

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: Ethics (PHL.310)
Credits: 3 Credits
Instructor: Gabriela Dragnea Horvath; dragnea@gonzaga.edu



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OFFICE HOURS: THURSDAY, 10:00-11:00

SCHEDULE: MON, TUE, THU, 11:30 -13:00

ROOM: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The human capacity to discern between right or wrong, just and unjust has always been crucial for personal happiness, professional accomplishment, social and political balance. In our epoch, moral choices can have global consequences in finance, economy, conflicts, health, environment, they can involve the destiny of millions of people and ultimately the very survival of humanity. The course conceives ethics not only as a personal code of good behaviour, but as an instrument to engage in the promotion of values and their transmission to the coming generations.

It is divided into two parts.

- **Part 1** focuses on ethical axioms instrumental to building up a set of personal values and goals and evaluating the proper means to attain them. The text under study is Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the issues - excellence, virtues and vices, values and criteria of defining them, justice and injustice, practical wisdom, judgement, friendship.
- **Part 2** examines the application of Aristotle's ethical axioms in a Christian context, more specifically in Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*. The students will have thus the opportunity to connect deeper to the cultural past of the city of Florence and the ethical issues that occupied the mind of its greatest poet. The discussions on the Divine Comedy will be related to contemporary dilemmas in a compare-contrast perspective.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- to enrich the students' philosophical culture
- to give them a historical perspective of ethical urgencies, by connecting them to the problems of the Florentines in the Middle Ages.
- to help them understand the importance of a well-assimilated, well-motivated and coherent ethical system for a good life.
- to refine their skills of critical analysis and reinforce their discernment, by assisting them in approaching an issue from various points of view.
- to increase their sense of responsibility versus their own selves, the world they live in and the future.

TEACHING METHOD

Sessions consist in a brief introductory lecture, text analysis, oral and/or written reports and debates. The students are expected to read the texts in advance, following certain guidelines and present written and/or oral reports. Group work in class is also included.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students are expected to:

- develop their critical faculties and abandon emotionally motivated opinions in favor of logically grounded argumentation
- distinguish between genuine and false values, justified behavior and strategies of self-justification
- have a deeper appreciation of their social commitment
- make a balanced use of imagination and rationality in evaluating the possible consequences of moral deliberation.
- improve their ability to write a well-articulated, limpid argumentation.

GRADING AND OTHER POLICIES

The final grade takes into account the following requirements:

Oral reports, reading assignments, debate capacity – 40%

Due on the dates designated in the syllabus, the assignments will be checked by oral and/or written reports, group work in class and unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. There is no make-up possibility for missed quizzes. As philosophy is an activity, participation in class debate is essential for a high grade. This percentage includes attendance and deportment. **(10%)**

Regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Arriving late will lower your grade; two arrivals behind schedule will count as an absence. Absences are considered as such, excused or unexcused. It is the students' responsibility to make up for missed classes. More than five absences will result in an F for the course. More than four will result in an F for attendance and participation.

Participation means bringing the reading material to class and the written reports when required, presenting oral reports of readings, being active in debates and group work. Participation also refers to regular behaviour in class, thus the evaluation of attendance and participation includes deportment.

Deportment

Mutual respect is essential for a good collaboration. Being physically present, but doing things that have nothing to do with the class (listening to music, checking emails, private conversation, etc) will have a negative effect on the grade. Disrupting behaviour will be

followed by warning and/or dismissal from class and will result in a D or F for attendance and participation and/or dismissal from class. Food and beverages are not accepted in class. Cell phones must be off.

Essay– counts 30 %

Delivery Date- June 28

The essay consists in the articulated and convincing treatment of a topic pertinent to the course, with a clear formulation of the ethical issue to be investigated and an equally clear conclusion. As ethics is applied philosophy, students are expected to address ethical theory and concrete examples in a balanced manner. The topic has to be screened and approved by the professor.

On the delivery date hard copies typed in standard format are to be handed in to the professor at the beginning of class and an electronic copy readable by Word-Windows or Microsoft Word is to be submitted by email.

Standard format: Title, aprox. 4-5 pages Times New Roman, 12, 2 line spacing, Bibliography

Essays submitted late will receive a grade penalty as follows: 1 day—1 letter grade (e.g., A- to B-), 2 days—2 letter grades (e.g., A- to C-), more than 2 days—grade of 0 / F on the assignment.

The evaluation is done according to the following criteria:

- well formulated argument (rhetorical strategy)
- ability to approach an issue from various points of view and evaluate them critically
- good use of bibliography. Sources need to be cited and listed at the end in the Bibliography. Class notes can build the frame of your argumentation, but will not be cited as primary sources.
- clarity of expression including quality of style (grammar, spelling).

