

FUND FOR AMERICAN STUDIES/GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

The Ethics and Values of Philanthropy
GOVT-472

Summer 2005
MW 4:00-7:30, Reiss 112

Instructor: John Hasnas
Office: 401 New North
Phone #: 202-687-4825

First Class Meeting: July 1
Final Class Meeting: July 22

Texts: Student packet to be purchased in the business school, Room G-03, Old North

PURPOSE

This purpose of this course is to enhance your appreciation for, and ability to deal with, the ethical issues that can arise in the course of philanthropic activity. The course is designed to teach you *how* to deal with such ethical issues, with the emphasis on the word 'how.' This indicates that you will be required to master a method for solving problems rather than simply learn and remember a stock set of answers.

It is important for you to appreciate this distinction. In many of your courses you are required to understand a conceptually complex set of materials and demonstrate your understanding on examinations or in papers. This is not such a course. In this course, your job is to master a skill; specifically, the skill of normative problem-solving. More precisely, you will be required to develop three closely related abilities: 1) the ability to identify and analyze ethical problems, 2) the ability to derive a solution to these problems, and 3) the ability to communicate the justification for your solution to others.

The above implies that you should not expect to be provided with answers to the problems we will be examining. In fact, we will often close our discussion of a problem without achieving any definitive resolution. The success of this course should not be measured by the number of ethical problems that we resolve during the semester, but by the degree of confidence you feel at its conclusion in your ability to deal with the unexpected and unexamined normative dilemmas that may confront you in your professional life.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Your grades will be determined by your grade on a take-home final exam as modified by the Present and Prepared policy described below.

Final exam:

At the last class meeting, a take-home final exam will be distributed. The exam will present a description of a factually complex situation that gives rise to several ethical issues. Students will have a week within which to write an answer that identifies and resolves these issues. The exams will be evaluated on the basis of the student's ability to 1) recognize the ethical issues presented,

2) apply the relevant materials from the course to the resolution of those issues, 3) construct well-reasoned arguments in support of the resolutions the student believes to be correct, and 4) communicate that argument clearly in writing. These papers constitute individual assignments. Once the problem has been distributed, you may not discuss it with your classmates.

Formal requirements: The exam will indicate the day and time that it is due and a *maximum* word limit. You must submit a hard copy of your exam by the stated time. Exams may be submitted to me in my office or placed in my mailbox in Room G-04, Old North. The exams must be doubled-spaced, have page numbers, and be printed in 12 point font. In addition, they must contain a word count on the cover sheet.

Present and Prepared policy:

Our class time will be spent mostly in discussion of the ethical issues we are considering. There will be very little lecturing. Hence, to a significant extent this course will be taught Socratically. This means that I will be asking you questions about the assigned readings as a means of exploring your thoughts as to their meaning and significance and stimulating broader class discussion. You will be expected to have read *and thought about* the assigned readings before class. I will randomly call upon members of the class to discuss the issues they address and respond to my questions about their implications. At various points, I will open the discussion up for comments offered on a voluntary basis.

Because the class periods are rather long, they will be divided into two parts with a break in between. This will produce the equivalent of 16 classes, two a day for each of the eight class meetings. Your reading assignments will indicate whether they are associated with the first or second session of each class.

The reading load for this course is rather light for the typical college course, but because the reading must be done in only 3½ weeks, completing it will present something of a challenge. (I will attempt to have the reading packet for the course prepared and available significantly before the first class meeting for those of you who would like to begin reading in advance.) It is perfectly reasonable for there to be days on which you are unable to complete your reading assignment prior to class. In recognition of this, I will utilize the Present and Prepared policy described below.

When you enter the classroom at the beginning of class, there will be sign-up sheets on the front desk. The sign up sheet will have a blank space for each of the two parts of the class meeting for that day. If you have completed the reading for either or both of the sessions for that day and are prepared to discuss their implications, you may place a checkmark next to your name in the appropriate box. If you do so, you are subject to being called upon during that session. If you do not, you will not be called on. You may not check your name off after class has been in session for five minutes or if you do not intend to stay until the end of the relevant session. If you check your name off for 13 of the 16 class sessions,* you will receive a one increment increase in your grade above that assigned to your exam. If you do not check your name off for at least 8 of the 16 sessions, you will receive a one increment decrease below the grade assigned to your written work. ***In addition, if you check your name off and I call on you and find that you are not prepared, your grade will be lowered by one increment.*** A student's grade may also be increased

* This includes our first class meeting.

by one increment (whether or not the student has already received the Present and Prepared bonus) if, in my judgment, that student has consistently made extraordinarily valuable contributions to class discussion. Such an increase will be made only for truly exceptional performance.

Please note that I am unlikely to make it through the course without inadvertently calling on a student who has not checked off his or her name. Should this happen to you, please point out my error and I will immediately move on. However, should you wish to respond, please do so, and I will place a check mark next to your name and count the session toward your total for the bonus.

