in a tumultuous political climate with multiple parties and movements claiming themselves to be the “right” or “moral” movement while simultaneously dethroning science and “facts”. These groups all use the language of justice, right, duty, fairness, and equality. But what do these terms mean, how are these ideas conceptualized by all the groups and individuals using these terms? Why is it problematic for multiple groups to be claiming justice if they are actively perpetuating injustice? Who decides what is just or unjust? It is necessary to understand the origins of these important concepts, how they have evolved, been stifled and only applied to certain groups of people at the expense of other groups. In this course we will examine the roots of these important concepts by examining traditional ethical theory in detail such as the works of Aristotle (virtue ethics), Kant (deontology) and Mill (utilitarianism) who provided Western philosophy with the foundations for understanding right, equality, duty and virtue. These thinkers represent thought from only one part of the world and it is important to understand ethical theories from diverse sources as well such as the philosophy of nonviolence and oppression.

We will discuss more contemporary issues of abortion, drug use, pornography, terrorism, nonviolence, oppression, animal rights, and environmental ethics. Since we are living in such turbulent times (e.g. a global ecological crisis, hate crimes, mass
shootings, an extremely divided nation, etc.), it is important to read ethical theories regarding these issues while also considering the more traditional ethical theories so you can be an efficacious human being.

Some questions this course will delve into are...what does it mean to have a right? What is duty? What is equality? What is virtue? What is justice? What is fairness? How do these concepts change depending on the context and how have they not been applied to groups of people as a means of exclusion? What is the role of government? Should the government have a say in our choices? How should human beings treat one another in different contexts? What is oppression? How can we apply ethical and moral theories to our lived experiences? What are some similarities and differences that we see across different ethical traditions? How have your perceptions of a moral issues changed or evolved throughout the semester?

As honors students you are expected to take more of an active, engaged role with your learning. This class will be more discussion oriented than lecture oriented, which requires consistent, active engagement from you. If you are struggling with a concept, it is your responsibility to come to my office hours and discuss it with me in order to be a truly active participant in the classroom.

While these works are challenging, they are accessible for individuals who have not had much experience with reading philosophical works, which is why this will be a challenging, but interesting and relevant course. It is important to remember that reading philosophy and writing philosophy papers are challenging and that they can be done effectively only if you are committed to the reading and genuinely interested in the work/questions that the readings are approaching. I am definitely here as a resource so please ask me questions and send me emails, etc. because I am here to help you.

Honors Program Information:
1. In order to remain in the honors program, you need to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 and receive at least a "B" in each of your honors sections.
2. Tuition awards of $50 a credit hour are provided eight weeks into the semester. For any questions about scholarships, contact Edyta Miazga.
3. After 12 credit hours, students are invited by email to join Phi Theta Kappa. Being a member of PTK opens up students to lots of national scholarships for four-year institutions.
4. The Honors Program will soon be accepting applications for the CLC Scholars. Please check the website for more information.
5. Honors courses for the spring 2017 semester will include:

SOC 222 – Social Problems
HST 222 – US History 1876 to the Present
ENG 122 – English Composition II
ENG 244 - Mythology and Fairytales
HUM 221 – American Decades

PSC 121 - American National Politics

PHI 121 – Introduction to Philosophy

CMM 121 – Fundamentals of Speech Mondays

If you have any questions, please contact Nick Schevera at 847-543-2959, his office is B265.

Course Objectives:
- Students will develop critical thinking skills
- Students will be able to logically support a position
- Students will apply philosophical concepts to social justice issues and their own lived experience
- Students will understand the practical importance of philosophy
- Students will closely examine their own positions, assumptions, and beliefs
- Students will become aware of their own perspective and biases when interpreting knowledge and experience

Teaching Methodology: This course will be a mixture of interactive lecture and discussion involving small group work and larger group work. Reading assignments and writing assignments will be completed outside of the classroom.

Attendance Policy:
- You are allowed three absences throughout the semester without it affecting your grade. I do not need to know the reason for your absence and all will be weighed equally. (A total of five absences will result in a 0% for your attendance/participation grade.) If you have more than eight absences, your overall final grade will be progressively lowered by ten percentage points.
- If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes/information that you missed from another student. You may also come to office hours to discuss the material.

