

SSEI '02

CHAMINADE UNIVERSITY OF HONOLULU
RE/SO 338 - Religion, Philosophy and Social Ethics
Instructor: Larry Jones
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Office hours by appointment and/or phone and/or e-mail

COURSE DESCRIPTION IN GENERAL CATALOG:

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.

GOAL: With a view toward a deeper understanding, to be engaged both intellectually and existentially with some of the major ethical questions which confront modern society. As always, we will apply the educational philosophy of Marianist Universities: 1) educate for formation in faith, 2) provide an integral quality education, 3) educate for family spirit, 4) educate for service, justice and peace, and 5) educate for adaptation and change.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To objectively examine the following questions of social ethics: a) community responsibility, b) our criminal justice system, c) trust of the government, d) controversies created by modern medicine, e) the ethics of corporate mergers, f) ethics and the military, g) the ethical dilemmas of civil litigation, h) the ethics of medical research, and i) politics, privacy and the press.
2. To relate to these issues the ideas and beliefs of some of the time honored thinkers of history, including the ancient Greeks, the Biblical writers, the writers on moral law, the utilitarians, and various contemporary theologians and philosophers.
3. To develop an awareness of and appreciation for the rich diversity of religious and philosophical theories, traditions and experiences as they relate to contemporary social ethics.
4. To hone our own interest in and ability to evaluate and make ethical decisions about public policy as well as personal choices.
5. To improve our abilities to read, think, discuss and write skillfully.
6. To actively participate in making this class both challenging and interesting.

REQUIREMENTS

1. An inquisitive yet open mind and a sense of humor.
2. Attendance at and active participation in all class sessions, including taking notes.
3. Completion of all reading assignments.
4. A one page reflection paper for each session on the assigned text readings.
5. At the end of each class session, a brief written statement based on that session's content.
6. A six to eight page term paper on a major ethical issue of social importance. Highlights to be shared with class on session #10.
7. Mid-term essay exam (session #5) focusing on information covered in preceding class sessions and, final take home exam (due session #10).

READINGS: Text: *Ethics in America Source Reader*, edited by Lisa Newton
Various handouts

GRADING: 15% class attendance and participation
15% reflection papers (see next page for particulars)
15% sum-up papers (see next page for particulars)
20% term paper (see next page for particulars)
15% mid-term exam, Session #5
20% final take home exam, due Session #10

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| A = 90 - 100% | C = 70 - 79% | F = 59% and below |
| B = 80 - 89% | D = 60 - 69% | I = Incomplete |

The instructor reserves the right to make changes in the content of the course depending on the needs of the class.

TERM PAPER:

1. Based on an ethical social issue related to one of the session topics. If you would like to choose another topic, please consult with instructor.
2. Six to 8 pages of written material. May be up to 10 pages, but no shorter than 6.
3. Use at least five research sources, three of which may be from the Internet and one of which shall be an interview of a specialist.
4. Discuss the major differing points of view and conclude with your own.
5. Include the philosophical and religious dimensions of the issue written about.
6. Proposal for paper shall be summarized in a paragraph turned in at Session #5 and shared briefly with the class on that date.
7. Use MLA or APA format, including cites and reference list, double space and use proper grammar and punctuation.
8. When you turn in your paper at the last class session, also please provide instructor with a self-addressed stamped envelope if you wish your paper returned to you.

**FORM FOR TERM PAPER
HEADING**

Term Paper

Name
Date turned in

Title of Paper

REFLECTION PAPERS

1. The purpose of your reflection paper is to show that you not only read the material but that you reflected upon it and have attempted to focus on the key questions the class should discuss.
2. The reflection papers are due at the class session dealing with those readings.
3. While doing the readings you should jot down for your own reference ideas that impress you, things you disagree with, or questions you have.
4. After you have completed the readings, write one to two pages of your reflections on the readings using your reading notes per #3 above.

**FORM FOR WEEKLY REFLECTION PAPER
HEADING**

Readings for Session No. ____

Name
Date turned in

STYLE

Typed
Double spaced

1" margins
Correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence structure

SUM-UP PAPERS

At the end of each class session we will take a few minutes for you to write a brief sum-up of what you consider the main points of view regarding the issues dealt with during the day's session. These will, of course, be hand written and turned in when you leave the class.

