



# MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

School of Arts and Sciences

## COURSE SYLLABUS

<b>Course Number</b> PH 309-D	<b>Course Title</b> Ethical Theory		
<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>Spring Semester</b> X	<b>Summer Semester</b>	<b>Year</b> 2012-13
<b>Name of Instructor</b> Dr. Christopher Franklin			
<b>Meeting Day, Time, and Room Number</b> T, F 02:45PM - 04:0PM, 203			
<b>Final:</b> None. Special Discussion Session—Tuesday May 7 <sup>th</sup> 3-5:30			
<b>Office Hours, Location, Phone</b> Wednesday 8am-11am, Ireton 1008, 703-284-3836			
<b>E-mail</b> christopher.franklin@marymount.edu			

## UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

### Academic Integrity

By accepting this syllabus, you pledge to uphold the principles of Academic Integrity expressed by the Marymount University Community. You agree to observe these principles yourself and to defend them against abuse by others.

### Special Needs and Accommodations

Please advise the instructor of any special problems or needs at the beginning of the semester. If you seek accommodation based on disabilities, you should provide a Faculty Contact Sheet obtained through the Office of Student Access Services, located in Rowley Hall.

### Access to Student Work

Copies of your work in this course including copies of any submitted papers and your portfolios may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. All work used for these purposes will be submitted anonymously.

### Student Copyright Authorization

For the benefit of current and future students, work in this course may be used for educational critique, demonstrations, samples, presentations, and verification. Outside of these uses, work shall not be sold, copied, broadcast, or distributed for profit without student consent.

### University Policy on Snow Closings

Snow closings are generally announced on area radio stations. For bulletins concerning Marymount snow or weather closings, call (703) 526-6888. Unless otherwise advised by radio announcement or by official bulletins on the number listed above, students are expected to report for class as near normal time as possible on days when weather conditions are adverse.

Decisions as to snow closing or delayed opening are not generally made before 5:00 AM of the working day. Students are expected to attend class if the University is not officially closed.

## 1. BROAD PURPOSE OF COURSE

An investigation into the moral dimensions of human life. The course explores the specific theoretical issues that shape the formation of ethical systems. Students will examine foundations for objective moral standards and human rights. Prerequisites: EN 102 and one course in the humanities (old core); EN 102 and PH 200 (new core).

Course Description: There have been two significant developments in the moral thought of western culture in the twentieth century. First, a widespread recognition of human rights has emerged despite the diverse cultural, religious, and philosophical assumptions about humans and our place in the universe. Second, in this century we have been witness to (and sometimes complicit in) the perpetration of some of the most unjust and horrific events in human history (numerous attempts at genocide (the Holocaust, the Great Crime, Rwanda), My Lai, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to name just a few). This juxtaposition is baffling to say the least, and we will explore it in part. Our main aim, however, will be to seek an understanding of the nature of human rights and the ethics of responding to wrongdoing. The first half of the course will focus on understanding the major rival theories of human rights, specifically as these theories seek to provide a *grounding* for human rights. We will engage questions, such as: what makes it the case that humans have rights that must be respected? Why *must* we respect human rights—what makes humans so special? We will survey a range (though not exhaustive) of religious and secular responses to these questions. We will then turn from issues of primary justice to issues of retributive justice: how should we respond to those who violate human rights (ours or others)? Should we respond with blame, hate, and punishment, or forgiveness, love, and mercy? Our inquiry will for most part be concerned with how we as individuals should respond, rather than we as society or institutions. What kind of people should become in light of the evil we daily witness? In the second half of the course we will consider and assess a wide range of answers to these, and related, questions.

## 2. COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:

### Liberal Arts Core Outcomes (general and discipline-specific)

- a. Students will engage in critical reasoning/problem solving by evaluating basic philosophical claims, theories, and arguments.
- b. Students will use imagination to generate considered responses to basic questions about philosophical problems and texts.
- c. Students will demonstrate knowledge of fundamental philosophical concepts, such as basic concepts of informal logic, as well as elementary principles and theories in selected sub-fields of philosophy.
- e. Students will develop epistemic virtues such as intellectual curiosity, courage to engage in independent inquiry, humility to hold beliefs provisionally, and striving to perfect one's personal worldview.

## Foundational Moral Principles Course

### *General Outcomes of University Requirements and Reinforcement of Core Skills and/or Attitudes*

### *Discipline-Specific Outcomes for General Students*

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#### PH 309—Ethical Theory

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1. Analysis, Critical Reasoning and Problem Solving: Students will engage in critical reasoning/problem by constructing original arguments and critiquing philosophical claims, theories and arguments.
  2. Inquiry, Discovery and Creativity: Students will use imagination as well as knowledge of basic philosophical claims and theories to develop considered responses to questions about philosophical problems and texts.
  3. Moral discernment: Students will seek out the moral and ethical dimensions of issues and situations. This will be demonstrated through means such as papers, case studies, and/or service learning.

