I. General Education Review - Writing Course

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<tr>
<th>Dept/Program Subject</th>
<th>Philosophy</th>
<th>Course # (i.e. ENEX 200)</th>
<th>PHL 210E</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Moral Philosophy</td>
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II. Endorsement/Approvals
Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Deborah Slicer</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone / Email</td>
<td>x2527</td>
<td><a href="mailto:deborah.slicer@umontana.edu">deborah.slicer@umontana.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Chair</td>
<td>Paul Muench</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Jenny McNulty</td>
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III. Type of request
New | One-time Only | Change | Remove

Reason for new course, change or deletion: Request for renewal of writing course designation.

IV Overview of the Course Purpose/Description: Provide an introduction to the subject matter and course content.

This is an introductory course in ethics for philosophy majors and minors. There are no prerequisites. We want to get at the bottom of the judgments we make about what is morally right and wrong. Specifically, what kind of reasons can we give for those judgments and prescriptions? We will study in depth three secular, western moral theories that we frequently appeal to in order to justify the moral claims we make: theories about virtuous character, Kantian and rights theories, and utilitarianism. We'll also look at critiques of these three theories. In order to understand if and how these theories are practical we will test their application to some contemporary moral issues: capital punishment, civil disobedience, and duties to rescue. In addition to our reading, we'll watch three films that explore the application of these principles. By the end of the semester, if nothing else, you should be more conscious and articulate about the moral judgments and prescriptions that you, family, friends, politicians, and religious authorities make.

This course is a designated writing course. You will be required to write five papers. At least one of these will be revised in light of my feedback, and you will have the opportunity to workshop one or more of your papers.

V Learning Outcomes: Explain how each of the following learning outcomes will be achieved.

| Student learning outcomes: Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts | Every paper required for the course not only presupposes that students have assimilated the relevant materials but also requires them to demonstrate that they can apply the concepts learned either to a critique of the underlying position or to a particular ethical question. |
| **Formulate and express written opinions and ideas that are developed, logical, and organized** | Every paper required for the course requires students to go beyond a mere exegesis of the class materials. Whether students are required to interpret and criticize the class materials or apply them to a particular factual situation, they are required to formulate and express opinions and ideas. |
| **Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience, purpose and context** | Students will be instructed in the proper writing techniques in philosophy, and during class discussion will be presenting their work to other members of the class. |
| **Revise written work based on constructive comments from the instructor** | Students are given the opportunity to workshop drafts of papers in class and/or to revise at least one paper in the light of written feedback. |
| **Find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically (see http://www.lib.unt.edu/informationliteracy/)** | Students will receive instruction from the professor with respect to the basic research and writing conventions. |
| **Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions** | Students will receive guidance from the professor with regard to the basic conventions of philosophy. |
| **Demonstrate appropriate English language usage** | Clarity, grammar, and style are indispensable with respect to the well-crafted philosophy paper, and these matters will be included in the professor’s feedback and factor into every paper’s grade. |

**VI. Writing Course Requirements**

| Enrollment is capped at 25 students. If not, list maximum course enrollment. Explain how outcomes will be adequately met for this number of students. Justify the request for variance. | Yes. |
| What instructional methods will be used to teach students to write for specific audiences, purposes, and genres? | Students are expected to conform to the requirements of appropriate philosophical writing, a skill that will be taught through feedback on both papers and presentations. |
| Which written assignments will include revision in response to instructor’s feedback? | Students will receive written feedback on their first paper and asked to revise this material and incorporate it into a longer, second paper. |

**VII. Writing Assignments:** Please describe course assignments. Students should be required to individually compose at least 16 pages of writing for assessment. At least 50% of the course grade should be based on students' performance on writing assignments. Clear expression, quality, and accuracy of content are considered an integral part of the grade on any writing assignment.

