

Course Syllabus

syllabus in .doc form

Philosophy 102: Contemporary Moral Problems

Syllabus

Item #1913; Spring 2020

Instructor: Dr. Greg A. Damico

Email: greg.damico@bellevuecollege.edu (<mailto:greg.damico@bellevuecollege.edu>)

Text: All readings will be available online via Canvas.

Course Description: The study of many disciplines proceeds in large part simply by imparting information to the students. Many of the humanities—and especially philosophy—are different in that their students are expected not so much to absorb as much information as they can but rather more *to engage* with the information with which they are presented. The philosopher is constantly reading, yes, but the good philosopher is constantly stopping while she reads to ask: “Is this right?” or “Do I agree with this?” or “What is the author’s evidence or argument for the claim he is making here?”

This class explores some familiar contemporary issues from a perspective of philosophical ethics. We shall begin with a couple of theoretical issues but the course will be focused primarily on the approach to certain obvious moral topics like free speech, our responsibilities toward the world’s poor and abortion. At the end of the term, we shall take a brief look at race relations in America and, in particular, the case for reparations.

This class provides philosophical consideration of some of the main moral problems of modern society and civilization such as abortion, euthanasia, war, and capital punishment. It fulfills a social science or humanities credit at BC.

Course Outcomes: After completing this class, students should be able to:

1. Formulate, clarify and evaluate arguments.

2. Analyze and assess views that make ethics a matter of convention, including moral relativism and Divine Command Theory.
3. Explain and evaluate substantive ethical theories including utilitarianism and respect for persons and the ethics of care.
4. Explain how substantive ethical theories including utilitarianism, respect for persons and the ethics of care incorporate the value of cultural diversity. Explain the ethical foundations for sustainability.
5. Apply substantive ethical theories including utilitarianism and respect for persons to a range of specific problem areas like the death penalty, physician assisted suicide, animal rights, poverty, environmental protection and free speech.
6. Write argumentative essays containing clear thesis claims, strong arguments for the theses, reasonable consideration of opposing views, and conforming to the presentation/writing standards set forth in the “BC Philosophy Writing Guidelines.”

For a list of BC’s learning outcomes for this course, visit [this page](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/classes/All/PHIL/102).
<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/classes/All/PHIL/102>

Course outcomes will be met as detailed below.

Requirements and Grading:

Two exams	15% ea.
Five quizzes	2% ea.
One short essay	20%
One final exam	30%
Participation (on the discussion boards ^[1])	10%

The final exam will be heavily weighted toward the material in the second half of the course.

I will use a standard transformation from percents to letter-grades:

A 93+

A- 90-92

B+ 87-89

etc.

I round to the nearest whole unit percent.

Course Policies:

1. Late work will not be accepted without prior permission from me. I am sometimes amenable to granting extensions, so if you need one, talk to me *beforehand*.
2. Students are expected to know what plagiarism is—and then to avoid it! Unofficially, any time someone A uses the ideas of someone else B (whether quoting B *verbatim* or not), A is expected to cite B as a source. Such citations typically go either in a parenthesis inside the text or in a footnote. Having full citations in the body of a paper can be cumbersome; thus it is also highly recommended that students include, at the end of the paper, a list of works cited in the paper. Here full citations can be given in a less intrusive way. Suspected cases of plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will be referred to the appropriate authorities.

Affirmation of Inclusion:

“Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination.

We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.” For more, visit [this page](http://bellevuecollege.edu/about/goals/inclusion.asp) (<http://bellevuecollege.edu/about/goals/inclusion.asp>).

Important Links:

Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC

All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to MyBC. To create your account, visit [this page](https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/netid/) (<https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/netid/>).

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting [this page](http://depts.bellevuecollege.edu/helpdesk/students/) (<http://depts.bellevuecollege.edu/helpdesk/students/>).

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible.

If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc., please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is an additional access program available to you. Contact asn@bellevuecollege.edu or 425.564.2764. ASN is located in the Library Media Center in D125. You may also be interested in [this page](#) (<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/autismspectrumnavigators/>).

The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call our reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links [here](#) (<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc>).

