

# Philosophy 1001-001: Ethical Dilemmas-Spring 2005

**Class Time and Location:** Mon, Wed 10:45 AM-12:05 PM, BUC 105

**Instructor:** Dale Clark

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**Course Description and Objectives:** Sex, Drugs, Politics... areas of conversation usually considered forbidden within mixed company; such discussions are, after all, usually in poor taste (unless, of course, it is an election year). Perhaps, however, such issues are ignored not out of taste but rather because such troubles simply make many people uncomfortable. In this course, we will nonetheless pursue many of these issues and more. Our goals will be two-fold. We will reflect upon numerous situations that may challenge many of us at some time in our lives; situations that rarely seem to have easy answers or simple solutions but, nonetheless, demand that as creatures of conscience we take some kind of action, for better or for worse. We will also investigate why it is that we may feel and choose the way that we do. What underlying rationales might there be for our dilemmas? Just what is at stake? What do our responses say about us? The potential answers to these questions will involve contrasting what it is that we think we should do as moral agents with what it is that we actually do as human beings. Unfortunately, at the end of this course we may not be any closer to knowing what to do when faced with any difficult decision. Reflecting upon such dilemmas, however, may at least point us in a coherent direction. Perhaps we can also learn more about ourselves in the process and begin to develop an understanding as to why some of these things make us so uneasy.

**Prerequisite:** The main prerequisite for this course is an open mind: the ability to suspend both belief and disbelief in order to determine what the implications of each position we will investigate actually are. It is necessary that you be able to distance yourself from your own immediate emotional reactions to certain issues and to discuss each view we study critically, objectively, and dispassionately. No proselytizing or special pleading will be tolerated and each viewpoint (both philosophical as well as individual) will be accorded the respect that it deserves. Likewise, no attempt will be made to change your beliefs, which remain sacrosanct (i.e., 'your own business') and will be treated as such. We shall not be concerned with whether each (or any) position is objectively true, but rather with what such positions say about what we take to be important as well as how the world would be if our and others' actions were in line with our theories and opinions.

**Course Attributes:** This course fulfills the Humanities Exploration Requirement.

**Required Texts:**

- 1) Pojman, Louis P. *How Should We Live: An Introduction to Ethics*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2005.

**Readings**

It is imperative that you keep up with the assigned readings (with minor exceptions, this will mean around 20-30 pgs. a week, usually less). A great amount of this course revolves around in-class discussions; you will notice that Wednesdays are specifically set aside for such discussion. If you have not done the reading, you may have little of interest to say. The reading schedule reflects the week in which you should be prepared to discuss the readings. For example, Chapter 2 of Pojman's text is slated for Monday of week 2. This means that you should have read Chapter 2 by Monday, January 17 of week 2. Occasionally, I will assign additional readings outside of the Pojman text. I will make copies of such readings available to you and let you know when you need to have finished reading them.

**Schedule of Topics and Readings**

Week 1: Introduction/ Why Morality?

1/10 (Mon): Introduction

1/12 (Wed): Possible Aims and Features of Morality- Pojman, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-17)

Week 2: Why Be Moral?

1/17 (Mon): Holiday

1/19 (Wed): Moral Motivation- Pojman, Ch. 2 (pp. 19-44)/Possible Conflicts

Week 3: So You Say...

1/24 (Mon): Ethical Relativism- Pojman, Ch. 3 (pp. 47-64)

1/26 (Wed): Possible Conflicts

Week 4: It Does Not Matter What You Say...

1/31 (Mon): Ethical Objectivism- Pojman, Ch. 4 (pp. 65-88)

2/2 (Wed): Possible Conflicts

Week 5: And Now for Something Completely Different...(well, kinda)

2/7 (Mon): Religion and Ethics- Pojman, Ch. 5 (pp. 89-105)

2/9 (Wed): Possible Conflicts  
**First Paper Due**

Week 6: Morality As Advantage

2/14 (Mon): Utilitarianism- Pojman, Ch. 6 (pp. 107-121)  
2/16 (Wed): Possible Conflicts

Week 7: Morality As Advantage II

2/21 (Mon): Holiday  
2/23 (Wed): Utilitarianism- Pojman, Ch. 6 (pp. 122-135)/Possible Conflicts

Week 8: Morality As Duty

2/28 (Mon): Deontology- Pojman, Ch. 7 (pp. 137-162)  
3/2 (Wed): Possible Conflicts

Week 9: Morality As Duty II

3/7 (Mon): Deontology- Pojman, Ch. 7 (pp. 137-162)  
3/9 (Wed): Possible Conflicts

Week 10: Morality As Living Excellently

3/14 (Mon): **No Class (Spring Break)**  
3/16 (Wed): **No Class (Spring Break)**

Week 11: Woohoo!

3/21 (Mon): Virtue Ethics- Pojman, Ch. 8 (pp. 165-190)  
3/23 (Wed): Possible Conflicts

Week 12: Morality As Living Excellently II

3/28 (Mon): Virtue Ethics- Pojman, Ch. 8 (pp. 165-190)  
3/30 (Wed): Possible Conflicts  
**Second Paper Due**

Week 13: Don't Tread On Me

4/4 (Mon): Human Rights Ch. 9 (pp. 193-207)  
4/6 (Wed): Possible Conflicts

Week 14: Today's Conflicts

4/11 (Mon): TBA  
4/13 (Wed): TBA

Week 15: Today's Conflicts II

4/18 (Mon): TBA  
4/20 (Wed): TBA

Week 16: Today's Conflicts III

4/25 (Mon): TBA  
4/27 (Wed): TBA

**Final Paper Due on 5/4 (Wed)**

**Course Requirements:**

- A) Students are expected to finish each assigned reading before the class meeting on that assignment.
- B) In order to facilitate communication, students are required to provide the instructor with a *working* email address by the end of the second week of class. Send a message with the title "Phil 1001—Enrolled Student" to the instructor and in the body of your message please be sure to note your major and class year (e.g. junior, senior). Students who have not sent this message by the end of the second week of class will be penalized one grade level on the first paper (e.g. A- to B+).
- C) Quizzes: There will be a number of in-class quizzes at random in order to test students' familiarity with the assigned reading materials.
- D) Take Home Exams: three open book exams (papers) of 1200-1800 words (approx 4-6 typed, double-spaced pages), due by 5 p.m. on the days designated above. Topics will be handed out in advance. Further details on manner of submission, penalties for lateness, extensions, drafts, etc. will be given with exam topics.

**Grading:**

Participation in discussions, 10%; Quizzes, 10%; First Exam, 25%; Second Exam, 25%; Third Exam, 30%

(The instructor reserves the right to change this weighting as necessary in order to fulfill the educational mission of the course.)

Note: Students must complete all of the written work listed above (except quizzes) in order to be eligible for a passing grade for the class. Late work will be accepted with a penalty, but utter failure to submit (by the day of the final exam) any one of the writing assignments will result in a failing grade for the entire course. Also, all written assignments in this course must be the student's own work. Plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct may result in a failing grade for the entire course, and the case may be transferred to the University's Academic Misconduct Committee for further judgment. According to the Student code, "Plagiarism' means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person's work in, or as a basis for, one's own work offered for academic consideration or credit for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one's own, without attribution, any individual's words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression" (Student Code, p. 3). If you have further questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic misconduct, ask the instructor and consult the University Code.

#### ADA Statement:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.