MAKING UP ABSENCES: Excused absences, such as military duty, may be made up by consultation with the instructor. **SUCH CONSULTATION SHALL BE INITIATED BY THE STUDENT.** However, since you will not have had the benefit of classroom presentations and discussions when absent, you will need to spend some extra time mastering the reading materials and perhaps getting other students' notes.

Session 1, June 11 Community Responsibility

Introductions and syllabus review

Video: *Do Unto Others* A panel of experts discusses the question of community responsibility.

Discussion

Session 2, June 13 Justice and Murder

Readings: Text: pp. 2-17, Introduction, Thucydides, Plato
Handouts: *Applied Ethics*, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
How Denominations Develop Ethical Policies, Religious Tolerance.Org
Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting: A False Dilemma? Marie M. Fortune
What is attorney client privilege?
Can client confidentiality be sacrificed? Amarillo Globe News, 6/11/98

Video: *To Defend a Killer* Ethical dilemmas of the criminal justice system are explored.

Session 3, June 15 Government Trust and Mistrust

Readings: Text: pp. 18-43, Plato cont.
Handouts: *Code of Ethics*, U.S. Congress
Watergate Scandal, Encarta Encyclopedia
Bush-Lay Ties Based on Shared Priorities, Washington Post, 3/24/02
Restoring Public Trust in Government, Patricia McGinnis

Video: *Public Trust, Private Interests* Looks at trust within the government, between one public official and another, and between the government and the public.

Session 4, June 17 When Patient and Doctor Disagree

Readings: Text: pp. 43-63, Aristotle
Handouts: *Refusal vs. pursuit of treatment*, Maura R.J. Burnell
Duty to patient vs. duty to society, Theresa A. Walls

Video: *Does Doctor Know Best?* Controversies created by modern medicine are discussed.

Session 5, June 19 Corporate Ethics

Midterm exam

Readings: Text: pp. 65-90, Readings from the Bible
Handouts: *Ethical Considerations in Corporate Takeovers*, Woodstock Theological Center
Seminar in Business Ethics, Sections 1 and 2
"Public Tiring of Mega-Mergers as Corporate Thinking Ignores the Public Interest," Chicago Tribune, June 13, 2000

Video: *Anatomy of a Corporate Takeover* Tops CEO's debate an alarming array of ethical problems surrounding merger mania.

Session 6, June 21 Ethics and the Military

- Readings: Text: pp. 91-126, Readings on Aquinas, Lock and Jefferson **REQUIRED**
Readings on Epectitus and Hobbs **OPTIONAL**
- Handouts: *The Port Chicago Disaster*, Contra Costa County Office of Education
REQUIRED
Selected news stories about U.S. military in Okinawa **OPTIONAL**
- Video: *Under Orders, Under Fire*, The duty to follow orders and a commander's obligation to protect soldiers are discussed by top military personnel and news correspondents.

Session 7, June 22 Civil Suits and Civil Rights

- Readings: Text: pp. 126-154, Readings on Kant and M.L. King, Jr. required
Readings on Royce and Rawls optional
- Handouts: *Does the Adversarial System Need Changing?* by Esther Lardent
Mediators help solve civil cases
- Video: *Truth on Trial* The ethical dilemmas of civil litigation are the focus.

Session 8, June 24 Dilemmas in Medical Research

- Readings: Text: pp. 155-189, Epicurus, Bentham, Mill
- Handouts: *Stem Cell Research and Applications: Monitoring the Frontiers of Biomedical Research*, American Association for the Advancement of Science
The Human Genome Diversity Project: Implications for Indigenous People, Debra Harry
- Video: *The Human Experiment* Whether or not humans should be used as test subjects in the medical research field is debated.

Session 9, June 26 Right to Privacy vs. Right to Know

- Readings: Text: 192-195, Epilogue
- Handouts: *For personal reasons,* Timothy D. Smith
Confidentiality, Privacy, and the "Right to Know," Journal of the American Medical Association
The Media at War, Public Broadcasting System
What's so patriotic about trampling on the Bill of Rights?, Center for Constitutional Rights
- Videos: *Politics, Privacy, and the Press* Panelists on both sides of the issue discuss what part of a public official's life should be exempt from public scrutiny.
The Media at War, PBS

Session 10, June 28 All Pau, Time Flies When You're Having Fun

Term paper reports

Course evaluation