Phil 1213: Philosophies of Life section 22670

Spring 2019

TR 2:00 – 3:15

HSCI 326

Professor: Wes Evans
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Office: 260 Murray Hall
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Office Hours: MW 12:00 – 1:30 or by appointment

Prerequisite courses: None

Course description: In this class we will take an introductory look at several important concepts in ethics in Western philosophy. We will begin by briefly discussing basic concepts in logic and argumentation in order to develop the tools necessary to address contemporary moral issues. Topics covered will include applied and meta-ethics, social justice, moral theories, and varying viewpoints on controversial issues such as abortion, assisted suicide and capital punishment. We will also use philosophy to look at some events that affect contemporary life in America and around the world, such as acts of terrorism. Our goal will be to develop critical thinking skills that we can use to better understand the important moral issues of the day.

Grading procedure: The total number of points for the semester is 100. Your final grade will be whatever percentage of 100 you have at the end, graded on a 10 point scale.

Required texts:

Contemporary Moral Arguments: Readings in Ethical Issues by Lewis Vaughn

Assignments: There will be four types of assignments in this class: class participation/attendance, quizzes, a final paper, and classroom presentations, adding up to 100 points total for the semester.

Quizzes will be open book and can happen at any time during class without warning. Each quiz will be over reading assignments that occurred at least one or more weeks before the time of the quiz. Quizzes are worth 5 points each and will not be announced in advance. By open book I mean that you may use your textbook—and ONLY your textbook—during the quiz. No notebooks or other devices are allowed, and you must use your own book. You may not borrow a book from others, or for that matter pass any
kind of material from one person to another during the quiz. Any such activity will be treated as cheating and result in a grade of 0 on the quiz for all involved. It is recommended that you ALWAYS do the assigned readings and ALWAYS have your textbook with you during class, or else you will find these quizzes very difficult. The quizzes will total 30 points.

The final paper will involve you choosing a topic from the class to write about. Read the book carefully during the semester and write a 4 to 5 page critical analysis of the reading’s claims and arguments using some of the philosophical principles we will be discussing in class. You are not required to either agree or disagree with the author’s claims, only to support your views of the book with well-reasoned arguments. The paper will be announced and discussed in class, but consider it assigned as of the first day of class and keep it in mind as you examine the various topics we discuss throughout the semester. It should be typed, double-spaced and in 11 or 12 point font. Proper citations must be made of any outside works used in your paper. I want the paper printed out, brought to class and handed to me in person, please. The paper will be worth 50 points.

Class participation means attending class regularly and participating in the frequent discussions on various topics that we will have in class. I don’t want to be the only person in the room discussing the topic of the day. Everyone will be expected to contribute to discussions, even when the topic is controversial or possibly upsetting. You will not be pressured to agree or disagree on any topic, but your assertions will be challenged. To avoid losing points on this component, you will need to be regularly raising your hand, asking relevant questions and participating in class discussions. I will allow up to six absences during the semester. If you have more than that, you will lose one point for each absence over 6, out of a total of 20 participation/attendance points.

Classroom activities will consist of daily lectures, group discussion, student presentations, and in class written assignments such as quizzes. Please do not disrupt these activities by using cell phones or other devices, which might distract yourself or other students. At the beginning of class you will be asked to put away all electronic devices and remove any headphones or ear buds. Do not have these kinds of devices on your desk or in your hands during class, as they can be very distracting. You may be asked to leave if you are overly disruptive and have a negative effect on other students’ ability to participate in class. If you attempt to use electronic devices without permission during class, this could result in loss of points from your participation grade.

Attendance: This class will include both lecture and assigned textbook readings. Both attendance at lecture and reading the book are mandatory. I will allow you no more than 6 absences before I start subtracting points from your final grade. If you have a note or some other proof that an absence is excused, please be sure to let me know.

There will be material that is in my lectures that is not in the textbook, and material that is in the textbook readings that is not in my lectures. BOTH are equally parts of the curriculum, and material from either could end up in an assignment. Classroom participation and attendance are worth 20 points total.

Classroom presentations will be held regularly during the semester. Presentations are optional and worth 5 bonus points. If you wish to do a presentation on one of the weekly readings, let me know at the beginning of the week which reading you would like to present on. It is not necessary to use Powerpoint, but if you wish to you may. But be sure to prepare your presentation in advance and have
adequate notes for your talk. Do not attempt to “wing it” or give a presentation unprepared. Presentations should be between 5 and 10 minutes long, should accurately represent the chosen reading, and should include some questions for possible classroom discussion at the end.

**Academic integrity:** Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing the works of others, copying from the assignments of other students, having someone else do your assignment for you, acquiring and using cheat sheets of any kind, and having or using any material during an exam or quiz that was not approved beforehand. If I catch you cheating a first time, I will give you zero credit for the assignment in question. If I catch you a second time, you will receive zero credit for the entire semester.

**Statement from the school:** Oklahoma State University is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct of its members. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained in this course. Participating in a behavior that violates academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, multiple submissions, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person cheat, unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and fraudulently altering academic records) will result in your being sanctioned. Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript (FI), and being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal the charge. Contact the Office of Academic Affairs, 101 Whitehurst, 405-744-5627, academicintegrity.okstate.edu.

**Grammar and Spelling:** Any written assignments must be in legible writing and utilize proper English grammar and spelling. I will subtract points for major grammatical errors or misspellings. This also includes an evaluation of writing style and effective communication. If I find an assignment completely unreadable, I will give it zero credit. In addition, please do not use internet expressions such as “LOL” or “WTF” in written assignments.

If English is your second language, or if you have a disability that affects your ability to write, I will of course relax some of these demands, but your assignments still need to be at least readable for me to give them any grade. Come speak to me as soon as possible if there is some legitimate reason why you might have trouble handwriting and/or typing in proper English.