GROSSMONT COLLEGE

Official Course Outline

PHILOSOPHY 140 – PROBLEMS IN ETHICS

1. Course Number Course Title Semester Units Semester Hours

PHIL 140 Problems in Ethics 3 3 hours lecture: 48-54 hours

96-108 outside-of-class hours

144-162 total hours

2. Course Prerequisites

None.

Corequisite

None

Recommended Preparation

None.

3. Catalog Description

This course is an introduction to ethics in theory and in practice. This study involves the exploration of moral theories and principles in order to see how they apply to the individual and society. We will critically examine some of the major schools of moral thought in Western philosophy, as well as some in Eastern philosophy. These theories will be applied to some of the primary ethical problems that we face, as individuals and as societies, and will continue to confront.

4. Course Objectives

The student will:

a. Comprehend and critique the major ethical theories in Western philosophy.

b. Distinguish between moral and non-moral issues such as the difference between personal values and social ethics.

c. Comprehend the difference between moral theories and moral principles, in order to realize that principles can be divorced from theories.

(1) Deconstruct ethical theories so that they may be able to reconstruct more satisfactory ethical theories.

(2) Define the meanings of moral terms, such as “good,” “right,” and “duty.”

d. Distinguish moral considerations from non-moral considerations when assessing a moral problem. They will differentiate between normative statements and descriptive statements.

e. Examine and evaluate all sides of a moral dilemma.

f. Analyze any moral problem into its relevant components.

g. Coherently discuss some of the major moral problems that we face as a society today. They will begin to grasp the breadth and depth of all sides of any moral issue and construct a more reasonable response.

h. Apply the relevant moral principles and reasoning to the various moral problems that we face.

i. Analyze consistency in their moral reasoning through written essays, and hopefully continue to develop this reasoning throughout their lives.

5. Instructional Facilities

Standard lecture classroom

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6. Special Materials Required of Student

None.

7. Course Content

a. Meta-ethical issues.

(1) The subject of ethics.

(2) The language of moral philosophy.

(3) Free will and egoism.

(4) Cultural and moral relativism.

b. Classical western ethical perspectives.

(1) Greek virtue ethics.

(2) Kantian ethics of duty.

(3) Utilitarianism.

c. Classical eastern ethical perspectives.

(1) Confucianism.

(2) Buddhism.

(3) Taoism.

(4) Hinduism.

d. Contemporary moral issues. We will apply theoretical moral reasoning to some of the more pressing problems that we face in the world today, as individuals and as societies such as the following:

(1) The treatment of non-human animals.

(2) Cloning.

(3) Capital punishment.

(4) Suicide and euthanasia.

(5) Ethics in the media.

(6) Environmental ethics.

(7) Technology.

8. Method of Instruction

a. Lecture and discussion.

b. Group work.

c. Field trip to places such as the San Diego Center for Ethics in Science and Technology.

d. Individual instruction.

9. Methods of Evaluating Student Performance

a. Class participation.

b. Projects (in-class and outside assignments).

c. Quizzes, essay exams, and final exam.

d. Critical reflection papers on moral issues

e. Term paper evaluating moral issues and/or theories.

10. Outside Class Assignments

a. Read works concerning moral philosophy, in both theory and application.

b. Writing assignments may take the form of short or long papers and/or take home exams. The writing will apply critical thinking concepts.

c. Students may participate in collaborative class projects or be expected to do research. For example, students participate in activities for One-Campus/One-Theme events.

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11. Texts

a. Required Text(s):

(1) Rachels, James, and Stuart Rachels. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* 6th ed. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 2014.

(2) Solomon, Robert C. et al. *Morality and The Good* *Life* 5th ed. 7th ed, New York, NY. McGraw Hill, 2014.

(3) Wolff, Jonathan. *Readings in Moral Philosophy*, 18th ed., New York, NY, W.W. Norton & Company, 2018.

b. Supplementary texts and workbooks:

Study packets compiled by the instructor.

Addendum: Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, our students will be able to do the following:

* 1. Master fundamental ethical concepts and terminology through engagement with philosophical literature.
  2. Understand the main divisions within ethics.
  3. Apply the main ethical justifications for action.

Date approved by the Governing Board: December 11, 2018