| **Formal Graded Assignments** | Papers (60% of final grade): Students will write five papers (at least one of which will involve revision of earlier writing). Papers will range from two to four pages in length. Final Exam (25% of final grade). Students will write approximately an additional fourteen blue book pages on the final exam. |
| **Informal Ungraded Assignments** | N/A |
Philosophy 210E: Introductory Ethics
Fall 2013
Professor Deborah Slicer
L.A. 101/243-2527/ deborah.slicer@umontana.edu
O.H.: tba

This is an introductory course in ethics for philosophy majors and minors. There are no prerequisites. We want to get at the bottom of the judgments we make about what is morally right and wrong. Specifically, what kind of reasons can we give for those judgments and prescriptions? We will study in depth three secular, western moral theories that we frequently appeal to in order to justify the moral claims we make: theories about virtuous character, Kantian and rights theories, and utilitarianism. We'll also look at critiques of these three theories. In order to understand if and how these theories are practical we will test their application to some contemporary moral issues: capital punishment, civil disobedience, and duties to rescue. In addition to our reading, we'll watch three films that explore the application of these principles. By the end of the semester, if nothing else, you should be more conscious and articulate about the moral judgments and prescriptions that you, family, friends, politicians, and religious authorities make.

This course is a designated writing course. You will be required to write five papers. At least one of these will be revised in light of my feedback, and you will have the opportunity to workshop one or more of your papers.

Schedule
8/26 Hello and Business
8/29 “The Value of Philosophy,” Bertrand Russell (x); “Reflections on Suffering,” Bertrand Russell (x)
9/2 Labor Day, No Class
9/4-9/11 Crimes and Misdemeanors, film
9/18-9/30 Utilitarianism, J.S. Mill
10/2 “Famine, Affluence, and Morality,” Peter Singer (x); “World Hunger and Moral Obligation: The Case Against Singer,” John Arthur (x)
10/7 “A Critique of Utilitarianism,” Bernard Williams (x); “The Experience Machine,” Robert Nozick (x)
10/9 No Class
10/14-10/23 The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, Kant
10/28-11/4 Dead Man Walking, film; “Capital Punishment,” Rachels (x)
11/11 Vets’ Day, No Class
11/6-11/20 The Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle
11/27 Thanksgiving, No Class
12/2-12/4 Weapons of the Spirit, film
12/6 Last day wrap up

Texts:
Utilitarianism, J.S. Mill
The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, Kant
The Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle
“Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper” (x)
“Grammar Guide” (x)
(x)= essays on e-reserve on the philosophy department web site. Go to “Current Syllabi and Course Materials.” Print these, mark them up as you read, and always bring the assigned essay or book to class with you.

Requirements
1.) 5 1-2 page papers on assigned topics. I’ll actually give you 6 assignments. So that means you can drop your lowest score if you write all 6. NO make-up assignments. These are due at the beginning of class. I will NOT accept a paper once class has started. 12 pts/each=60 points total
2) 1 20 minute presentation on an assigned topic=15 points
3.) Comprehensive final exam= 25 pts.

Writing Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, you will increase your ability to do the following:
1.) Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts.
2.) Compose written documents that are appropriate for a philosophy audience, purpose and context.
3.) Revise written work based on constructive comments from the instructor.
4.) Begin to use writing conventions that are appropriate for philosophy.
5.) Demonstrate appropriate English language usage.

Information Literacy
You will acquire the ability to identify relevant information in a text and incorporate this into your papers, making use of appropriate citation methods and drawing on philosophy databases where relevant.

Law and Order
1.) Attendance and participation—I will take attendance sporadically. If attendance is good and you’ve participated in discussions, and if you have a borderline grade at the end of semester, I’ll boost your final grade. If your attendance has been poor, I won’t boost the grade. Be forewarned: Readings for this class are very difficult. If you don’t come to class and take good notes, chances are good you’ll fail it. So read diligently and have a conversation with what you’re reading, come to class regularly, take very good notes, find a study partner or two, and see me whenever you’re confused.
2.) I consider the following rude and unacceptable: ringing cell phones, open lap tops, reading the newspaper or working on something other than class materials in class, whispering to your neighbor, texting, coming into class late or leaving early (unless you’ve okayed this with me), in other words anything that keeps you or other students from giving me your full attention. I’ll call you out for these things just once. After that, I simply drop you from the class. Please just be considerate, responsible adults, and we’ll get on fine.

