

CHAMINADE UNIVERSITY OF HONOLULU

REL 338 Religion, Philosophy, Social Ethics

Spring Session, April 12 – June 16, 2019

Schofield Army Education Center

Meeting Times: Friday Eves. 5:30pm-9:40pm

Instructor: Dr. Achilles S.C. Gacis, MA, M. Div., Ph.D.

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Please use the CUH internal email for communications on course related issues and questions

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Designed to give students an interdisciplinary experience in the study of social ethics from the perspective of theology, religion, and philosophy. Students will explore the theory and practice of social ethics and develop the knowledge and skills for philosophical and theological critique of ethical systems and social policy.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Within the broad outline of the catalog description the student will engage their own understanding of personal and social ethics with philosophers, theologians and sociologists as we explore how we can live more meaningful personal and social lives. Underlying this quest are the rich areas of discourse traditionally associated with philosophy, sociology and anthropology, and theology, particularly the areas of ethics and moral theology.

In this course we will be focused on social ethics. The term “social ethics” refers to the *systematic reflection on our relations with other people with whom we live*. Since we live in communities with other people, we cannot do what impulses us all the time. There is a mutual pressure from other people to let them also do what they wish, since other people are similar to what we are. Consequently, restraints are placed on all peoples living within communities. The origins and justifications of these restraints will constitute the subject matter of our course. The social sciences came about after the French Revolution and gained ascendancy among intellectuals in the 19th century. These sciences changed the method by which we study things. We used to think that there is a difference between studying persons and studying physical objects in this world. The social sciences proposed that everything is studied by the same method. That same method that is used to study physical objects will also be used to study humans. Whether or not this is possible, we will explore and inquire.

The course is designed as being reading, exploring, and writing intensive in terms of work to be done. Each weekly module has a selection of exercises that are to be answered in essay form. You will be required to examine the entire module and related map pertinent to the questions in the module section. The one thing I want to mention with regard to the coursework is the writing. Not as something extraneous to the study you will be doing, but as rather central to the act of learning. This course involves the study of religious, philosophical, and ethical traditions. The way to and through those traditions is by thoughtful and attentive reading, listening to what authors have to say, reading and sorting out the possible meaning of religious texts, and then, setting down what you have read, interpreted, and thought about in clear and thoughtful prose in your response(s) to the variety of questions per module presented.

Set up a schedule that works well for you. You'll need time for the map perusal and readings and then the writing. This is due to the ten-week course we are limited to. Upon

weekly completion of each module assignment, you will submit your work as separate hard copy (stapled papers) module assignments when you return to class.

At the end of the course there will be a presentation required by each student. Detailed instructions will be explained in class.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS: MindMaps

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

ORGANIZATIONAL THEME, Marianist Educational Philosophy

The choice of content, the pedagogy selected, and the fulfillment of the course objectives rely on the organizational theme. The organizational theme around which the course is constructed is derived from the document, "Characteristics of Marianist Universities."

- ♦ **Educate for formation in faith;**
- ♦ **Provide for an integral quality education;**
- ♦ **Educate for family spirit;**
- ♦ **Educate for service, justice and peace; and,**
- ♦ **Educate for adaptation and change.**

The root of the word educate, *educare*, means to "lead out from." To educate means to begin where persons are individually to lead them to a future locus of where they will become. It is a journey that continues throughout one's life. Since all individuals are persons of faith, in relationship to one another, this course provides students the opportunity to explore faith in several contexts. As we continue to grow as a global community, understanding others' worldviews that are often constituted by religious ideals becomes a necessity. The classroom itself becomes a community in which students share and learn the various religious beliefs, particularly those that promote service, justice and peace. In essence, the goal is that students, while learning about others, also learn about themselves in order to be prepared for adaptation and change.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES LINKED TO PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The Three Program Learning Outcomes that this course introduces are:

