Ethics Syllabus- Spring 2018
PHIL 2314 E
Mondays and Wednesdays 7:00-8:15 Malloy 017

Instructor: Dr. Stephen J. Striby
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**Course Structure and Content:** The first half of this foundational ethics course will treat the notion of virtue as it develops from Plato’s account of justice, through Aristotle’s view of moral virtue, to Aquinas’s treatment of the theological virtues. Aristotle’s view of moral virtue will be discussed in great detail. After this discussion of virtue, a short section on natural law ethics, utilitarianism, deontology, and the universality of ethical principles will ensue. Natural law will be defended as a mean between the extremes of utilitarianism and deontology. Subsequently, and to round out the semester, certain particular ethical issues regarding sexuality and life and death will be addressed.

**Course Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the course, the successful student will be able to:

1) Show an understanding of Plato’s notion of justice, Aristotle’s account of moral virtue, and Aquinas’s treatment of the theological virtues. This outcome advances *Goal Four* of the *Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes*, which calls for students to “affirm the dignity of the human person” and *Goal Nine*, which enables students to “inculcate ethical thinking” and “apply ethical standards in judging conduct”. This outcome also contributes to *Goal Three*, which pertains to the “necessarily harmonious relationship between ethical truths known through reason, and moral...
truth, as contained in divine revelation” and the understanding that “grace builds on and perfects nature”.

2) Explain the essential elements of utilitarian and deontological methods of determining the goodness and badness of actions, and show how natural law ethics can be seen as possessing the virtues of those two ethical systems, while it leaves behind their deficiencies. This outcome helps to advance Goal Nine of the Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes, as quoted above.

3) Finally, the student should have developed his or her ability to critically evaluate positions taken on ethical issues and defend his or her own sound position by means of oral and written expression. A particular instance of this is the following: “In a writing assignment, students will present in a clear manner and in their own words, an argument in a valid form, a counterargument, and an effective response to that counterargument”. This is the philosophy QEP writing outcome for Ethics classes, and students will be asked to do the above in both papers for this course. This outcome contributes to Goal Five of the Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes, which helps the student “develop competence in critical thinking, critical reading, effective writing, and oral communication”.

Grading and Attendance: There will be two essay tests, each worth 15% of the final grade, and a comprehensive final exam worth 20% of the final grade. The student will complete one short paper worth 10%, and a longer research paper worth 20%, of the final grade. There will be eight quizzes on the readings worth 20% of the final grade. These will occur at the beginning of class and will not be previously announced. There will be no makeup quizzes, but provisions can be made to make up a test if the student is excused for his or her absence. For the possibility of an absence being excused, the student must contact Mr. Striby on or before the day of the absence, and have a sound reason for his or her absence. Students may gain or lose up to six percentage points based on their attendance and participation in class discussions. In accordance with university policy, more than three unexcused absences will cause the student to lose points on the
final grade, with each unexcused absence causing a one percent reduction in the grade.

**Grading scale:** A: 95-100, A-: 90-94: A grade of A reflects excellent work on the part of the student. To earn this grade, the student must excel on all or most of the assignments and tests, show considerable understanding of concepts and arguments presented in class and in the readings, produce well written, diligently researched papers, and have good attendance and participation. B+: 87-89, B: 84-86, B-: 80-83: To earn a grade in the B range, the student must complete all of the assignments and tests, show good understanding of the aforementioned concepts and arguments, produce well written papers, and have good attendance and participation. C+: 77-79, C: 74-76, C-: 70-73: To attain a grade of C, the student must complete all of the assignments and tests, show some understanding of concepts and arguments, write a good paper, and consistently attend class. D: 60-69: To attain this grade, the student must complete the assignments and tests, show some understanding of concepts and arguments, and show some consistency in attending class. F: Below 60: A grade of F is given when the student fails to complete assignments, fails to show any consistency in attending class, plagiarizes on a paper, or cheats on a test.

**Calendar of Readings- Ethics**

(NE refers to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*; BB means the text is on Blackboard under “Course Documents”; all page numbers are from Pojman’s *The Moral Life*, 1st ed.)

**Week One (Jan. 22, 24):** What is ethics? Grading and policies; Plato’s *Republic*, Bk. II (BB)

**Week Two (Jan. 29, 31):** *Republic*, Bk. IV (BB); Rep. Bk. IX (BB)

**Week Three (Feb. 5, 7):** Aristotle *NE* I, 13, II 1-2; *NE* II, 3-6; *NE* II, 7-9

**Week Four (Feb. 12, 14):** *NE* III, 5-6; *NE* III, 7-9; *NE* III, 10-12

**Week Five (Feb. 19, 21):** *NE* IV, 1, 5-7; Review; TEST #1 (21st)

**Week Six (Feb. 26, 28):** *NE* VI, 1-2, 5, 13; *NE* VII, 1-4
Week Seven (Mar. 5, 7): NE VII, 5-10; NE VIII, 1-3; NE VIII, 4-6

Spring Break

Week Eight (Mar. 19, 21): NE IX, 4, NE X, 6-8; Aquinas on Happiness (BB); Aquinas on the theological virtues (BB)

Week Nine (Mar 26, 28): Bentham’s Classical Utilitarianism (239-244); Mill’s Utilitarianism Refined (232-236); Kant’s The Moral Law (297-316)

Week Ten (Apr. 2, 4): Aquinas on natural law (BB); Kant on sexuality (669-671); Review for test #2

Week Eleven (Apr. 9, 11): TEST #2 (9th); Belliotti on sexuality (681-689; Punzo on chastity (690-697)

Week Twelve (Apr. 16, 18): Noonan on Abortion (758-765); Warren on abortion (766-775);

Week Thirteen (Apr. 23, 25): Declaration on Euthanasia (Iura et Bona)(BB); Singer on international giving (BB)

Week Fourteen (Apr. 30, May 2): John Paul II on obligations to the poor (BB); Review for Final Exam

Final Exam: Monday, May 14th, 6:00pm

Paper Due Dates

Short Paper (10 pts.): Wed., Feb. 7th