PHIL 220: Introduction to Ethics- Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Michael Berhow
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Course Number: PHIL 220
Office Phone: (605) 677-5218

Class Meetings: Online

Course Description
Introduction to Ethics examines the major currents and components of ethical theory from classical times to the present, investigating problems arising from specific theories, as well as critically analyzing the validity of these theories for current ethical concerns.

IMPORTANT: This course will cover the complex and sensitive topics of bigotry, racism, religion, anti-Semitism, genocide, affirmative action, issues related to gender and sexuality, politics, same-sex marriage, abortion, etc. When covering current controversial issues, the instructor will strive to present the relevant arguments for various positions, while providing an online platform that encourages students to respectfully discuss multiple viewpoints.

IF YOU ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH SUCH TOPICS, PLEASE RECONSIDER TAKING THIS COURSE.

Textbook Information
• Michael Sandel, Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?, (978-0-374-53250-5) published by St. Martins

Instructional Method
This course will be facilitated entirely online via Desire2Learn (https://d2l.sdbor.edu), which you will use to:

• Communicate with your classmates and the instructor
• View lecture notes and recordings
• View and complete self-assessment quizzes and exams
• Submit coursework
• Access all required course materials (lecture recordings, lecture slides, required videos)
• Access your course progress and grade information
**Student Expectations**

First and foremost, students are expected to read, understand, and abide by all policies and procedures outlined in this syllabus, as well as those in the **Online Student Handbook**, which can be accessed from the “Getting Started” widget on the course homepage. The latter contains important information about the various support services available to online students.

In terms of activities, each week is detailed in the Class Schedule that can be accessed via the “Getting Started” widget on the course homepage. The instructor will also provide regular updates during the week, so students should log into D2L to check for news and email **at least three times per week**, if not more frequently.

In terms of time commitment, the South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) defines a credit hour as constituting one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction, and two hours of out-of-class, student work. As this is a three-credit-hour course, students should expect to dedicate **around nine (9) hours per week** to course activities.

Students are also expected to have and maintain the appropriate technology required to complete the course. For more information about this, please see the **Technology Requirements** towards the end of the syllabus.

One important thing to remember: when all is said and done, this is your class; it is what you make of it. Your level of participation will be directly proportional to your class experience: you will get out of it what you put into it.

**Instructor Expectations**

The instructor will strive to provide every possible opportunity for detailed feedback and, unless otherwise stated, will respond to inquiries within forty-eight hours (48) on normal weekdays. The instructor will also endeavor to return feedback and suggestions, using standard rubrics and grading criteria, within a reasonable amount of time—see the **Assessments** section below for more detail.

Finally, the instructor will also abide by all policies set forth in this syllabus and those by the **Online Student Handbook**, The University of South Dakota, and the SDBOR.

**Course Objectives**

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<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to understand real world issues from the perspective of moral philosophy, and use its language and theories to develop and express their own views on ethical issues.</td>
<td>This will be assessed as students participate in online discussion forums.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to define major ethical issues and dilemmas being addressed across human cultures, and</td>
<td>This will be measured as students take online quizzes, online exams, and complete reading</td>
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learn to evaluate their impact on communities, countries, and the world as a whole.

Students will develop and learn to express their own moral philosophical views on various issues of life, work, and human society.

This will be assessed as students participate in online discussion forums, and as they complete the essay exam.

**Lectures / Office Hours**

Lectures and will be recorded and available under the **Content** area of the course, under the Activities section of the current week. If you need to meet with me for office hours, please send me an email through D2L, and we can plan a phone call.

**Assessments**

Because of the online nature of this course, it is important that students receive regular feedback on their progress. To that end, there will be regular participation requirements and assessments to assure that ample feedback is provided and that ample opportunity is provided to ask questions about the various course topics.