2. Christianity and its relationship with various ethical processes;
4. The Catholic Intellectual Tradition, particularly the Marianist tradition of education for service, social justice and peace;
6. The uniqueness of Hawaii and the Pacific Rim as a meeting place for various ethical perspectives.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. discuss the important elements ethical methodologies- (PLO 2);
2. recognize the differences and commonalities among ethical methodologies (PLO 2);
3. understand some of the social justice issues and religious responses to them (PLO 4);
4. appreciate more their own religious ethical backgrounds and that of the Chaminade community (PLO 4, 6)
5. reflect on their own beliefs, feelings, and attitudes towards different ethical perspectives, correlating and contrasting them with what they are learning (PLO 2, 6)

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Students are expected to:

- ◆ attend class regularly and on time;
- ◆ be prepared for class having done assigned modules and completed any homework;
- ◆ participate in class activities;
- ◆ do additional research as required;
- ◆ keep open communication with the professor in regards to anything that may affect one's being unable to fulfill course requirements as stated above;
- ◆ regularly check for class updates and notices via their student email box.

GRADING:

Grading Scale is based on percentage of total points possible at the end of the term.

A - 90% or better	Outstanding scholarship and unusual degree of intellectual initiative.
B - 80-89%	Superior work done in a consistent and intellectual manner.
C - 70-79%	Average grade indicating competent grasp of subject matter.
D - 63-69%	Inferior work of the lowest passing grade, not satisfactory for fulfillment of prerequisite course work.
F - 62% or lower	Failed to grasp minimum subject matter; no credit given.

POINTS SCALE

90-100=A	Module submissions = 7 Sections, 35 points per section
80-89=B	Attendance.....=10 points, 1 point per class meeting
70-79=C	Final Presentation----- =55 points
60-69=D	
59 & less=F	

Class Attendance and Participation:

Class attendance is required. There will be a daily sign-in sheet for attendance. It will be the student's responsibility to sign in daily. Failure to attend class carries a penalty and will reflect on final grade. Please be on time as class will begin on the hour. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor regarding any absence. Points are given for each class and will be deducted for unexcused absences. More than three unexcused absences will result in lowered grade despite points earned. Students with excused absences will need to complete a missed-class assignment in order to receive a portion of the points for attendance. Consistent tardiness will be noted and a portion of points deducted as well.

Participation includes being prepared with assignments for submission, discussion, and in-class activities given at the discretion of the instructor. Do not bring any children to class.

Course content subject to change with ample notice given to student.

~Final Grades are not negotiable~

Classroom Conduct:

In order to create a viable and productive learning environment, and to show respect for each other in the classroom, all persons are expected to follow basic rules of conduct.

1. Talking only when it is your turn to do so.
2. Cell phones or other such electronic devices must be silenced and kept out of sight (e.g. light glaring during video presentations). If you need it for an emergency, notify the instructor.

According to the handbook, the instructor may require a student to leave the classroom if the conduct is such that it can be deemed as disruptive to the rest of the class. This includes but is not limited to excessive personal conversations, use of cellular or other electronic devices, and disrespectful language or behavior.

Note: *In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. **It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any specific special needs or difficulties that one may have in order that appropriate strategies for the completion of the work may be mutually developed.** Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the school site Director.*

LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENT

All student work will be evaluated for:

- ◆ knowledge of the subject matter from research materials, class presentations, discussions, videos, research, any outside class related activities
- ◆ critical application and accuracy of the content
- ◆ thoroughness and clarity of answers in reflective and research assignments
- ◆ continuing development of understanding

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Course content	In Class Assignments & Topics for the week
Week 1 April 12	Introduction and Course overview.	What are “ethics?” A purposeful definition. The nature of ethical studies. Research methodologies. Course work.
Week 2 April 19	Use Map Nodule: Philosophical Ethics (click on O sign to expand map links)	Module 1 – Defining Morality and Ethics 1) We look to others to define what a moral person usually might be. Who do you look to as your personal example of being moral and why? 2) Are some actions and behaviors moral free? How so? Give Examples and explain. 3) When you participate in an academic community, does it encourage and influence moral behavior? What about the workplace environment? Give examples and explain. 4) Briefly summarize the key ethical teachings of <i>Socrates</i>, <i>Plato</i>, and <i>Aristotle</i>. 5) How can you apply Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” to your own life’s journey? Explain.
Week 3 April 26	Use Map Nodules: 2,3,4,5 <i>Presentation Topic Due</i>	Module 2 – Existentialism/Identity/Nihilism 1) What is “ontological shock?” Think about a time in your life when this occurred, and it affected your worldview (a growing moment in your life). How did you respond? Did it make you re-assess your moral beliefs? Explain in detail. 2) Make a list of your general guidelines that you use when making moral decisions. How did you arrive at this particular list? How do you resolve your own moral conflict? 3) Is it morally acceptable to euthanize people who have terminal illnesses and who want to end their lives? Why or why not? Give examples. (cont’d)

