PHIL 301: ETHICS  
Gonzaga-in-Florence  
Spring Semester 2017  
Dr. Patrick Burke

Presuppositions:

As a course in the Core Curriculum, ETHICS is based on the proposition that human kind has the capacity to develop normative standards for the conduct of human life through reasoned and consistent arguments. Further, it holds to the conviction that the construction of a rational ethical standard is compatible with and not contradictory to one's religious beliefs.

Several forms of human knowledge will be analysed in this course as they pertain to moral reasoning and value formation:

a) philosophical views about human nature and the human person and how these affect normative standards.
b) socio-economic and political presuppositions of the culture,
c) scientific and empirical information about human persons and human societies (the contributions of modern bio-genetic, psychological, cross-cultural and anthropological as well as sociological research).

Core Theme, Goals, and General Outcomes:

As a course in the Gonzaga University Core Curriculum, this course has the overall objective of fostering in the students an intellectual and practical commitment to the theme of responsibility and service. This means that a central goal of this course will be to engender in the students a responsibility for and a commitment to the common good of the human community which a person educated in the Catholic Jesuit tradition is expected to embrace. Further, by the end of the course, students will have engaged not merely in values clarification but in the serious intellectual work which the construction of an ethical framework requires so as to make their own contribution to the articulation of moral standards for the global human community.

Specific Outcomes:

As an advanced course in Philosophy (300 level), it has twin outcomes

a) in terms of skills, by the end of the course, the student will have developed and sharpened his or her critical/analytic, synthetic/interpretive, and interrogative/imagination skills in the field of philosophical ethics, and

b) in terms of content, by the end of the course, the student will be able to

i. articulate and demonstrate a sympathetic yet critical understanding of the contributions from several competing philosophical traditions to the discussion of a range of moral issues,

ii. articulate and demonstrate the contributions of contemporary culture, science, religion, and other sources of wisdom to determining the meaning and value of the human person and to the formulation of ethical frameworks for moral problem solving,
to articulate and demonstrate his/her own critical contribution to an adequate ethical framework relative to a range of moral issues affecting the globalization of the human community and his or her local community.

**Required Texts:**

- **The Elements of Moral Philosophy** by James and Stuart Rachels, 8th edition or even the 7th or 6th edition.
- **The Right Thing To Do: Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy** by James and Stuart Rachels, 7th edition or even the 6th edition.
- **Contemporary Ethics Reader**, compiled by Dr. Burke (available in Florence)

**Course Requirements:**

1. *Class attendance:* we will observe Gonzaga-in-Florence’s policy regarding absences (see attached policy below). Please be mindful that it is distracting to the professor and the other students for persons to be tardy.
2. *Careful reading* of the assigned pages prior to each class session and thorough review of class notes. The *semester schedule* with selected readings will be distributed on the first day of class.
3. *Active participation* in class discussions through observations, thoughtful questions, and offering of one’s own insights. Besides oral contributions, other methods of participation will be offered, such as required written responses to questions dealing with selected readings, short in-class exams, and the keeping of a journal. Directions for journal are attached below. **No use of laptops, cell phones, or other electronic communication devices during class.**
4. Mid-term and final essay examinations.
5. *Position paper* of no more than 10 pages in length on a contemporary moral issue seriously affecting the human community. The essay must reflect, in part, the reading material assigned for the course. Specific directions for the paper (attached below) are to be observed rigorously. The final draft of the paper is due on the last formal class day.

**Course Grade:**

The course is scored on a 500 point scale, as follows:

- 100 points -------------- mid-term examination
- 150 points -------------- final examination
- 150 points -------------- position paper [including preliminary drafts]
- 100 points -------------- class participation [includes journal or written response to various question sets] See journal guidelines below

**Office Hours:** *by appointment only.* Generally, Dr. Burke will be available immediately after class to discuss pertinent issues for the position paper and any other aspect of the course. He will also be
available for review sessions outside class time prior to the examinations. Make appointments to see him immediately after class or at some other congenial time.

**Directions for Final Paper**

The paper can be either a research paper or one of a strictly personal nature or somehow both, but in any case it must make significant use of the texts of the course and reflect the learning objectives of the course.