3.) See the University of Montana Student Conduct Code re. cheating, etc. (http://www.umt.edu-SA).
Read the excerpt from “The Kindest Cut,” by Larissa MacFarquhar, then discuss the following in essay form, 2-3 pages, double-spaced.

1. Why would a utilitarian regard what Wagner did not as virtuous but as a duty? (See page 39, far left column, 2nd paragraph.) See also Wagner’s claim that he’d “cheapen” himself if he didn’t help and his discomfort with his recipient thanking him. Relate this to specifics in Bentham, especially. I can’t stress enough that you need to work with relevant specifics in MacFarquhar’s essay and in Bentham. Do NOT give me a general summary of these articles.

2. In a short closing paragraph address the related questions MacFarquhar raises on page 40, middle column, beginning “So what do you make of Paul Wagner?...” I’d like to see a well-reasoned response. Mostly I’m grading you on #1, above, so do give that section most attention.

PLEASE:
**Don’t summarize the essay. I’ve read it. Get right to point after a 1 or 2 sentence introduction.**

**You don’t need to work with all of Bentham. Work with specifics that are relevant to the topic.**

**Make an outline before you write and stick with the 5-6 points in your outline.**

**Read your drafts out loud and edit as you go. This will vastly improve your writing. Write in your natural speaking voice! Don’t try to sound smart! You are smart. Let your own voice lead.**

**You will lose points for 5th-grade grammatical errors! For example edit for comma splices, sentence fragments, possessives, use semi-colons properly (it’s easy—they separate complete sentences or items in a list). Use the grammar guide that you’ve already printed from our web site.**

**Minimal quotes in a paper this short. I’d prefer you not quote from Bentham at all. I need to see that you can put these ideas into your own words.**
Paper #2, Due at 1:10 on Wednesday 10/17
4-5 pages, double-spaced

Part I
Revise paper #1. Address my comments and suggestions and correct all grammatical errors and typos.

Part II
1.) Expand the first paper another 2 pages. What might Mill have to say about Wagner? Work with specifics here---this is very important. The first papers by and large didn't do this. Find 2 or 3 specific points that are relevant in Mill and work those in some depth. For example, you might look at what Mill says about the internal sanctions (chpt 3), or what Mill says about the distinction between higher and lower pleasures (chpt 2), or at what he says about rights (chpt 5), or see if his response to any of the other objections in chpt 2 are relevant. Again, work with specifics rather than with the theory in general.

2.) You may integrate Mill into the discussion of Bentham or you can just add an extra 2-3 pages at the end on Mill.

PLEASE:
**Don't summarize the essay. I've read it.
**You don’t need to work with all of Bentham or Mill. Work with specifics that are relevant to the topic.
**Make an outline before you write and stick with the 5-6 points in your outline.
**Read you drafts out loud and edit as you go. This will vastly improve your writing. Write in your natural speaking voice! Don’t try to sound smart! You are smart. Let your own voice lead.
**You will lose points for 5th-grade grammatical errors! For example edit for comma splices, sentence fragments, possessives, use semi-colons properly (it’s easy—they separate complete sentences or items in a list). Use the grammar guide that you’ve already printed from our web site.
**Minimal quotes in a paper this short. I’d prefer you not quote from Bentham or Mill at all. I need to see that you can put these ideas into your own words.
**Number pages!
**Give me full pages. Don’t start the paper half-way down the page or use huge font or very wide margins. I'm on to this, okay?!
**I suggest you read the “How to write a philosophy paper,” guidelines which are on our web site, the site you’ve used to download other materials. Go to the Philosophy Department web page, click “Courses and Syllabi,” find my name.
Paper #3/ Philosophy 210E
DUE on 11/7 at the beginning of class
Late papers will be recycled rather than graded
2 full, double-spaced pages