**IMPORTANT:** Late work will only be accepted--and/or make-up assessments will only be made available--under conditions such as a documented illness, family emergencies, etc., and will be provided solely at the discretion of the instructor. When possible, students should notify the instructor prior to missing any assessment.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes, Reading Outlines, and Discussion Board</td>
<td>You will have 10 online quizzes (20 points each), and you may complete 2 reading outlines (10 points each) for extra credit. Quizzes should be taken on D2L, and there will be 10 randomly selected questions per quiz (multiple choice/T&amp;F). Questions for the quizzes come from course lectures and the assigned textbooks. Your extra credit reading outlines should be at least 500 words per assignment, and you may select any chapter out of your blue textbook (Justice: A Reader) to outline. For discussion requirements, refer to the paragraphs entitled “Discussions” below. Discussions count toward your participation in the course, and will be ungraded. <strong>Proper participation is required</strong>, however, to receive the full points for your reading quizzes. Failure to participate in a weekly discussion will result in 10 points per week being deducted from your overall quiz score.</td>
<td>20 points each; 200 total points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Online Exams</td>
<td>There will be 3 semester exams over the assigned reading and lectures. Your third online exam will be a cumulative final due during finals week. Exams will resemble your online quizzes, so you can review previous quizzes to assist you in reviewing the relevant materials for the exam. Each exam will consist of 40 randomly selected questions (multiple choice/T&amp;F). Each exam will be administered via D2L, and your grade will be available upon completion. Exams are timed, and you will have 45 minutes to complete each exam. You are NOT allowed to use any notes, your book, or any other materials or resources while</td>
<td>40 points each; 120 total points</td>
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Discussions
You will have 9 discussion topics this semester. Students will be divided up into small discussion groups—consisting of five to eight students—in order to discuss a question posed by the instructor. Students will need to post at least one direct response to the instructor’s posting and at least one response to another group member’s response. Discussion posts will open Monday mornings (see course schedule for more details), and the first direct response is due no later than 11:59 PM CT on Wednesday. Your response to another group member is due by 11:59 PM CT on Friday.

When posting in the discussions, each student must abide by the “Netiquette” section in the Online Student Handbook, which can be found in the “Getting Started” widget on the Course Home page. Additionally, each student will need to post a substantive response to the question or questions posed by the instructor, and then reply substantively to another student’s response. A substantive response is more than simply saying, “I agree,” or “I disagree;” rather, it will provide arguments to support the student’s response.

IMPORTANT: Because of the interactive nature of discussions, if you miss a weekly discussion, even for an excused absence, you will NOT be able to make it up.

Participation / Attendance
Participation/attendance is of the utmost importance and will be measured in three ways: 1) weekly discussions; 2) weekly assessments; 3) watching the lecture.

If:
- more than one weekly discussion absence is recorded, or
- more than one lecture is missed/not reviewed

The instructor may lower the student’s final grade by two (2) percentage points per additional absence. Anyone missing two or more times, or who is not otherwise satisfying the course’s expectations, may be withdrawn from the course at the instructor’s discretion. Should this be the case, the student will receive a grade of “W” on his/her official transcript and will not receive a refund.
### Course Point Total

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<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>360-400</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320-359</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280-319</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240-279</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-239</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
<td>F</td>
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**IMPORTANT:** You can check your current grade at any time during the semester by clicking on the Assessments+Grades link. You will also be able to check the grades for any assessment, as well as feedback on those assessments, using this link as well.

### Course Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td>Read: Course Syllabus&lt;br&gt;Watch: Introduction Lecture&lt;br&gt;Discussion: Introduce yourself to your group on the D2L discussion board.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Why Study Ethics?</td>
<td>Read: Justice 1; Reader 1&lt;br&gt;Watch: Recorded Lecture and Other Posted Videos&lt;br&gt;Assignment: Quiz 1 (over Justice 1 and lecture)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Discussion:</strong> Watch the lecture on D2L and participate in your discussion group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>A Just Society</td>
<td>Read: Plato’s Cave (Posted on D2L)&lt;br&gt;Watch: Recorded Lecture and Other Posted Videos&lt;br&gt;Assignment: Quiz 2 (over Plato’s Cave and lecture)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Are Moral Values Relative?</td>
<td>Read: All Articles on D2L&lt;br&gt;Watch: Recorded Lecture and Other Posted Videos&lt;br&gt;Assignment: Quiz 3 (over PojmanRelativism and lecture)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Exam Week</td>
<td>Assignment: EXAM 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Utilitarianism</td>
<td>Read: Justice 2; Reader 2&lt;br&gt;Watch: Recorded Lecture and Other Posted Videos&lt;br&gt;Assignment: Quiz 4 (over Justice 2 and lecture)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Discussion:</strong> Watch the lecture on D2L and participate in your discussion group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Libertarianism</td>
<td>Read: Justice 3,4; Reader 3&lt;br&gt;Watch: Recorded Lecture and Other Posted Videos&lt;br&gt;Assignment: Quiz 5 (over Justice 3, 4 and lecture)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Discussion:</strong> Watch the lecture on D2L and participate in your discussion group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Read: Justice 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Deontological Ethics</td>
<td>Read: Justice 6; Reader 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
<td>Read: Justice 7; Reader 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Affirmative Action</td>
<td>Read: Justice 8; Reader 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Exam Week</td>
<td>Assignment: EXAM 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Virtue Ethics</td>
<td>Read: Justice 9, 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Marriage Laws and Legislator Morality</td>
<td>Read: Reader 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Ethics in Public: The Aspiration to Neutrality</td>
<td>Read: Justice: 9, 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Understanding the Righteous Mind</td>
<td>Watch: Posted Videos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finals</td>
<td>EXAM 3</td>
<td>Assignment: EXAM 3</td>
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**Technology Requirements**

