DPLS 746 Feminist Ethics

Spring 2012  2 Credits
Saturdays 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Jan. 14, Jan. 28, Feb. 11, Feb. 25, Mar. 10
INSTRUCTOR: Mimi Marinucci, Ph.D.
EMAIL ADDRESS: mmarinucci@ewu.edu

CONTACT INFORMATION: You are welcome to contact me privately with questions or concerns that cannot be addressed in class. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Do not ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus.
- Do not ask me to estimate your course grade.
- If you have questions about the material, raise them in class for the benefit of all students.
- Questions that require an immediate response should be handled in person.
- Please include the course title in the subject line of all email correspondence.
- Please sign all messages with your first and last name.
- I accept assignments by email only with prior approval under special circumstances.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will begin with a brief examination of the treatment of women within traditional ethics. We will then address the views of some early women philosophers and feminist philosophers, followed by a close analysis of contemporary feminist approaches to ethics including the ethics of care and ecofeminism.

COURSE GOALS: You should develop an appreciation for the kinds of questions that underlie both mainstream and feminist ethics. In addition, you should become sufficiently familiar with particular feminist ethical theories to articulate their content and apply them in an analysis of mainstream ethical theories. Ideally, you will also begin to perform your own analysis by synthesizing compatible elements of different theories, entertaining original ideas, and adopting a theoretically viable and personally satisfying perspective on moral issues for yourself.


COURSE GRADE: Reading summaries due at the beginning of class each week (excluding the first meeting) will each contribute 5% (20% total) toward your final course grade. Weekly reading summaries should provide a 2-3 page overview of the assigned text. Each text consists of a collection of essays by different authors. Plan to devote about one paragraph to each (or at least most) of the assigned essays in each text. Reading summaries are due at the beginning of class. If you are unable to attend, you can earn credit for reading summaries submitted prior to the
beginning of the relevant class period, but you will not earn credit for late reading summaries. Reading summaries will be loosely graded ("good," "good enough," or "not good enough"). 60% of your final course grade will be determined by your grades for your best three (out of four possible) 5-7 page discussion papers in which you address an issue or topic of your choosing from each text. You will have the opportunity to write discussion papers on each of the four texts, but you may skip one without penalty. Discussion papers are due via email (mmarinucci@ewu.edu) by noon on the Saturday following each regularly scheduled class meeting (excluding the first meeting). Refer to the paper guidelines distributed the first week of class for additional information. The remaining 20% of your final grade will be determined by your attendance and participation. Your attendance grade (10%) will be calculated as a straightforward percentage of the classes you attend. Your participation grade (10%) will reflect the degree to which you enhance the quality of the course by asking appropriate questions, offering relevant insights, and supporting your classmates in their efforts to learn the material.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: I accept late assignments only under very special circumstances and with an appropriate reduction in grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: While collaboration and cooperation are encouraged, cheating is legally and morally wrong. If you do not know the difference, please see me immediately. Should the need arise, I will determine the appropriate response to academic dishonesty, or suspicion thereof, on a case-by-case basis. I may elect to take action at the university level, and I may impose consequences up to or including a failing course grade.

UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES: Please see me immediately if you believe that your personal situation warrants adjustments in the course requirements. I may require documentation.

IMPORTANT DATES: Please note the following dates and adjust your schedule as needed. Also note that specific reading assignments will be announced in class.
1/14 Review Syllabus; Discuss Readings*
1/28 Discuss Justice & Care; Reading Summary Due (at the beginning of class)
2/4 Justice & Care Discussion Paper Due (by email, by noon)
2/11 Discuss Ecofeminism; Reading Summary Due (at the beginning of class)
2/18 Ecofeminism Discussion Paper Due (by email, by noon)
2/25 Discuss Feminists Doing Ethics; Reading Summary Due (at the beginning of class)
3/3 Feminists Doing Ethics Discussion Paper Due (by email, by noon)
3/10 Discuss Global Feminist Ethics; Reading Summary Due (at the beginning of class)
3/17 Global Feminist Ethics Discussion Paper Due (by email, by noon)
*You are expected to access and read excerpts (Introduction, Ch II, Ch XIII) from Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Woman (http://bartleby.com/144/), Mill's Subjection of Women (http://constitution.org/jsm/women.htm), and excerpts (Introduction, Conclusion) from Beauvoir's Second Sex (http://marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/index.htm) in advance of our first meeting on 1/14.