

Phil 160 C: Introduction to Ethics (Scientific Connections)

Fall 2009

Location: 119 Mary Lyon House • Time: Tu/Th 2:30-3:45

Instructor: Jeffrey Dunn
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Course Website: udrive.oit.umass.edu/phil160-jdunn/160Home.html

DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to ethics with a focus on ethical issues that arise in science. We will start with an introduction to leading theories in ethics about what makes actions right or wrong. Next we will consider some ethical questions concerning scientific practice. Some questions for investigation include:

- Is it acceptable to use humans as experimental subjects? Is it acceptable to use animals?
- Should scientists have complete freedom to pose any research question and investigate any research topic?
- What is the difference between fraud and incompetence and are either a moral matter?
- Is it morally permissible to ration healthcare resources?

We will conclude the course by looking at some things that science might be able to tell us about ethics. In particular, we'll look at some psychological experiments about moral intuitions, and consider what science has to say about notions such as character and virtue.

REQUIRED TEXT:

James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. (available at *Amherst Books*)
Various articles available online (linked from course website).

BASIC SCHEDULE:

(see course website for detailed schedule)

PART I: THEORETICAL ETHICS

Week 1	Introduction/Logic & Utilitarianism
Week 2	Utilitarianism
Week 3	Kant
Week 4	Social Contract & Rawls
Week 5	Theoretical Exam

PART II: ETHICAL ISSUES IN SCIENCE

Week 6	Human Experimentation
Week 7	Human Experimentation/Animal Research
Week 8	Animal Research/Fraud

Week 9	Fraud/Free Inquiry
Week 10	Free Inquiry/Rationing
Week 11	Rationing

PART III: SCIENTIFIC ISSUES IN ETHICS

Week 12	Ethical Intuitions and Psychology
Week 13	Ethical Intuitions and Psychology
Week 14	Virtue and Character
Finals Week	Final Exam

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Lectures:

You are expected to attend lectures, take detailed notes, and participate in class discussions. Attendance will often be taken, which will affect your attendance/participation grade.

Reading:

You are expected to complete the required reading for each class meeting, and come prepared to discuss the material and ask questions. Reading assignments will be announced in class and posted on the website.

Internet:

You are expected to have regular access to the internet to view the class schedule, and to view and print papers that are available on the internet.

Homework Assignments:

There will be frequent short homework assignments that you are expected to complete. The course calendar (online) gives the dates that these will be assigned and due. When calculating your total homework grade, your lowest grade will be dropped.

Theoretical Exam:

The theoretical exam for this course occurs approximately 1 month into the semester and is designed to test you on the material covered in Part I of this course. The exam will be given in class on Thursday, October 8.

Final Exam:

The final exam will be cumulative. The time and date of the final exam is scheduled by the university.

GRADING:

Your final grade for this course will be calculated based on the points you accumulate throughout the semester. There is a total of 200 points available. The points are broken down as follows:

<i>Homework Assignments:</i>	100 points
<i>Theoretical Exam:</i>	30 points
<i>Final Exam:</i>	60 points
<i>Attendance/Participation:</i>	10 points

LOGISTICAL INFORMATION:

Access to the course website requires a UMass ID and password. If you have difficulty accessing the site, please let me know.

The easiest way to access to course website is to go to:

people.umass.edu/jdunn/

Click on the “courses” link, and then click on the link for our course.

Many of our reading assignments are not available in our book. These articles are available online and are linked from the schedule on the course website. Some articles are available online, others are available through various databases (e.g., JSTOR) to which UMass has access. You must be on the UMass network to access some of these articles. If you are having trouble accessing any of these articles, please let me know.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

If you have a disability relevant to this course that you think that I should be aware of, please contact me as soon as possible.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense, and I take it very seriously. There is a clear Academic Honesty Policy that can be found here:

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/

It is your responsibility to read the university policy. If you are unclear about what academic dishonesty is, it is your responsibility to contact me with any questions so that you are clear about it. Ignorance is not an excuse. If I discover any instance of academic dishonesty, I will pursue the harshest penalty consistent with university policy.