1. Select an issue that pertains to the themes or problematics of the course.
2. State the issue in the form of a question
3. Define the key terms of the issue without begging the question. Examples of the latter: abortion is the unjustified taking of an innocent human life.
4. State the range of positions on the issue.
5. State what position you take on the issue.
6. Develop the best arguments in favor of your position.
7. Discuss the ethical framework that justifies these arguments.
8. Discuss the theory of the human person or the origin of human rights that justifies the ethical framework on which your arguments are founded.
9. Show how your arguments succeed in the face of the best counter-arguments to your position.
10. Conclude

**Guidelines for Journal Writing**

Since participation is worth 100 points toward the final grade, and since the class is too large to accommodate universal oral participation, and since the subjects addressed are often of such a personal nature that one hesitates to volunteer, and, finally, since preparation is a necessary condition for effective participation in the course, it is strongly recommended that students keep a comprehensive journal consisting of

- Responses to all formal discussion questions
- Responses to special writing assignments
- Notes pertaining to the various readings
- Class notes
- Observations pertinent to the course material made while traveling to various places in Europe, e.g., the use of sex in billboard advertising, manifestations of permissiveness or repressiveness such as legalized prostitution, indications of sexism, etc.
- Notes for final draft of paper

All of these items will indicate the level of your ongoing engagement in the course and help to contribute to your final participation grade. Journals will be graded only at the end of the course as part of the determination of the grade for participation.

**A NOTE ON HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:**

Consistent with its mission, Gonzaga seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX and Gonzaga’s policy prohibit harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct. Gonzaga encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in the Student Code of Conduct Website: [http://www.gonzaga.edu/Student-Life/Community-Standards/Student-Code-of-Conduct.asp](http://www.gonzaga.edu/Student-Life/Community-Standards/Student-Code-of-Conduct.asp) about what happened so they can get the support they need and Gonzaga can respond appropriately. There are both confidential and non-confidential resources and reporting options available to you. Gonzaga is legally obligated to respond to reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, unless made to a confidential resource. Responses may vary from support services to formal investigations. As a faculty member, I am required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following websites: [www.gonzaga.edu/eo](http://www.gonzaga.edu/eo) and [www.gonzaga.edu/titleix](http://www.gonzaga.edu/titleix).
NOTICE TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/MEDICAL CONDITIONS:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation for their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability/medical condition requiring an accommodation, please call or visit the Disability Access office (room 209 Foley Library, 509-313-4134).

Gonzaga in Florence Attendance Policy (effective Fall Semester 2013)

Attendance is taken at the beginning of class from the first day of the semester. The student entering class after attendance is taken has to contact the professor at the end and announce his/her presence. However, this does not mean that coming late is accepted. Two late arrivals may be excused, three turn automatically into an absence and will affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade.

Students can miss one week's work, irrespective of the course formula (three sessions, two sessions, one session). It is their responsibility to make up for the missed work. If they miss a quiz or a report they are not allowed to have it at another time, unless the absence is for certified medical reasons and the professor and Director agree.

More than one week's work missed is going to be penalized as follows:

One extra absence:
1. by lowering the attendance and participation grade as determined by the professor

Two extra absences
2. by lowering the final grade by a whole letter grade

Three extra absences
3. by grading the whole course F

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Academic honesty is expected of all Gonzaga University students. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and theft. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty is subject to disciplinary action, which may include, but is not limited to, (1) a failing grade for the test or assignment in question, (2) a failing grade for the course, or (3) a recommendation for dismissal from the University. (See also “Academic Honesty” on page 67 of the University’s online catalogue: http://www.gonzaga.edu/catalogues/PDF-archive/2014-2015UGCatalogue.pdf)

COURSE EVALUATION:

At Gonzaga, we take teaching seriously, and we ask our students to evaluate their courses and instructors so that we can provide the best possible learning experience. In that spirit, we ask students to give us feedback on their classroom experience near the end of the semester. I will ask you to take a few minutes then to carry out course/instructor evaluation on-line. Please know that I appreciate your participation in this process. This is a vital part of our efforts at Gonzaga to improve continually our teaching, our academic programs, and our entire educational effort.