DPLS 746 Leadership & Applied Ethics

Spring 2011 2 Credits
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Dates: Fridays from 6-10PM; Jan 14, 28, Feb. 11, 25, March 4
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NOTE THE READING ASSIGNMENT FOR THE FIRST SESSION ON JANUARY 14.
P'EASE COME TO THE FIRST MEETING PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE BLUM AND NUSSBAUM ARTICLES pp. 4-22 IN THE TEXT

Text
• Applied Ethics: A Multicultural Approach, 5th edition, ed. Larry May, Kai Wong, Jill Delston (Available in the Gonzaga University Bookstore and online; be sure to obtain the 5th edition)

General Description of the Course’s Content
The moral philosopher is not satisfied with the world “as it is,” but always seeks to point the way to a world that is “as it ought to be.” Nor is the philosopher content to allow political persuasion to be the last word on moral issues. A philosopher’s response to practical moral issues has two sides; it is first a clear description of the rights and wrongs in regard to the issue and second, a judgment (a prescription) about the best course of action that will enhance what is right and diminish what is wrong. Without question, all ethical approaches are idealistic, since they seek to raise ideas about right over realities that are judged to be wrong.

Applied ethics is driven by an idealistic hope for a “better world” because it refuses to be content with accepting the world as it is. At the same time, applied ethics must attempt to be “as practical as possible” in its idealistic remedies for what is wrong with the world. It needs to maintain its love for the good without falling into a quixotic irrelevance in the world of daily life. A multicultural philosophical approach to moral issues is always philosophical. That is, it attempts to describe rights and wrongs in regard to an issue and then make a judgment about the best course of action. A multicultural approach recognizes that descriptions of rights and wrongs may vary depending upon the cultural perspective of the person providing the description. It also realizes that the prescription for moral improvement of the issue will vary depending, in part, upon the cultural background of the person making the judgment. To take a multicultural perspective in applied ethics is to pay attention to the descriptions and prescriptions of a variety of perspectives in regard to ethical issues alive in the world. It is not to be assumed that various cultures in themselves “have” moral perspectives shared by all who live in them. Obviously, people of a given culture disagree with each other about moral issues. Nor is it the case that one cultural perspective has per se a privileged philosophical perspective on any moral issue. No matter what the perspective, the value of the perspective lies within the descriptions and prescriptions it provides. That value can only be determined by a reflective and informed dialogue that seeks the good.
The Course’s Anticipated Outcomes
The anticipated outcome of the course is your successful application of leadership values to the various issues studied. Success in this venture is predicated on your grasp of the philosophical arguments and insights provided in the readings. This grasp is demonstrated in class discussion, your report, and your final paper.

How the Course Reaches its Anticipated Outcomes
The anticipated outcome of the course is reached in three ways. First, you are expected to read all assigned material and participate in each session’s discussions. Second, you are responsible for reporting on the readings assigned you for one session. Third, you need to compose a final paper (18 pages) that provides a thorough exposition of those same readings and concludes with a practical moral response that takes all perspectives in those readings into account. This practical moral response is from a leadership perspective; describe your prescription. Please cite all references APA style. In a nutshell, you are expected to master the multicultural perspectives on one of the issues and come to a conclusion that exhibits your decision from a leadership perspective.

Session Schedule
6:00-6:15 Informal discussions
6:15-7:30 Student report
7:30-7:45 Break
7:50-9:05 Student report
9:05-9:15 Break
9:15-10:00 Class Discussion Assignments Reports You work with a partner on your report. If the class has an odd number of students, one student will either work alone or will work on a complex issue with two other students. At any rate, it is up to the partners to decide how they will divide the work, give the report, and assist all of us in understanding the various perspectives on the issue.

The reports have three components:
• Summaries – explain the main ideas in the assigned readings; this is your main task
• Criticism – point out how you feel about the readings in regard to their coherence, clarity, and moral point of view; tell us which readings you find most worthwhile, and why
• Response – bring the rest of us into a discussion of the readings and the issues addressed by them The summary and criticism should be written in a narrative format, copied, and handed out to each of us. This will allow us to keep track of the various readings and enrich our discussions. The summaries and criticism will vary in length, but most likely you will need and average of two pages for each article in the section. In addition, the summary and criticism should be very helpful to you in composing your final paper. You may want to research outside material in order to provide a good report and/or final paper. You may also want to make use of the Blum and Nussbaum articles in the introduction to the text. However, the main point of the seminar is to work with the readings assigned and to show a leadership perspective on the issues. The course is not so much interested in theoretical approaches but in taking an applied moral approach.
Reading Assignments
Reports will be on the following readings on the assigned dates. Every student is assigned to read the assignment before the class session. Please come to class having already read the entire assignment in preparation for discussion.


• **January 28** War and Violence, pp. 259-313.

• **February 11** Gender Roles and Morality, pp. 315-369.

• **February 25** Abortion, pp.427-480

• **March 4** Euthanasia, Sustaining, and Creating Life, pp. 481-575

• The final paper is due Friday, **March 18**. Please email the paper as an attachment to the email address on this syllabus.