Public Safety

Public Safety and Emergencies

Public Safety is located in D171 and can be reached at 425-564-2400 (easy to remember because it's the only office on campus open 24 hours a day—2400). Among other things, Public Safety serves as our Parking Permits, Lost and Found, and Emergency Notification center. Please ensure you are signed up to receive alerts through our campus alerting system by registering [here](#) (<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/alerts/?ref=footer>).

If you work late and are uneasy about going to your car, Public Safety will escort you to your vehicle. To coordinate this, please phone ahead and let Public Safety know when and where you will need an escort.

Please familiarize yourself with the emergency postings by the door of every classroom and know where to go in the event of an evacuation. Your instructor will be asked if anyone might still be in the building, so check in before you do anything else. Emergency responders will search for anyone unaccounted for.

If a major emergency occurs, please follow these two rules:

- 1) Take directions from those in charge of the response. We all need to be working together.
- 2) Do not get in your car and leave campus (unless directed to). Doing so will clog streets and prevent emergency vehicles from entering the scene. Instead, follow directions from those in charge.

Please do not hesitate to call Public Safety if you feel safety questions or concerns at any time.

Student Information

Visit [this](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/student-information/) [\(http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/student-information/\)](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/student-information/) website for information about [student procedures and expectations](http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/59/2013/11/STUDENT-PROCEDURES-AND-EXPECT_march22_2016.pdf) [\(http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/59/2013/11/STUDENT-PROCEDURES-AND-EXPECT_march22_2016.pdf\)](http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/59/2013/11/STUDENT-PROCEDURES-AND-EXPECT_march22_2016.pdf) and the [A&H commitment to student growth and development](http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/59/2013/11/Arts-and-Humanities-Commitment-to-Student-Growth-and-Development1.pdf) [\(http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/59/2013/11/Arts-and-Humanities-Commitment-to-Student-Growth-and-Development1.pdf\)](http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/59/2013/11/Arts-and-Humanities-Commitment-to-Student-Growth-and-Development1.pdf).

Course Schedule (subject to change):

As this is an online course, the pacing will be largely up to individual decision by the students. But the following notes should be borne in mind:

1. The class has ten modules in addition to “Getting Started”. Plan on spending about 1 week on each.
1. It will not be possible to skip ahead in the modules. So start early and pace yourself! Here is an illustration of my suggested pace through the course:

Week 1: Apr 8-10

What is Ethics?

Readings: (1) Shafer-Landau and Feinberg, Chapter 5 Intro

WATCH CRITICAL REASONING LECTURE (Crit Reason Lecture 8)

Week 2: Apr 13-17

Realism

Readings: (1) Nussbaum, "Judging Other Cultures"; (2) Damico, "A Conversation about Moral Realism"

READ ALSO THE NY TIMES ARTICLE ON MORAL REALISM

APR 13: FIRST DISCUSSION POST DUE

APR 16: QUIZ 1 DUE

Week 3: Apr 20-24

Two Stories

Readings: (1) Plato, excerpt from *Crito*; (2) Harris, "The Survival Lottery"

APR 20: SECOND DISCUSSION POST DUE

Week 4: Apr 27-May 1

Free Speech

Readings: (1) Gunther, "No Speech Code"; (2) Bartlett and O'Barr, "The Chilly Climate on College Campuses"

APR 27: THIRD DISCUSSION POST DUE

MAY 1: QUIZ 2 DUE

Week 5: May 4-8

Theory, Part 1: Mill

Readings: (1) Mill, Chapters 1-2 of *Utilitarianism*

WATCH MY LECTURE ON MILL

WATCH "TROLLEYOLOGY" VIDEOS

MAY 4: FOURTH DISCUSSION POST DUE

MAY 5: EXAM 1 DUE

Week 6: May 11-15

Theory, Part 2: Kant

Readings: Kant, Section 1 of *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*

WATCH MY LECTURES ON KANT

WATCH SANDEL'S LECTURE(S) ON KANT

MAY 11: FIFTH DISCUSSION POST DUE

MAY 11: ESSAY PROMPT POSTED; ESSAY DUE MAY 26

MAY 14: QUIZ 3 DUE

Week 7: May 18-22

The Poor

Readings: (1) Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics"; (2) Rachels, "Morality, Parents and Children"; (3) Singer, "The Solution to World Poverty"