The University of South Dakota has established minimum technology requirements for participation in online courses. These are outlined under the “Technology Support and Requirements” section in the [Online Student Handbook](#) in the “Getting Started” widget on the course homepage.

Aside from the requirements listed in the handbook, this course has three other requirements:

1. All students should have the ability to submit performance/album reviews in a format compatible with Turnitin (Word: DOC or DOCX; OpenOffice: ODT; Other: RTF, TXT, PDF, WPS). The University of South Dakota provides access to Google Docs—a free, online office suite—
which can save documents as Word files. USD’s Google Docs can be accessed with your USD username and password at: http://docs.usd.edu.
Additionally, USD makes Microsoft Office available for free to all students. For more information, please visit the USD Technology page: http://www.usd.edu/technology

Student Resources:
The University of South Dakota provides a number of useful services to students:

- **Online Student Handbook (in the “Getting Started” widget on the course homepage):**
  This contains very important information related to the services provided by the University of South Dakota as well as the University policies. In it, you will find such information as:
  
  o Academic support services such as the library, writing center, proctor and testing information, book purchasing, etc.
  o Student support services such as advising and enrollment information, financial aid, student life, and counseling, etc.
  o Technology support services like technology requirements, ITS Help Desk contact information, discounts on computers and software, etc.

- **myUSD Portal (http://my.usd.edu):**
  The myUSD Portal is your one-stop place for a majority of services offered to any student taking a USD course—like this course. You can access the following services from the “Academics” tab in the portal:
  
  o WebAdvisor
  o I.D. Weeks Library

- **The USD Writing Center (http://www.usd.edu/academics/writing-center):**
  The USD Writing Center was established to provide writing assistance to students in order to help them become better writers. It is available on campus during regular business hours and online in the evenings. Please visit the URL above for more information.

Plagiarism Policy:
Plagiarism is defined as using the words and/or ideas of another and representing them to be your own, without proper credit to the author or source. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism will result, at a minimum, in a grade of zero for that assignment.

Since it is impossible to evaluate a plagiarized paper, no credit can be given. At the discretion of the instructor, a student may be subject to any, or a combination, of the following:

- allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit
- given a zero for the assignment
- assigned a reduced grade for the course
- reported to the program in which the student is majoring and that department may take additional action
- dropped from the course
- failed in the course

**IMPORTANT:** The instructor will use iParadigm’s Turnitin product to determine the level of originality of papers submitted in the course. All student papers will become part of a course database of papers that will also be used to check the originality of future papers submitted in the course; however, the student will maintain copyright ownership of the paper. For more information about this, please refer to:


**Freedom in Learning:**
Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the Department of Music at (605) 677-5274 to initiate a review of the evaluation.

**Disability Services:**
Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester.

For information contact:

Ernetta L. Fox, Director
Disability Services
Room 119 Service Center
(605) 677-6389
[http://www.usd.edu/ds/dservices@usd.edu](http://www.usd.edu/ds/dservices@usd.edu)

**Diversity**
The University of South Dakota strives to foster a globally inclusive learning environment where opportunities are provided for diversity to be recognized and respected. This course will explore many of these areas.