		4) What do we learn from death?
Week 4 May 03	Use Map Nodule: 5	Module 3 – Religious Ethics 1) Important historical religious figures preached love, tolerance, and non-violence. Referring to the teachings of Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr., how do you respond to their teachings and preaching when faced with a situation where you must act on or apply some of these teachings? 2) How do people find “meaning” to their being? What does it mean to be “alive” and “self-actualized?” 3) Jesus taught that we should “turn the other cheek” and to “love our enemies.” Using depth of thought and reflection on this (without being hermeneutical), what does it mean? 4) How do you respond to guilt? Discuss what an immature response to guilt would be versus a mature response. 5) Does a religious education contribute to one’s moral development? Explain your position thoroughly.
Week 5 May 10	Use Map Nodule: 6	Module 4 – Social Ethics 1) <i>Ethical Subjectivism</i> states that what is morally right and wrong is simply a matter of personal opinion. Is there any validity to this perspective? Explain your position thoroughly with examples. 2) Explain what is termed the <i>Kitty Genovese</i> syndrome. Does this still occur? Give examples that you know of. 3) A <i>sociopath</i> is a person who acts solely on his or her feelings without concern for universal moral principles and sentiments. What examples of this behavior do you know of? (cont’d)

		4) Does “evil” exist? How do you define it and know its manifestation? Please be thorough in your explanation.
Week 6 May 17	Use Map Nodule: 7	Module 5 – Applied Ethics 1) Discuss how your religious beliefs or lack thereof, have shaped your morality. Is there a difference between religious and secular morality in your life? If so, what are the differences? If there are differences, how do you resolve a conflict between religious and secular morality? 2) We often seek to apply our personal ethical beliefs in our daily lives. What measurements do you use to determine whether or not you are applying those ethical beliefs effectively and appropriately and are not merely imposing them on yourself and others? Do you see this happening today? Give examples.
Week 7 May 24	Use Map Nodules: 8,9,10	Module 6 – Rights Ethics: Modern Society, Deontology: The Ethics of Duty, Virtue Ethics: Must we learn Ethical Behavior? 1) “I know my rights!” Do you? What are they and why are they yours? 2) We are constantly told that we “have a duty to ____.” Why is this important? 3) Virtues and virtuous behavior are always terms we hear being used. What are virtues? Do you have them? How do you know and what would be some of the good virtues you possess?
Week 8 May 31	Use Map Nodules: 11,12, and 13	Module 7 – Ethical Egoism: Self-Interest, Utilitarianism: The Greatest Happiness and the Good Life 1) All people seek their natural state of being “happy.” How do you define “happiness?” Why is this part of our important

		(cont'd) American political consciousness? We state that we as individuals have a right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Explain this. 2) Explain John Stuart Mill's analysis of Utilitarianism. Do you agree with his perspective? Why or why not? 3) What constitutes a "good life?" Is it determined by our culture, our social status, our gender, or now redefined identity, our personal wealth, our opportunity, our integrity, our national security and international reputation, our intellectual clarity and development, etc?
Week 9 June 7	~Presentations~ (Alphabetical order: first half of class) All students must attend both presentation classes.	Your name here: _____
Week 10 June 16	~Presentations~ (Alphabetical order: second half of class) All students must attend both presentation classes.	Or your name here: _____ ...Course Wrap Up!

HAVE A GREAT SEMESTER!