MAY 18: SIXTH DISCUSSION POST DUE

Week 8: May 25-29

Abortion

Readings: (1) Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"; (2) Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"

MAY 25: HOLIDAY

MAY 26: ESSAY DUE

MAY 27: SEVENTH DISCUSSION POST DUE

MAY 28: QUIZ 4 DUE

Week 9: Jun 1-5

Euthanasia

Readings: (1) Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"; (2) Steinbock, "The Intentional Termination of Life"

JUN 2: EXAM 2 DUE

JUN 3: EIGHTH DISCUSSION POST DUE

Week 10: Jun 8-12

Racial Equality

Readings: Coates, "The Case for Reparations"

JUN 8: NINTH DISCUSSION POST DUE

JUN 11: QUIZ 5 DUE

Week 11: Jun 15-16

Final Preparation





Readings: none




















JUN 15: TENTH DISCUSSION POST DUE

















JUN 16: FINAL EXAM DUE







[1] At least twice per module. See Canvas site for details.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Mon Jun 10, 2019	 First Quiz Opens	12am
	 Start Reading Chapter 1	12am
Tue Jun 11, 2019	 Watch Lectures 1 and 2 by FRIDAY	12am
Mon Jun 17, 2019	 Second Quiz Opens	12am

Date	Details	Due
	 Start Reading Chapter 2	12am
Tue Jun 18, 2019	 Watch Lecture 3 by FRIDAY	12am
	 Watch Lecture 4 by FRIDAY	12am
Wed Jun 19, 2019	 Watch _12 Angry Men_ by MONDAY	12am
Thu Jun 20, 2019	 First Exam Opens	12am
	 Second Exam Opens	12am
Fri Jun 21, 2019	 Start Reading Chapter 3	12am
	 Start Reading Chapter 5	12am
	 Start Reading Chapter 7	12am
Mon Jun 24, 2019	 Third Quiz Opens	12am
Tue Jun 25, 2019	 Start Reading Chapter 4	12am
	 Start Reading Chapter 6	12am
	 Start Reading Chapter 9	12am
Wed Jun 26, 2019	 Start Reading Chapter 13	12am
	 Watch Lecture 5 by FRIDAY	12am
	 Watch Lecture 6 by FRIDAY	12am
Mon Jul 1, 2019	 Start Reading Chapter 10	12am
Tue Jul 2, 2019	 Watch Lecture 7 by FRIDAY	12am
Mon Jul 8, 2019	 Start Reading Chapters 12, 14	12am

Date	Details	Due
Tue Jul 9, 2019	 Start Reading Chapter 8	12am
Wed Jul 10, 2019	 Watch Lecture 8 by FRIDAY	12am
Thu Jul 11, 2019	 Start Reading Chapter 11	12am
Mon Apr 13, 2020	 Module 1 Discussion Board: What Ethics Is	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 16, 2020	 Quiz 1	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 20, 2020	 Module 2 Discussion Board: Realism	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 27, 2020	 Module 3 Discussion Board: Two Stories	due by 11:59pm
Fri May 1, 2020	 Quiz 2	due by 11:59pm
Mon May 4, 2020	 Module 4 Discussion Board: Free Speech	due by 11:59pm
Tue May 5, 2020	 Exam 1	due by 11:59pm
Mon May 11, 2020	 Module 5 Discussion Board: Theory, Part 1	due by 11:59pm
Thu May 14, 2020	 Quiz 3	due by 11:59pm
Mon May 18, 2020	 Module 6 Discussion Board: Theory, Part 2	due by 11:59pm
Tue May 26, 2020	 ShortEssay	due by 11:59pm
Wed May 27, 2020	 Module 7 Discussion Board: The Poor	due by 11:59pm
Thu May 28, 2020	 Quiz 4	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Tue Jun 2, 2020	 Exam 2	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jun 3, 2020	 Module 8 Discussion Board: Abortion	due by 11:59pm
Mon Jun 8, 2020	 Module 9 Discussion Board: Euthanasia	due by 11:59pm
Thu Jun 11, 2020	 Quiz 5	due by 11:59pm
Mon Jun 15, 2020	 Module 10 Discussion Board: Racial Equality	due by 11:59pm
Tue Jun 16, 2020	 Final Exam	due by 11:59pm