Academic honesty

Academic honesty is essential to education. As students expect professional deontology from their professor, so does the professor expect honesty and genuine intellectual engagement from the student. Academic dishonesty is *any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise*. It includes unauthorized assistance in tests and examinations; internationally impeding or damaging the academic work of others; submitting another person's work as your own, or providing work for this purpose; submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing an editing service for others; submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference; paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation; submitting substantially the same piece of work in more than one course without the explicit consent of all the instructors concerned; assisting other students in any of the above acts.

Students who are academically dishonest will receive “0”, zero on the work in question or a failing grade for the course as a whole, depending on the importance of the work to the overall course grade and the judgment of the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to submit copies of student written work to a plagiarism detection site such as TurnItIn.com.

Final Exam – count 30 %

- **Final exam – Friday, June 29**
- a written test consisting in:
 1. two questions out of four on two fragments chosen from the readings (50 points)
 2. an essay (no less than one page) on a larger ethical topic (50 points).

Special Accommodation

Requirements of special accommodation due to specific problems are to be notified on the first day of class.

REQUIRED READINGS

- Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics (Oxford World's Classics)* [Paperback] Aristotle (Author), Lesley Brown (Editor), David Ross (Translator)
ISBN-10: 0199213615
ISBN-13: 978-0199213610
- Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno* [Paperback], verse translation by Robert Hollander (Translator), Jean Hollander (Translator).
ISBN-10: 0385496982
ISBN-13: 978-0385496988

INTERNET RESOURCES available as supplementary support for essays:

- **JSTOR**
- **Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy**
- **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE

PART I ETHICAL AXIOMS IN ARISTOTLE

Class 1 Monday, May 21

- Introduction to the course. Circumscribing concepts like ethos, ethics, morality, immorality.

Class 2 Tuesday, May, 22

- Seeking the good.
- Reading: Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, 1-7

Class 3 Wednesday, May 23

- How to acquire happiness.
- Reading: Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, 8-13

Class 4 Thursday, May 24

- Excellence and virtues 1
- Reading: Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, 1-6.

Class 5, Monday, May 28

- Excellence and virtues 2.
- Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, 7-9

Class 6, Tuesday, May 29

- Action and moral deliberation.
- Reading: Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, 1-7

Class 7, Wednesday, May 30

- Courage and self-indulgence
- Reading: Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, 8-12

Class 8, Thursday, May 31

- Prodigality, magnificence, pride.
- Reading: Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IV

Class 9 Monday, June 4

- Justice and Unjustice, 1
- Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V, 1-6

Class 10 Tuesday, June 5

- Justice and Unjustice, 2.
- Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V, 7-12.

Class 11 Wednesday, June 6

- Practical wisdom and judgement.
- Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI

Class 12 Thursday, June 7

- On vice, incontinence and brutishness.
- Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VII

Class 13 Monday, June 11

- On friendship.
- Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII

Class 14 Tuesday, June 12

- On friendly relations.
- Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IX

Class 15 Wednesday, June 13

- On pleasure.

- Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X

Class 16 Thursday, June 14

- **ARISTOTLE – REVIEW**

PART II CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN DANTE

Class 17 Monday, June 18

- Introduction to the *Divine Comedy* and Dante's ethical sources
- Reading: Dante, *The Inferno*, Cantos I, II, III

Class 18 Tuesday, June 19

- Circles 1,2,3: Limbo, Lust, Gluttony
- Reading: Dante, *The Inferno*, Cantos IV, V, VI

Class 19 Wednesday, June 20

- Circles 4,5,6: avarice, prodigality, anger and sullenness
- Reading: Dante, *The Inferno*, Cantos VII, VIII, X-XI

Class 20 Thursday, June 21

- Circle 7: violence against others, self, God
- Reading: Dante, *The Inferno*, Cantos XII, XIII, XIV

Class 21 Monday, June 25

- Sodomy, usury. Circle 8: seducers, flatterers, hypocrites, thieves
- Reading: Dante, *The Inferno*, Cantos XV, XVII, XVIII

Class 22 Tuesday, June 26

- Simony, baratry, false counsellors,
- Reading: Dante, *The Inferno*, Cantos XIX, XXI, XXVI

Class 23 Wednesday, June 27

- Violence against relatives, party or homeland, guests, rightful lords
- Reading: Dante, *The Inferno*, Cantos XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV

Class 24 Thursday, June 28

- **EXAM REVIEW + Essay Delivery**

Class 25 Friday, June 29 – **FINAL EXAM**