Grading Criteria for Exams

In this course, the object of your written work will always be to present a **justification** for your resolution of an ethical problem. Your job will be to take a position and defend it with an argument. Your work will be evaluated on the basis of 1) how effectively you have utilized the course materials, and 2) the quality of your argument and presentation. The second of these elements will be evaluated according to three criteria: relevance, support, and clarity.

- 1) **Relevance** - Relevance concerns the relationship between your conclusion and the reasons you introduce for it, your premises. Your reasons or premises are relevant when they make the conclusion more likely to be true. To meet this criterion, the argument you create should be one in which every premise i) helps establish the conclusion, and ii) is necessary to the establishment of the conclusion.
- 2) **Support** - You will never create an argument in which every premise is self-evidently true. If you could, the topic would not have been in controversy in the first place. Therefore, you must support your controversial premises. To meet this criterion, you must provide a good reason to believe that each controversial premise is true. (Note: You are not required to provide an ironclad defense of such premises or establish them beyond doubt.)
- 3) **Clarity** - Clarity refers to both the conceptual organization of your argument and the literary quality of your writing.
 - a) Conceptual organization - This refers to how clearly you have expressed 1) your conclusion, 2) the structure of your argument, and 3) the content of your premises.
 - b) Literary quality - Your papers will be expected to exhibit a level of written expression consistent with your status as graduate students at Georgetown University with regard to grammar, spelling, and proofreading.

Tentative Syllabus

Class #1: Theoretical Foundations

- Session 1:
- 1) Excerpt from Beauchamp and Bowie, Ethical Theory and Business
 - 2) W. T. Stace, "Ethical Relativism"
 - 3) Excerpt from John Stuart Mill, On Liberty
- Session 2:
- 1) Excerpt from John Rawls, A Theory of Justice
 - 2) Excerpt from Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State and Utopia
 - 3) Excerpt from Ronald Dworkin, Taking Rights Seriously

Class #2: The Limits of Autonomy and the Duty of Veracity

- Session 1:
- 1) Gerald Dworkin, "Paternalism"
 - 2) In re Seiferth
- Session 2:
- 1) Excerpts from Sissela Bok, Lying
 - 2) Albert Carr, "Is Business Buffing Ethical?"

Class #3: Ethics and Agents

- Session 1:
- 1) Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits"
 - 2) R. Edward Freeman, "A Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation"
 - 3) Thomas Donaldson, "Constructing a Social Contract for Business"
- Session 2:
- 1) John Hasnas, "The Normative Theories of Business Ethics: a Guide for the Perplexed"
 - 2) Dennis P. Quinn & Thomas M. Jones, "An Agent Morality View of Business Policy"

Class #4: Ethics in Organizations

- Session 1:
- 1) James A. Waters, "Catch 20.5: Corporate Morality as an Organizational Phenomenon"
 - 2) Robert Jackall, "Moral Mazes: Bureaucracy and Managerial Work"
 - 3) Case: Kermit Vandivier, "The Aircraft Brake Scandal"
- Session 2:
- Reading to be distributed.

Class #5: Ethics and the Environment

- Session 1:
- 1) Garret Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons"
 - 2) David Schmidtz, "The Institution of Property"
- Session 2:
- 1) "Social Responsibility and Economic Efficiency" by Kenneth Arrow

Class #6: Ethics and Law

- Session 1:
- 1) The Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - 2) Excerpts from John Hasnas, "Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and the Anti-Discrimination Principle: The Philosophical Basis for the Legal Prohibition of Discrimination"
 - 3) Excerpt from Charles Murray & Richard Herrnstein, *The Bell Curve*
 - 4) Packet of News Clippings
- Session 2:
- 1) Legislative and Administrative Regulations
 - 2) Deborah Epstein, "Can a "Dumb Ass Women" Achieve Equality in the Workplace? Running the Gauntlet of Hostile Environment Harassing Speech,"
 - 3) Eugene Volokh, "What Speech Does Hostile Work Environment Harassment Law Restrict?"

Class #7: The Limits of the Market and International Ethics

- Session 1:
- 1) Excerpt from Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*
 - 2) Excerpt from Leon Kass, *Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity*
 - 3) Lloyd Cohen, "Increasing the Supply of Transplant Organs: The Virtues of a Futures Market"
- Session 2:
- 1) Tom Donaldson, "Moral Minimums for Multinationals"
 - 2) A Scandal in Andamania

Class #8: The Duty to Render Aid

- Session 1:
- 1) Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
 - 2) Garrett Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat"
 - 3) David Schmidtz, "Islands in a Sea of Obligation: Limits of the Duty to Rescue"
 - 4) Charles Murray, "Little Platoons"
- Session 2:
- 1) Ian Maitland, "The Great Non-Debate over International Sweatshops"
 - 2) Dennis G. Arnold & Norman E. Bowie, "Sweatshops and Respect for Persons."