Philosophy 3301: Ethics
Tom Pynn, Asst. Prof. of Philosophy
Coordinator of the Peace Studies Program
TR 6:30-7:45, Spring 2010


E-mail address: tpynn@kennesaw.edu to be used only for communication purposes. If you use
the email on Georgia View, there is a strong chance that I will not respond for days. You are to
use my KSU address. Exams submitted electronically without authorization will be deleted.

Course Description: Philosophy 3301 presents the student with an opportunity to engage in a
guided philosophical examination of the different questions, texts and concepts developed by
ethical thinkers from both Western and Non-Western cultures. The student reads primary works
of ethical philosophy and engages in thoughtful discussion about the ideas raised by and in these
works. Students take essay examinations, engage in class discussion, and view documentaries.
All in-class and out-of-class activities focus on elevating the student’s critical ability to read
philosophical texts, comprehend ethical concepts and conceptual frameworks of the philosophers
we study, and apply the ideas we study to their own self-understanding, other-understanding, and
understanding of the world they live in by speaking in class discussions and composing exam
essays.

Required Text
Michael C. Brannigan. Ethics Across Cultures: An Introductory Text with Readings

Highly Recommended: W. L. Reese, Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and
Western Thought or a reputable dictionary of philosophy either in print or on-line.

Evaluation: The student will demonstrate performative competence in communicating
(through writing and speaking) his/her understanding of the course material. Each exam
emphasizes a close reading of the texts we study. The student will not use outside sources or
secondary sources whether Internet, World Wide Web, journal, or book. If you want to use a
text in addition to the ones required for this course you must have it OK’d by the instructor.
Failure to cite outside sources on the exams, known as plagiarism, will result in an “F” for the
exam. Continued plagiarism will result in your being brought before the school judiciary. See
Academic Integrity Statement below. All exams are due when class begins. I will allow late
exams only if the student contacts me about the absence at least one week prior to the exam date
and/or if the student finds himself/herself in dire straits; e.g., giving birth, comatose,
hospitalization for an extended period of time, and, of course, being dead. A student may email
me their assignment(s) only if prior arrangements have been made with me. See section E-mail
address. The student must complete and turn in all exams in order to receive credit for the
course.

- 4 exams (80%) covering each section of study. Each exam reiterates what is done in class:
lecture, class discussion, and documentaries. The take-home essay exams are given out one
week prior to the due date. The exams emphasize close reading of texts, reasoning acuity,
and composition skills. No outside or secondary sources other than those studied in class are to be used.

- **Mike Ryan Lecture Series and/or Peace Studies Lecture Series or New York Times critiques:** (10%). You may choose either to attend five of the Mike Ryan and/or Peace Studies Lectures or compose critiques of 4 articles in the *New York Times*. See Georgia View for the critique guidelines. A combination of both lectures and summary is not an option. No partial credit. All lectures must be attended or all articles must be completed in order to receive credit for this component of the grade. Each critique is to be at least 500 words in a well-organized and developed composition. If you choose the NYT critique option, critiques are due no later than April 22, 2010. No critiques will be accepted after this date.

- **Class participation** (10%). Class participation is willingly and spiritedly engaging in reading aloud, asking questions and freely participating in discussion of the topics at hand with other students and instructor. Attendance is neither rewarded nor punished; however, students who miss class do not perform as competently as students who attend class on a regular basis.

**Extra credit:** You may acquire extra credit, but all exams must have been turned in to receive extra points. Extra credit is obtained by completing a 500-word response to any philosophically relevant film. See Georgia View for an explanation of what I want to read in a philosophical response. Each response you complete and submit is worth up to 5 points. Extra credit points will be added to the exam closest to the turn in date of your summary. There is no limit to the amount of responses one can turn in. All extra credit must be turned in no later than April 22, 2010.

*Nota Bene: All course work is to be typed in Times New Roman at 12 point, double-spaced, and in standard margins. I will not accept handwritten assignments. No covers or jackets or folders, please. The student must complete and turn in all exams in order to receive credit for the course. In each exam essay I am looking for: accurate presentation of the author’s ideas, use of relevant vocabulary items, your critique of the author’s ideas, accuracy of grammar, and college-level composition skills.

**Academic Integrity Statement:** Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an informal resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement.

**Absence Policy:** There are no excused absences in college. Students are responsible for making up class by conferring with classmates (i.e. getting notes, discussing the main topics of conversation). Instructors are neither expected to, nor encouraged to repeat class lectures for
student convenience. The student will neither be punished for absence, nor rewarded for presence; however, the student is responsible for material covered: all readings, lectures, and documentary presentations. I will allow late exams only if the student contacts me about the absence at least one week prior to the exam date and/or if the student finds himself/herself in dire straits; e.g., giving birth, comatose, hospitalization for an extended period of time, and, of course, being dead. A student may email me their assignment(s) only if prior arrangements have been made with me.

Plagiarism Policy: See student handbook. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please visit the writing center or see me during office hours. See Academic Integrity Statement.

Expected Outcomes: By the end of the semester the student will
- be familiar with the ethical concepts of the various philosophers, philosophical traditions and philosophical periods we have studied;
- be able to write philosophically on a variety of ethical topics;
- understand contemporary events within the purview of an ethical perspective;
- be able to apply the ideas we study to his/her life;
- understand the different contexts and criteria for ethics;
- have an understanding of the relation of ethics to a variety of (sub)cultures.

Schedule of Events.

Jan. 7: Introduction to Ethics: “The Ethics Alternative”

Jan. 12-Feb. 2: Classical Ethics Aretaic and Virtue Ethics
Jan. 28-Feb. 2: Case Study #2, 439.

Exam I due: Feb. 9, 2010

February 4-25: Islamic Ethics

Feb. 4-9: Introduction to Islam, 355-369
Feb. 11: Islam and Violence/ Ethics and Violence, 369-375
Feb. 16-23: 376-394
Feb. 25: Case Study #9, 457-8

Exam II due: March 4, 2010

March 16-April 6: Enlightenment Ethics: Deontology and Utilitarianism
March 16-23: Deontology: 99-140
March 25-30: Utilitarianism: 141-175
April 1-6: Case Study #441-442
Exam I due: Apr. 13, 2010

April 8-29: Buddhist Ethics
Apr. 8: Introduction to Buddhism; *The Four Noble Truths Sutra* (handout)
Apr. 13: The Four Noble Truths; 260-264,
Apr. 15: The Four Signs of Existence; 256-259
Apr. 20-22: Buddhist Political Ethics (278-284) and Case Study #19, 483-4
Apr. 27-9: *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter . . . and Spring*

Exam IV due: May 6, 2010

**NOTE:** Schedule of events subject to change by Fate, the insightful awareness of the instructor, and/or the collaboration between students and instructor.

**Summary of Grading Percentages and Grading Scale**
Four Essay Exams: 80%
Lecture Attendance: 10%
Participation: 10%

A: 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 60-69; F: 59 and below

**Important Dates**
- Last day to withdraw with a W: March 5, 2010
- MLK, Jr. Holiday: January 18, 2010
- Spring break: March 6-12, 2010
- Peace Conference: March 26, 2010
- Last Class: April 29, 2010