

RE/PH/SO 338
Religion, Philosophy & Social Ethics
Fall, 2006/H 202

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to present students with an interdisciplinary study of ethics drawing upon the rich traditions and perspectives of the social sciences, religion, and the humanities. Although this is primarily a lecture course, approximately one third of all classes will be put aside for questions and discussion so that we may all have the opportunity to learn from one another.

Special emphasis will be placed on these interrelated topics, which by the end of the semester the student will demonstrate competency in understanding and being able to articulate.

Woven throughout this course will be initial references to and eventually lectures on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

- *different cultural/religious understandings of the concept of SELF
- *the history (and problems) of Christian texts and ethics
- *the great dilemma of sacred texts: how to understand them today
- *the relationship between crisis ethics and virtue ethics
- *how our cultural articulation of SELF influences our understanding of morality
- *how early and Medieval Christian communities understood ethics
- *Protestant and Catholic Ethical Traditions today
- *Christian Ethics in the 20th century

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *Stephen Carter, *Integrity*
- *a copy of the Bible (which contains both the so called OLD and NEW TESTAMENTS)
- *Additional readings will be placed on library reserve throughout the semester.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE AND GRADING:

*Everyone in this course (instructor and students alike) is expected to contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of mutual respect.

*this includes (but is not limited to) coming to class on time; being courteous and respectful during class; not interrupting or otherwise distracting someone (including the instructor), nor utilizing electronic communication devices where are everywhere in abundance; not utilizing materials which are extraneous to our class; turning in of assignments on time; being present on the scheduled exam dates; etc.

Regular class attendance is expected; students are responsible for all class materials, including announcements and assignments, even if they are not present.

*Students who accumulate more than three unexcused absences will begin to have their overall course grade lowered (regardless of their exam scores) in a manner, which is totally up to the discretion of the instructor.

*Students are never automatically entitled to turn in assignments late or to have makeup exams. Should permission be given for late assignments or for makeup exams the penalties and

formats will be up to the discretion of the instructor. Make up exams are always more difficult than the regular test; make up exams are either given during regular class time or are administered orally by the instructor.

*There will be 4--5 essay exams throughout the semester. Each exam will have equal weight in the determination of the final grade.

WEEK

TENTATIVE COURSE MATERIAL OUTLINE:

I---V

**An introduction to cultural constructs of the SELF:
the ARCHAIC (and MODERN) perspectives**

***Archaic Metanarratives**

***Archaic ethics**

***Teleological and virtue ethics**

***How to approach an ARCHAIC text in the modern world**

***the Bible (Scripture) in its own culture and in ours**

***How to situate a text**

READ: CARTER, chapters I---III; V.

READ: Library Reserve Article, *The Return to Virtue Ethics*

VI---IX

***the archaic and modern assumptions**

***The concept of Self in Locke and Kant**

***Assumptions selectively based on works of some of the following:**

Rousseau; Hume; Nietzsche; and MacIntyre

READ: CARTER, chapters VII---XI

READ: Library Reserve Article, Himmelfarb, *The Two Cultures: An Ethics Gap*

X---XIII

The Further development of Religious Ethics:

XIV---END

**the culmination of the course: Christian World Views and the
Catholic Intellectual Tradition**

**READ: on Library Reserve, articles on the Catholic Intellectual
Tradition**

Mutual Respect In the Classroom

Respect Yourself:

- *Personal inventory of your gifts and growth issues
- *Thou shall not fall down and worship false idols and screens

Respect Your Peers:

- *Listening is neither a sin nor a crime
- *Zipping up early is rude
- *Using one another is immoral

The Class Environment:

- *Punctuality is not a vice and is much appreciated
- *We are not on a picnic or a joy rise; be entertained elsewhere
- *Please turn off and remove from public view all cell phones, entertainment devices, and all that is not part of the learning process
- *No entertainment; no food

My Respect for You:

- *I owe you my punctuality and a whole lot more:
- *Not to keep you overtime
- *To be organized and not waste your time in our class
- *Timely feedback on your work and thoughts

Additional Comments:

- *There is a time for lecture, a time for questions, a time for discussion
- *Class handouts and the responsibility that is yours
- *The single most annoying of questions: don't ask it

The National Culture:

- *Cheating and Downloading

PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

Attendance will be taken on a regular basis throughout the semester. Students who accumulate more than three (unexcused) absences will have their course grade lowered significantly (to an extent which is completely up to the discretion of the instructor). Students who are registered for the course but are not present on the first day of class will be marked absent for that day and on all days before they put in an appearance, unless they can present a compelling reason for their late arrival. The instructor shall determine, on an individual basis, what constitutes a compelling and acceptable reason. Students must take all of the exams in order to pass the course.

Cheating: If any student is caught cheating, or in any act of plagiarism, the student will fail the course. If any student signs in the name of another student on the attendance sheet, the student will be invited to withdraw from the course immediately or fail the course.

Students with Disabilities: Chaminade will provide assistance for any student with documented disabilities. Any student who believes he/she may need accommodations in this class must contact Dr. Don Kopf, 735-4845 or Dr. June Yasuhara, 739-4603, at the Counseling Center (office next to Security) in order to determine if the student meets the requirements for documented disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is important to contact them as soon as possible so that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Taping/Recording: The instructor does not permit taping or otherwise recording of lectures or class materials. Exceptions may be made on an individual basis, especially for students with documented disabilities.

Finals: The Universe has a master schedule for all final exams. These exams take place during final exam week. It is expected that students be present for the finals. Stories of early departure dates by the students are not accepted. Students will be able to take early finals only under the most urgent of situations. These exams will cover class material not yet reviewed when the early final is given.

Toward the end of the semester the instructor occasionally exempts a handful of students from taking the final. Such students will have demonstrated consistent high quality work in their exams and will have exceptionally high attendance. The student must also be present in class on the day when the exempted students are informed of their status.