Attendance does not only mean being physically present, but also mentally present, no cell phones, laptops, i-objects, etc. please come prepared with the text, no sleeping. If you are using your cell phone, laptop, sleeping, etc. (unless otherwise instructed) you will be asked to leave and will have a zero for participation that week. You are also expected to be on-time for class and to stay for the whole class. Failure to do so will result in being marked absent for the day. It is extremely disrespectful and rude to do any of the above activities and shows a lack of effort and participation on your behalf. You need to schedule appointments around your classes. Participation includes engagement in class discussions and coming prepared to answer questions during lecture. The nature of this class is debate and discussion, which is why participation is very important.
- It is the policy of our classroom to turn off all electronic forms of communication and entertainment, e.g., cell phones and notebook computers, unless specifically directed otherwise. If you cannot abide by that then you will be asked to leave as it is disrespectful, disruptive and rude.

Method of Evaluation: Grades are calculated out of the total number of points in this course: 320 points total

Participation: Out of 70 points (average of your weekly participation points), attendance (not only being physically present, but also mentally present, no cell phones, laptops, please come prepared, no sleeping). If you are using your cell phone, laptop, sleeping, etc. you will be asked to leave and will have a zero for participation that week. It is extremely disrespectful and rude to do any of the above activities and shows a lack of effort and participation on your behalf. If you are late or are not present for the whole class (for example: leave class early, come to class late), your participation grade will fall as you will be marked absent. It is your responsibility to schedule things around your classes instead of during your classes. Participation includes engagement in class discussions and coming prepared to answer questions during lecture. This also includes BRINGING THE READING TO CLASS EVERYDAY. It is your responsibility to be prepared for the discussions so you can participate sufficiently. Failure to participate will lead to a zero in participation for the week.

- Your participation grade is a composite of the following criteria combined with attendance. An A is basically consistent participation in all 3 of these categories:
  
  o Active participation in interactive lecture: Response to questions asked by instructor, actively ask questions as well/relate to your own lives.
  
  o Active participation in small group discussions: Dialogue/discussion with group participants, actively look for central quotes in the text to answer discussion questions.
  
  o Active participation in large group discussions/debates:
      Dialogue/discussion with peers, response to follow-up questions asked, reference to specific quotes in the text.

Reading Comprehension Responses: There will be 8 reading comprehension responses due on the assigned reading material. You will choose one of the guided reading questions provided and submit a 1-paragraph response to it (typed) and submit it for the next class. Hard copies need to be submitted. If there is an issue with the printer, please email it to me before class to ensure that late points will not be taken off. These will be 5 points each, 40 points total.

Papers: You will have 3 required unit papers (at least 2 pages typed, 12 point font, times new roman, double spaced, 1 inch margins maximum) worth 25 points each, 75 points total - These will respond to a question that I post on Blackboard ("assignments") and must include textual references/citations (specific quotes from the text with page numbers that you explain) in order to get any type of credit. The due dates for these papers are listed in the schedule.

Blog Post: (25 points) You will have the opportunity to write a blog post relating to our units on identity (class, gender, sexuality, race). You will need to be concise, yet creative
in your application of course material to contemporary issues in a way that can be understood by a wide audience. Guidelines will be provided for this assignment.

**Presentation:** (50 points) You will be responsible for presenting on a reading of your choice (from the syllabus) to the rest of the class. The presentation needs to include a visual (Powerpoint, Prezi, handout, video, blog, etc.). You will also be responsible for leading the discussion. You will receive more specific instructions for this.

**Final Paper:** Out of 60 points, one analysis paper (60 points total, 4-5 pages), instructions/directions will be given during the appropriate time. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate your ability to understand, explain, and relate the different philosophical frameworks to one another where you can identify similarities and differences across traditions.

**Criteria and Process for Determining Final Grades:**
I calculate your final grades based off of the number of points you earned and divide that by 320 points. Here are the minimum points needed for each grade:

- A (90-100%): 288
- B (80-89%): 256
- C (70-79%): 224
- D (60-69%): 192
- F (Below 60%): Anything below 192 points

**Late Work:** Each assignment must be turned in on the day that the paper is due. I will not accept late papers unless there are special circumstances that need to be discussed with me before the assignment is due.

**Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Whenever you quote or paraphrase from a book, the internet, a lecture, or other source, you must cite that source and use quotes if appropriate. Please review the College’s Academic Honesty Policy.

