Overview

Ethics is the study of the good and the right. In this class, we will be studying ethics at both the theoretical and the applied levels. First, we will ask about the nature of ethics itself. Is morality just a matter of personal taste? A social construction? A divine dictate? Second, we will explore a variety of current ethical issues, including euthanasia, abortion, famine relief, and factory farming.

Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to present, explain, and evaluate some of the central views and arguments in ethics. You should also see general improvement in your critical reading and thinking skills. Finally, you should meet the following GUR competency:

- Identify and analyze complex problems

Requirements

You are expected to arrive on time for class, having done the assigned reading in advance. In addition, you are required to complete a midterm (30 points), a final (50 points), and at least five in-class assignments (4 points each). Course grades are then determined as follows: 100-93=A, 92-90=A-, 89-87=B+, 86-83=B, 82-80=B-, 79-77=C+, 76-73=C, 72-70=C-, 69-67=D+, 66-63=D, 62-60=D-, 59-0=F. Study guides for the midterm and final will be posted on the course website. I will select two essay prompts from the study guide on the day of the exam and you will select one of those two prompts to write an in-class essay. In-class assignments will be given randomly throughout the quarter. There will be approximately eight assignments altogether and I will count your five highest scores.

Extensions

Requests for extensions or make-up work will be handled on an individual basis.

Changes

This syllabus is subject to change; any changes will be announced in class and by e-mail.
**Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty at Western Washington University is a serious infraction dealt with severely. It is your responsibility to understand the nature and possible consequences of academic dishonesty — see appendix D of the university catalog: [http://catalog.wwu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=463](http://catalog.wwu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=463)

**ADA Accommodations**

At Western Washington University, we are committed to providing a campus community, workplace and academic environment that is fully accessible to people of all abilities. Under federal and state law, no qualified person will be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of a University program or activity on the basis of their disability. For more information on accommodations, see the DSR webpage: [http://www.wwu.edu/disability/](http://www.wwu.edu/disability/)

**Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Western Washington University students enjoy the same basic rights, privileges, and freedoms granted to all members of society. At the same time, acceptance of admission to the university carries with it an obligation to fulfill certain responsibilities and expectations as a member of the Western Washington University community. For more details, see Western’s Student Rights and Responsibilities Code: [http://www.wwu.edu/dos/conduct/the_code.shtml](http://www.wwu.edu/dos/conduct/the_code.shtml)

**Schedule**

*Readings with a star are available on the course website.*

- **04.01** Introduction to Ethics
- **04.03** Introduction to Arguments “Introduction to Arguments”*
- **04.06** Subjectivism
- **04.08** Subjectivism “Subjectivism in Ethics”*
- **04.10** Subjectivism
- **04.13** Conventionalism
- **04.15** Conventionalism “Cultural Relativism”
- **04.17** Religion and Morality
- **04.20** Religion and Morality “Euthyphro”
- **04.22** Science and Morality
- **04.24** Summary and Review
- **04.27** Midterm
- **04.29** Abortion
- **05.01** Abortion
- **05.04** Abortion “Why Abortion is Immoral”
- **05.06** No class
- **05.08** Abortion “A Defense of Abortion”
- **05.11** Euthanasia
- **05.13** Euthanasia “The Morality of Euthanasia”
- **05.15** Euthanasia “Active and Passive Euthanasia”*
- **05.18** Euthanasia “The Survival Lottery”
- **05.20** Poverty “The Singer Solution to World Poverty”
- **05.22** Poverty
- **05.25** Memorial Day
- **05.27** Poverty “Lifeboat Ethics”
- **05.29** Animals
- **05.29** Animals “Moral Standing, Lives, and Speciesism”
- **06.01** Animals “Puppies, Pigs, and People”
- **06.05** Summary and Review