

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE
LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION
GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE

PHI	115	Ethics	3-0	3
Course Prefix	Course Number	Course Title	(Lec-Lab)	Semester Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Consideration of problems of value and conduct, including the question of the "good life" or happiness; and contemporary moral issues such as war, violence, drugs, racism, crime, and punishment. IAI H4 904

TOPICAL OUTLINE

This really depends upon the method of presentation. During the course a teacher will touch upon many topics such as those mentioned in the catalog description mentioned above, viz., the "good life" or happiness and contemporary moral issues.

METHODS OF PRESENTATION

1. Historical - an examination of the value systems of ethical theorists in chronological order. Advantages of this method: it helps the student to view and evaluate ethical theorists in their historical context or milieu; it also helps the student to see the development or evolution of ethics from its historical origins. Disadvantages: it lacks the advantages of the systems delineated below, viz., focusing on problems or on types of ethical theories.
2. Main types of Ethical Theories - an examination of the various types of ethical theories or schools of thought, e.g., hedonism, self-realization theories, Christian Ethics, etc., irrespective of the chronological order of position of the ethical theorists in history. Advantages: it helps the student to study and evaluate the various schools of thought rather than just individual theorists (although this difficulty can be alleviated to a certain extent in the historical method). Disadvantages: it loses some of the advantages of the historical method both because it is difficult to place each man in his historical context.
3. Problems of Ethics - an examination of the polarities or opposition between different principles of ethics, e.g., rule vs. end, egoism vs. altruism, absolutism vs. relativism. Advantages: it allows the student to critical examine the various opposing, often unexpressed, principles upon which ethical theories are based. Disadvantages: there are so many different principles, and each philosopher has so many principles, that it is difficult (if not impossible) to group them adequately; also, the student tends to get lost in a maze of opposing (often arbitrarily-grouped) sets of principles and never sees the individual philosophers or ethical schools as a whole.

STUDENT OUTCOMES: *(The student should . . .)*

1. identify and articulate multiple normative concepts.
2. identify the ethical issues at stake in individual and collective decisions
3. apply distinct ethical perspectives to real world issues
4. evaluate competing ethical perspectives on human problems and action
5. form arguments to articulate a defense of an ethical judgment in the face of competing claims.
6. analyze the arguments for the ethical judgments of others in the face of competing claims.
7. demonstrate an understanding of the weaknesses of one's own view and the strengths of a view with which one disagrees
8. demonstrate the use of three primary texts in the service of above outcomes
9. write a total of at least ten pages (of approximately 300 words each) of college level writing in the service of the above outcomes
10. communicate ideas about ethical issues orally.

SOME METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Quizzes
2. Exams (may be oral)
3. Written reading responses
4. Debates
5. Homework
6. Class activities
7. Participation

SOME TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

White, James E., *Contemporary Moral Problems*, 10th ed., Wadsworth, 2011.

Barbara MacKinnon, *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues*, 8th ed., Wadsworth, 2014.

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Semester Fall Year 2015