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of fundamental concepts and principles of moral philosophy, as well as major classic and contemporary ethical theories.
2. Students will demonstrate increased development of epistemic virtues such as intellectual curiosity, courage to engage in independent inquiry, humility to hold beliefs provisionally, and striving to perfect one's personal worldview.

3. TEACHING METHOD (lecture, laboratory, audio-visual, clinical experience, discussion, seminar, tutorial)

Lecture and Discussion

4. GRADING POLICY (i.e., number of graded assignments, weight given to each)

Participation: 10%

Movie Reflection One (word count 400-450): 5% Due 1/25

Movie Reflection Two (word count 400-450): 5% Due 4/5

Précis One (word count 850-900): 15% Due 2/8

Précis Two (word count 850-900): 15% Due 4/19

Paper One (word count 1800-2000): 25% Due 3/26

Paper Two (word count 1800-2000): 25% Due 5/7

All assignments will be due at the beginning of class and will be considered late if turned in 10 minutes after class has begun. Précises and papers will need to be submitted on blackboard through safe assignment. (Details for these assignments will be available on blackboard)

**No late work will be accepted unless the student provides, in advance of the assignment's deadline, official, written documentation demonstrating serious incapacitation on the part of the student due either to personal medical or family emergency.**

Attendance: Each student will be allowed 2 unexcused absences. Beyond this, each hour of unexcused absence will result in a 2% loss of the student's total course grade. Excessive or frequent tardiness will count as an unexcused absence.

5. CLASS SCHEDULE (List topics to be covered with *approximate* dates of presentation)

**1/15 Course Introduction**

**1/18 Introduction to Ethics**

Martin Luther King 'Letters from Birmingham Jail'

**PRIMARY JUSTICE**

**1/22 Justice and Goods**

Wolterstorff Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 1

**1/25 Justice and Goods (cont.)**

Wolterstorff Chapter 6

**Due: Movie Reflection One:** *King of Devil's Island*

**1/29 The Logic of Rights**

Wolterstorff Chapter 11

**2/1 The Challenge to Rights**

Jonathan Glover selections from *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*

**2/5 Divine Command Theory**

Robert Adams TBA

**2/8 Social Contract Theories**

Thomas Hobbes TBA

**Due: Précis One of Wolterstorff Chapter 1**

**2/8 Last day to withdraw from a class without academic record**

**2/12-2/15 Worries about the Divine Command and Social Contract Theories**

Wolterstorff Chapter 12

**2/19-2/22 Rights and Human Worth**

Wolterstorff Chapters 13-14

**2/26-3/1 Secular Accounts of Human Worth**

Wolterstorff Chapter 15; Allen Wood 'The Formula of Humanity as End in Itself' from *Kant's Ethical Thought*; Ronald Dworkin 'What Is Sacred?' from *Life's Dominion*

**3/3-3/10 Spring Break**

### **3/12-3/15 Religious Accounts of Human Worth**

Wolterstorff Chapter 16; Michael Perry 'The Morality of Human Rights: A Religious Ground' from *Toward a Theory of Human Rights*

**3/15 is the last day to withdraw from a class with a grade of W.**

### **3/19 Conclusions and Applications**

Wolterstorff Chapter 2, pp. 59-62; Peter Singer 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality'

**3/22 No Class**

**3/26 No Class**

**Due: Paper One**

**3/29 No Class Easter Holidays**

**4/2 No Class**

### **RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE**

#### **4/5-4/9 Blame and Forgiveness**

Murphy and Hampton Chapter 1; Charles Griswold 'Forgiveness at its Best' from *Forgiveness*, Robert C. Roberts 'Offense'

**4/5 Due: Movie Reflection Two: *Dead Man Walking***

#### **4/12-4/16 Anger, Indignation, and Hate**

Murphy and Hampton Chapters 2 & 3

#### **4/19-4/23 Retributivism**

Murphy and Hampton Chapter 4

**4/19 Due: Précis Two of Murphy and Hampton Chapter 1**

#### **4/25-5/3 Unconditional Forgiveness and Meekness**

Margaret Holmgren 'The Moral Analysis of the Attitudes of Forgiveness and Resentment'; Fyodor Dostoevsky 'Rebellion'; Glen Pettigrove's 'Meekness and "Moral Anger"'

#### **5/7 Special Class Discussion 3-5:30**

**Due: Paper Two**

### **6. REQUIRED TEXTS**

Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*. Princeton University Press.

Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*. Cambridge University Press.

Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. Perfection Learning Corporation.

7. REQUIRED OR SUGGESTED READINGS OR AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

Movies

*The King of Devil's Island*

*Dead Man Walking*