

REL 3170 Religious Ethics and Moral Problems Spring 2012

Class Time: Monday and Wednesday, 4:00 – 5:15

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Murphy, bmurphy@fsu.edu, 317-0367 ext. 230, Office A

Web-site: <http://mailer.fsu.edu/~bmurphy/>

Office Hours: Mon and Wed: 2:30-4pm. Tues and Thurs: 4-5:30pm.

Students with disabilities: Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should; (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center, Dean of Students Department
+00(850) 644-9566 (voice),+00 (850) 644-8504 (TDD)

Prerequisites: None. However, the course is intended for students in their third year of study or higher. You should be capable of reading and responding intelligently to complex material.

Course Description: This class is an introduction to the study of religious ethics. We will examine contemporary moral issues such as deception, capital punishment, war, the environment, and human sexuality in the context of religious views about love, duty, good, and evil.

Course Objectives:

1. Analyze and evaluate basic terms commonly used in the discipline of religious ethics.
2. Describe basic moral theories and approaches to moral reasoning.
3. Identify the key arguments used to support moral positions on issues such as lying, killing, human interaction with the environment, and human sexuality.

Set Texts:

Ethics for the New Millenium, The Dalai Lama (Unit 1)
Situation Ethics – For and Against, Fletcher and Montgomery (Unit 1)
Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life, Sissela Bok (Unit 1)
Islam and War, John Kelsay (Unit 2)
Johnny Got His Gun, Dalton Trumbow (Unit 2)

These items are available from the Campus Bookstore. You will also be required to read certain photocopied material (available in a folder in the library) and material available on the internet

(links will be posted on the course web-site). The web-site is open access, but to access some of the material, you will need to use your garnet username and password.

Grading: Class Participation:20% Quizzes: 60% (Each quiz, 20%) Essays: 20% (Best two)

94+ A
90+ A-
86+ B+
82+ B
78+ B-
74+ C+
70+ C
66+ C-
64+ D+
60+ D
56+ D-

Course Schedule:

11th January: Introductory Class

Unit 1: Thou Shalt Not?

16th January: *Ethics for the New Millennium*, xi-123

18th January: *Ethics for the New Millennium*, 123-237

23rd January: *Veritatis Splendor*, (web site) Introduction and Chapters I and II

25th January: *Veritatis Splendor*, Chapter III

30th January: *Situation Ethics*, 11-48

1st February: *Situation Ethics*, 48-90

6th February: *Lying*, 250-288 and xv-107

8th February: *Lying*, 107-250

13th February: Quiz 1

Unit 2: Worth Killing For?

15th February: *Johnny Got His Gun*, 3-119 (Paper 1 due: *Is truth a virtue for its own sake?*)

20th-24th February: Carnival ☺

24th February: Last day to drop without special permission

27th February: *Johnny Got His Gun*, 123-243

29th February: *Islam and War*, 1-42

5th March: *Islam and War*, 43-76

7th March: *Islam and War*, 77-122

12th March: Capital Punishment: *Dead Man Walking* (watch movie in class)

14th March: *Dead Man Walking* (watch movie in class)

19th March: Bedeau and van den Haag on capital punishment (web site)

21st March: Mill and Harry Potter on capital punishment

36th March: Weatherford on capital punishment
28th March: Quiz 2

Unit 3: Environment and Sex

2nd April: 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis (web-site/folder) Paper 2 due: *Can a society survive if it has no ideals worth the cost of a life?*

4th April: 'Can the East Help the West to Value Nature?' (web site/folder) (*Philosophy East and West*)

9th April: 'Towards a Buddhist Environmental Ethic' (web site/folder) (*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*)

11th April: Genesis Chapter 19: Sodom and Gommorah

16th April: *The Iliad* and *The Symposium* (web/folder)

18th April: *Arabian Nights* and *Madhumalati* (web/folder) Paper 3 due: *Is the human race the most important thing on Earth?* Review

23rd April: **Final Exam, (Quiz 3) 3:30-6:00**

Every quiz is like a final examination: ***not to be missed.***

Policies: So, you want to receive an F? Just ignore the following rules.