The Assignment
Decide what Kant might have to say about parts of the U.S. Patriot Act and present his position. Don’t try to talk about everything the synopsis mentions. Instead focus on 2 and only 2 aspects of the Act. The Categorical Imperative is relevant here, so use it in presenting Kant. Remember there are two versions. Work with both, one version as it’s relevant to one aspect of the Act and the other version as it’s relevant to the other aspect. In the process I expect to see some discussion of the following points. Integrate these into your discussion of the Imperative and the Act. Don’t just give me a summary of your notes.
(a) How is the Categorical Imperative related to Kant’s concept of “duty”?
(b) How is duty relevant to Kant’s idea of “Law”? What does he mean by Law?
(c) What’s the difference between acting in accordance with duty and acting from duty?
(d) Why are we autonomous/free when we act from duty?
(e) What are two differences between the utilitarian philosophy and Kant’s philosophy?

General Guidelines
1) Once again, I recommend you outline the main 5-6 points you want to make before you write. And hang with those points.
2) Stay very focused and work with specifics that are relevant to the points you’re making.
3) Don’t quote. Put ideas into your own words. Pretend you’re teaching this to a 3rd grader.
4) Write multiple drafts. And read your work out loud. You will hear nongrammatical and awkward prose. Write in your natural speaking voice. Please don’t try to sound like Mill or Kant!
5) Flag your points so that I can follow your flow. E.g., you might say “First Kant says...,” or “Next I want to say...,” or whatever feels natural to you.
6) This time I’ll deduct half a letter grade for grammatical errors and typos. Remember the grammar guide and look at your last paper to see which, if any, errors you made.
7) Number pages.
8) Don’t begin this paper the night before it’s due. I want to see more than a gloss of Kant. Review your notes, reread as you need to, and write multiple drafts as you refine and develop your case. You’ll need to be concise and, as I said earlier, stay very focused to get the job done in 2 pages.
This paper is a bit more challenging than the others, but I think you can handle it.

The film is loosely framed by 2 similar images. In one of the first shots a poetry student of Helen’s reads a poem that features a woman waiting at the end of a road with her arms open to someone. Near the end of the film there’s a similar image. Helen’s mother wakes her from a bad dream the night before Matt’s execution. Her mother reminds Helen that as a child she would sleepwalk and how once she walked into the street when she was sleeping. Her mother ran out to get her and Helen struck out, giving her a black eye. Her mother concludes the story by saying “But I held you tight. A mother’s arms are strong when her child is in danger.”

Relate these images to Kant’s notion of dignity, respect, and the Kingdom of Ends and to Matt’s redemption as it’s relevant to Kant.

Guidelines
1. Once again, get right to work. No long introductions or background summaries. Make an outline of the 4-5 points you want to make and hang with those.
2. Write in your natural speaking voice. Read the paper out loud and edit.
3. Use the grammar guide. I’m now deducting points for repeat offenders.
Paper #5/ Philosophy 210E  
DUE Dec. 5 at the beginning of class  
Late papers will be recycled rather than graded  
2 full, double-spaced pages

The Assignment  
This is a more personal essay than the others. I’d like for you to write about someone you know well. So you don’t want to write about a fictional character or someone in the media or politics that you’ve merely read about. You might write about a family member, friend, or work colleague for example. Tell me how this person displays one, and only one, of the following of Aristotle’s virtues: self control, generosity, gentleness, or friendliness. More specifically, address the following in the essay.

1) Contrast the mean/virtue with the extremes.  
2) Talk a bit about the role of practical reason in choosing the mean.  
3) Show me that you understand how Aristotle is a contextualist (the idea that context determines the mean).  
4) Convince me that the person you’re writing about is virtuous and not just continent.  
5) Don’t just summarize Aristotle and then write a biography about the person you admire. Integrate the discussion of Aristotle with the character sketch. Use the person you write about to illustrate the points you’re making about Aristotle.  
6) Give me specifics about (a) the person you admire and (b) the virtue. Regarding the virtue, I’m looking for the kind of specificity that I gave in my lectures on these virtues. A gloss of the virtue and its vices won’t due. Regarding the person, tell some stories that show me that this individual is someone I should admire.