**Note on Plagiarism:** I am very strict about plagiarism and will not accept it. I use SafeAssign for every assignment submitted so you need to be aware of your responsibilities regarding appropriately citing sources you are using. **Even if you are using a website to help you understand the material and you end up using an idea from the website without citing it, you are plagiarizing.** If you are having trouble understanding the material, reread the material, come to my office hours, and engage with the text more rather than looking at a misinformed website online and copying from it without citing it. If you plagiarize, you will receive a zero on the assignment, which can lead to failing the class depending on the severity of plagiarism and the assignment.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarism includes:

1. Downloading papers from the web.
2. Copying parts of web pages into your paper.
3. Quoting from a book or article without citation.
4. Paraphrasing an author’s work without credit.
5. Taking someone else’s ideas and claiming them as your own.
If you are unclear about how to cite sources see me. Ignorance is not an excuse for plagiarism. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will fail the paper and the class and the incident will be added to your permanent CLC record.

**Disability and Mental Wellness:** If you are a student with a documented disability and may need academic accommodations such as extended time for exams and/or an in-class note taker, please present documentation to the Office for Students with Disabilities in L112 at the Grayslake campus. To schedule an appointment, please call: voice (847) 543-2055, TTY 223-0134. If you have already contacted the Office for Students with Disabilities and have completed the Instructor Notification Form, please schedule a time to meet with me and discuss your needs.

The College of Lake County Counseling Office offers professional counseling for students who are in crisis or are having personal problems, which as a result may affect their academic and career goals. The services of professional counselors are available at three locations on an appointment or drop-in basis.

**Women’s Center, LGBTQ+ Resource Center, Multicultural Resource Center, and Veteran’s Affairs:** Stop by B113 (The Student Resource Center) Monday-Friday to check out any of these resources/offices. For more information on general student services, please contact me at schu@clcillinois.edu and I can direct you to the correct people.

**Course Schedule:** This is a tentative schedule, there are likely to be some changes since readings may take more or less time than expected. Changes made will be announced in class or online. The text is due by the date it is listed by. It is your responsibility to keep up with the due dates.

- **Monday, August 21st:** Introduction to course, What is Ethics? Life goals?
- **Wednesday, August 23rd:** Metaethics: “Moral Distinctions Not Derived from Reason” and “A Critique of Ethics” (PDFs provided on Blackboard)
- **Monday, August 28th:** “The Subjectivity of Values” and “Cultural Relativism” (PDFs)
- **Wednesday, August 30th:** “Euthyphro” (PDF)
- **Monday, September 4th:** No Class, Labor Day
- **Wednesday, September 6th:** Kantian Deontology Doing Ethics p.102-124
- **Monday, September 11th:** Abortion: p.163-184
- **Wednesday, September 13th:** p.194-205
- **Monday, September 18th:** Abortion Debate, Kant Paper Due
- **Wednesday, September 20th:** Aristotle’s Virtue Ethics, p.136-153
- **Monday, September 25th:** Drug Use: p.350-368
- **Wednesday, September 27th:** p.368-377
- **Monday, October 2nd:** Drugs Debate, Aristotle Paper Due
- **Wednesday, October 4th:** Pornography: p.416-425
- **Monday, October 9th:** Mill’s Utilitarianism, p.78-101
- **Wednesday, October 11th:** Political Violence, p.539-558
Monday, October 16th: Terrorism essays: p.577-584 and “The Morality of Terrorism” (PDF)

Wednesday, October 18th: Nonviolent Resistance:
Gandhi “Practice of Satyagraha” and MLK “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (PDFs)

Monday, October 23rd: 5 Broken Cameras Viewing

Wednesday, October 25th: 5 Broken Cameras Viewing and Discussion on Nonviolence, Mill Paper Due

Wednesday, November 1st: Oppression: “Five Faces of Oppression” (pdf p.37-60)

Monday, October 30th: Sexism and Patriarchy: “Oppression” (pdf p.183-192), “What is Feminist Ethics” (PDFs)

Monday, November 6th: Sexism and Patriarchy Essays Cont.

Wednesday, November 8th: Racism: “Something about the Subject Makes it Hard to Name”, “Overcoming White Supremacy: A Comment”, “Overt and Institutional Racism” (PDFs)

Monday, November 13th: Racism Essays Continued

Wednesday, November 15th: Homophobia and Heterosexism: “Homophobia”, “Gender Treachery: Homophobia, Masculinity, and Threatened Identities” (PDFs)

Monday, November 20th: LGBTQ+ Panel and Discussion

Wednesday, November 22nd: No Class, Thanksgiving Break


Wednesday, November 29th: “Environmental Justice” (PDF)

Monday, December 4th: “Puppies, Pigs, and People” (PDF)

Wednesday, December 6th: Environmental Ethics and Animal Rights Debate

Monday, December 11th-December 13th: We will meet during our scheduled final exam time, final paper due.