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences: if you miss a class or arrive late, I assume it is for a good reason and ask for no explanation. If you have compelling reasons for missing more than one third of the course, then you should drop the class. You are permitted 6 absences: this means that you can miss 3 weeks of class without any automatic penalty. This is a generous allowance of absences that you should use wisely. Once you miss more than this, you *automatically* lose 1 point for every absence. **If you miss 9 classes, you automatically fail.** If you are late, or leave the class early, that counts as half an absence.

At the start of the class, I will close the door and then call roll. If you arrive when the door is closed, please wait patiently and quietly. Do not disturb the class. After 30 minutes, I will open the door, giving a chance for latecomers to enter and early-leavers to depart – in each case, receiving a half-credit for attendance.

Clocks on this campus are unreliable: I set my watch by the computer in my office – this is the same time as is displayed on computers in classrooms and in the library. (Administrative computers, e.g. in the Student Affairs Office are on a different server, although the time-difference is only a few seconds.)

Remember, you should always aim to be the classroom before the lesson begins. By the time I call roll, you should be sat at your desk waiting.

Cell phones must be switched off in class. You will be penalized for breaking this rule. Food is prohibited, but you may quietly imbibe non-alcoholic drinks.

Late Work: Work must be handed in during class on the date given. If you know that you will be unable to make a class, you may arrange for a friend to deliver the work to me, but the responsibility is yours. I will only consider grading late work in exceptional cases (e.g. serious illness, with a doctor's note). If I consider it appropriate, I will penalize late work. Unless you have a very good reason for presenting the work late, it will receive an F.

Highlights/Lowlights: To help all students in future classes produce better papers, I select the best and worst pieces of work that are submitted on the web-site along with my comments. These extracts will be presented anonymously. If you are willing to have extracts from your work used on the web-site, write a large letter 'Y' at the start of the first page. If unwilling, write a large 'N'. I operate on the rule that *qui tacet consentire* (silence indicates consent).

THERE IS A FATE WORSE THAN F!

If you deliberately violate the Academic Honor Code, you are trying to get more credit for your work than you deserve by deceiving your instructor. I do not tell my students lies, and it makes me angry when students try to deceive me. Furthermore, you are attempting to gain an unfair advantage over honest students. Taking steps to deal with plagiarism takes up a lot of my time, and slows down the whole process of grading. So, please read the following instructions and follow them carefully.

If you are using *any* words taken directly from any book, or web-site, or CD-ROM, they must be enclosed in inverted commas - "...", or else clearly indicated by an indented margin and change of format:

As with this piece of text, which clearly stands apart from the rest of this paragraph. This is how a quotation from another source should appear in your paper when printed, unless it is just a "couple of words" that you want to mention.

You must state from which book they were taken, preferably including a page number. The reference must be given in the text, when the quotation is used, so that I can see when grading your paper exactly what is your work and what is taken from another source. Use either footnotes¹ or (parentheses). It is *not* sufficient to list sources at the end of the paper, although you should also do this. Even if you are not quoting directly, there should still be a clear acknowledgement of your sources: this is known as paraphrasing – you explain someone else's ideas in your own words. By giving a footnote, you give credit to the person whose information you are using. You also advertise to the professor that you have been reading about the subject.

If you have any doubts about meeting these requirements, contact me as soon as possible. Further notes are available on my web-site.

Papers must be written by you in English. If you write it in Spanish, you must translate it yourself: you are being graded, in part on your ability to communicate effectively in English. You are allowed to have help with "proof-reading" - i.e. you may ask someone to read what you have written in English and point out any mistakes. You must acknowledge your gratitude to your proof-reader at the start of the paper.

Plagiarism also includes the use of illicit material in closed book quizzes and final examinations. If I discover that you are guilty of plagiarism, you will receive an F for the piece of work in question, and it will be counted towards your final grade. As required by p.73 of the General Bulletin, I will inform the Vice-Rector in writing, and this will remain on your file. Repeated offenses may result in your being expelled from the university. If I discover a second offence, you will receive an F for the entire course.

¹ This is a footnote. It would state the exact source of the quotation. If you are using Word, you can Insert footnotes and they will automatically be numbered. Footnotes are numbered consecutively throughout the paper. If you refer twice to the same book, you do not repeat the same number.

I have read and understood the syllabus for REL 3170, Spring 2012. If I fail to follow the instructions given here, particularly those which relate to violations of the Academic Honor Code, I accept responsibility.

Signed:

Name (print):