General Guidelines

1) Once again, I recommend you outline the main 5-6 points you want to make before you write. And hang with those points.  
2) Stay very focused and work with specifics that are relevant to the points you’re making.  
3) Don’t quote Aristotle. Put ideas into your own words. Pretend you’re teaching this to a 3rd grader. (You may quote from the film.)  
4) Write multiple drafts. And read your work out loud. You will hear nongrammatical and awkward prose. Write in your natural speaking voice. Please don’t try to sound smart! You ARE smart. Trust yourself.  
5) Number your points so that I can follow your flow. This has worked really well in prior papers. (See paper #1 instructions.)  
6) I’ll deduct half a letter grade for grammatical errors and typos. Remember the grammar guide and look at your last paper to see which, if any, errors you made.  
7) Number pages.  
8) You’ll need to be concise and stay very focused to get the job done in 2 pages.
Writing Partner Check List

Formal Concerns

___ Is there a very short introduction that clearly reveals a thesis, the paper’s position?

___ Are the sentences clear and substantive?

___ Are there run-on sentences, fragments, or comma splices? If so indicate in the paper.

___ Did you find any sentences vague or confusing or that just don’t seem to say much? Indicate those in the paper.

___ Is the language flabby with extra verbiage and vague generalities or is it tough and precise? Indicate these problems.

Content

___ Does the writer use important terms properly?

___ Can you identify the argument’s reasons/supporting statements?

___ Does the conclusion follow from the reasons?

___ Did you find the argument persuasive?

___ What did the writer do well? List at least 2 things.

Having read the paper closely, recommend at least 3 concrete suggestions for improvement.
Phil 210E/Final Exam Terms and Questions
The exam is on 12/10 from 1:10-3:10 in our usual classroom.
Please bring bluebooks.

I. Review the Following Terms
a) Consequentialism 
b) Deontology
c) Positive and negative duties
d) Perfect and imperfect duties 
e) omissions 
f) commissions 
g) act and rule utilitarianism 
h) categorical imperative 
i) per Kant: reason, law, duty, good will, autonomy/freedom 
j) per Aristotle: virtue, vice, continence, incontinence, practical wisdom 
k) rights and duties 
l) marginal utility—Singer

II. Exam Questions: Write 2 solid standard-sized notebook pages per question.
1) What does Peter Singer mean by “marginal utility” and why would an act utilitarian like Bentham or Singer hold us responsible for our omissions? Here be sure to define act utility, omissions, and marginal utility. You don’t need to summarize Singer’s entire essay. I’m largely looking to see that you understand why the act utilitarian might hold us responsible for what we fail to do.

2) Mill brings up rule utilitarianism in two places: (a) See the complaint in chapter 2 about the difficulty of performing the calculus, and (b) In chapter 5 he’s trying to patch together a viable utilitarian conception of justice. Explain how rule utility might be useful to him here. Be sure you understand the difference between act utility and rule utility and explain it at the beginning of your essay.

3) Discuss Nozick’s complaint with utility. Relate this to Kant’s view on happiness and the moral good. Remember, the Kantian is not motivated by happiness.

4) (a) Why would Kant object to race or gender prejudice under any circumstances? (b) Would a utilitarian ever defend discrimination on the basis of race or gender?

5) (a) Why does Aristotle say that young people have trouble being virtuous, finding the mean? (b) How do they learn to become virtuous? (c) How do we ever know when we’re virtuous? (d) Relate to one of the virtues we discussed in class. Spend considerable effort of part (d).

6) A survivor in the film Weapons of the Spirit says that human beings are fundamentally good but that we have the potential to be fundamentally bad. (a) Relate this view of human nature and of the human condition to the secular view expressed by Professor Levi in the film Crimes and Misdemeanors. (b) What do you think of this view?
7) M.L. Kirg and Jack Turner have a lot to say about moral apathy. Explain, and then relate to Pierre Sauvage's claim that immoral laws should be "cheerfully broken." Do you agree or not? Why?