

Applied Social and Political Ethics

Meets: W 1-3.30

Room: Knowles Chapel 2

Professor: Julia Maskivker

Office: CSS 236

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Office Hours: T/R: 12.30-2

Political Science

Ethics is philosophical thinking about morality and moral problems. It attempts to arrive at an understanding of how we ought to live and what constitutes right conduct. It is concerned with questions about what would constitute good *reasons* for acting one way rather than another, and about what constitutes a good life for human beings.

This course will provide an overview of the most current and controversial issues that can be analyzed through the lens of different ethical theories. In particular, this class will be a class on **applied (social and political) ethics**. Although we will provide an overview of the most fundamental discussions in the realm of **normative ethics** and **meta-ethics** (the conceptual tools needed to understand more focused discussions) this class will focus on particular social and political problems of actual societies.¹ This approach, thus, will make discussions quite practical. Critical and **analytically rigorous** reasoning will be key to understanding the main confrontations and ideas, however. We will study moral judgments for and against certain particular issues such as **abortion**,

¹ As will be clear in the course, normative ethics asks questions about what we should do, or how we should behave, and provides different theoretical frameworks to orient us (the most basic distinction being the one between deontological and consequentialist theories). Meta-ethics deals with questions about the nature of ethics itself: Is it an objective or a subjective pursuit? What is the nature of "goodness"? How is goodness related to human nature and psychology? Applied ethics is the exploration of particular issues and problems in the light of the theories usually examined in normative ethics. **Applied social or political ethics focuses on issues that command the attention of social and political theorists and philosophers, that is, issues that concern life in common and the cooperative rules of society.**

the death penalty, affirmative action, immigration, the ethics of voting, food politics and genetically modified products, multiculturalism and women's rights, (redistributive) taxation, the justness of war, world hunger relief, healthcare as a right, and so forth. These are all issues that motivate heated debates in current liberal democracies. In this class, we will try to understand the analytical and reasoned arguments often invoked to justify or reject them. Many of those arguments are oftentimes used (in a simplified fashion) in the political arena or the media more generally. We will be primarily concerned with the **analytical and logical soundness of diverse moral arguments, primordially.**

Requirements

Three exams, Three presentations.

This is an upper level seminar-type class. It will consist of informed and interactive discussion among students and the professor, for which high motivation is needed.

Percentages

Exam 1: 25 %

Exam 2: 25 %

Op-ed 3: 25 %

Presentations: 25 %

Academic Integrity

You must become familiar with Rollins' Academic Honor Code. You can find the code online at: http://www.rollins.edu/studentrecords/main/academic_regulations.html Please read the honor pledge and learn what constitutes an honor code violation, especially as regards cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism is intellectual theft and you must know what constitutes it to avoid it. Failing to cite sources or incorrectly citing your sources constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism can be unintentional, but it should be punished regardless of intention since it devalues academic quality, and irrevocably damages the credibility of the individual responsible for it. Because of this, please refrain from committing it, by getting familiarized with the honor code.

Evaluation Criteria

In this class, average work earns a C. If the student writes an acceptable exam, and fulfills all the other assignments for the class, she will receive a C. Students receiving an A will have written an excellent exam, or set thereof, participated actively in class, and fulfilled all the other requisites for the course equally satisfactorily. A B range grade will be awarded for students who fulfill the criteria for a C, but their written assignments are of superior quality. The participation grade will be based upon the quality and quantity of participation. For this reason, it is advisable that you carefully reflect on what you are going to contribute to the class. The superior A grade will be awarded to students

who regularly offer insightful comments. Coming to my office hours also contributes to a good grade for this class. Excessive absences will make it impossible for you to receive a grade above the C range. (they can also make you fail the class).

Late Paper and Email Policy

I do not accept late papers or allow make-up work for no justified reasons. I expect to receive papers on time. I do not accept work that is emailed to me. No exceptions. You must give me a paper copy of your essays in class.

Attendance Policy

Your attendance in every class session is essential. *You are allowed a total of four absences.* Each absence over the specified limits will result in the final grade being dropped 1/3 of a letter. Therefore, if your final numerical grade is equivalent to a B-, and you have five absences, your final grade for the course would drop to a C+. Arriving after attendance has been taken counts as one half of an absence. You should save your absences for dire emergencies or serious illnesses. Meetings, job interviews, or early departures for weekend trips are not excused and will count as absences.

Disability Services Statement

Rollins College is committed to equal access and does not discriminate unlawfully against persons with disabilities in its policies, procedures, programs or employment processes. The College recognizes its obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide an environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability on this campus and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to participate in your classes, please make timely arrangements by disclosing this disability in writing to the Disability Services Office at (box 2613) - Thomas P. Johnson Student Resource Center, 1000 Holt Ave., Winter Park, FL, 32789. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 407-646-2354 or email: gridgey@rollins.edu

Core books for this course (available at the College Bookstore):

- *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, edited by Andrew Cohen et al. Blackwell Publishing, last edition
- *Global Justice, Seminal Essays, Volume One*, Edited by Thomas Pogge, Polity

Other materials will be posted on Blackboard

Schedule

1/14: **What is Ethics? Difference between Normative Ethics, Applied Ethics, and Meta-ethics.** Introduction to the syllabus.

1/21: **Ethical Theories:** Deontology, Utilitarianism, Virtue (care) Ethics: Keller article (bb) + Peters article (bb) + Introduction in Cohen book

1/28: **Abortion:** articles on Abortion in Cohen book + NYTimes article “on abortion and Redefining a person” +Thompson + Callahan articles on Abortion (BB)

2/4: **Capital Punishment:** articles in Cohen book + Bedau article on BB + Nytimes on death penalti (bb) +**Pornography:** articles in Cohen book

2/11: **Poverty and Beneficence:** Singer on affluence and famine (bb) + Murphy (bb) + Cohen chapter on world hunger (Wellman) + Pogge, ch 21

2/18 **Ethical concerns in technology Use (privacy rights, warfare, work):** Cohen chapters 2 (privacy rights) + 4 (bioethics) + “ military ethics and information warfare” article (bb) + “ technology and the future of work” article (bb)

2/25 Midterm

3/4 sprinbreak

3/11: **Ethics of Immigration:** immigration articles in Cohen book, + Carens article on immigration (bb) + pogge ch 8-10 + NYtimes articles on immigration (bb)

3/18: **The Problem of Dirty Hands in Politics:** Walzer on dirty hands (bb) + Walzer on Just war Theory (bb) + NYtimes articles on drones + Bell ch 19 (bb) + conditions on just war theory (bb)

3/25 **Morality of Markets:** Anderson on The Ethical Limitations of Markets (bb) + Sandel on What Money Can't Buy (bb)+ The morality of prostitution article (bb) + the morality of surrogacy article (bb) + Newspaper articles on organ markets (bb)

4/1 Midterm:

4/8 NY conference: **op-ed due**

4/15: **Healthcare:** Wolff article (bb) + Health II article (bb) + report on health in America (bb) + NYtimes article on the conservative case for Obama care (bb)

4/22: **Ethics of voting. A) No duty to vote:** Brennan polluting the polls (bb) + Berg on compulsory voting subverts dem (bb) **B) Duty to Vote:** Lacroix, Maskivker, Hill + Birch all on (bb)

Final: TBD