

SUMMER SESSION SYLLABUS

Hybrid Course

PH 210H: Ethics

C5: 2009



Saint Joseph's College of Maine

**DIVISION OF GRADUATE &
PROFESSIONAL STUDIES**

278 Whites Bridge Road
Standish, Maine 04084-5263
1-(800)-752-4723
1-(207)-893-7841

<http://www.sjcme.edu/gps/summer/index.htm>

Welcome to:
PH 210H
Ethics

Summer Session #1

Course Start Date: 6/15/2009

Online Dates:

6/15- 6/21; 6/27 – 7/24

On Campus Dates:

6/22 – 6/26

Course End Date: 7/24/2009

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A critical study of the most important competing ethical theories enabling students to learn to formulate rational responses to the most pressing ethical questions.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

If you have any questions regarding your course materials, please contact your academic advisor (1-800-343-5498) and/or our book vendor EdMap. You can reach EdMap by phone or email:

1-(800)-274-9104

<http://www.shop-edmap.biz/sjs/>

All Saint Joseph's College students must have a library card for the Wellehan Library prior to arriving on campus. To obtain your card, if you do not already have one, please call the library or visit their Website:

1-(800) 343-5498 ext. 7725

<http://www.sjcme.edu/library/index.htm>

REQUIRED TEXT

Rachels, James. (2007). *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill College. ISBN: 0-07-312547-4

Rachels, James. (2007). *The Right Thing to Do*, (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill College. ISBN: 0-07-312546-6

REQUIRED INTERNET SITES & INTERNET RESOURCES

Also visit and explore the following web sites:

<http://www.emory.edu/ETHICS/>

The Center for Ethics offers a webzine containing articles of current interest and links to programs and other sites related to ethics.

<http://www.ethics.org/>

The Ethics Resource Center is a clearing-house for articles and other on-line sites on moral ethics.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

You will be required to submit two brief (2 or 3 paragraph) reflections on the readings and discussion topics during each of the 5 online weeks, excluding the week you are on campus. In addition there will be one final paper 8-10 pages in length due at the end of the course. Further details on these assignments are provided below.

Your Instructor



Name: Matthew Day

Email: mday@sjcme.edu

I am pleased to have the opportunity to be your instructor for Ethics – PH S 210 during Saint Joseph’s College 2009 Summer Hybrid Program. I hope the course will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for you. Please let me take a moment and introduce myself.

Over the past twenty years I’ve taught at the college level and worked in the mental health field as a case manager and licensed therapist. I received my B.A. in philosophy from the University of Maine in 1985 and my M.A. in psychology from the University of West Georgia in 1988. In 1993 I entered the doctoral

program in psychology at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh where I received my Ph.D. I now live in Portland, Maine.

Throughout my academic career I have sought to integrate abstract philosophical and psychological concepts with the reality of everyday lived experience. My research interests include “phenomenology,” the descriptive study of things as they are on their own terms, and “hermeneutics,” or how we interpret meaning. My research has focused on the idea of “home” and the experience of “at-homeness” from both philosophical and psychological perspectives.

I hope the Winter and Spring go well for you and I look forward to meeting you during the warmer, brighter days of Summer. If you have any questions about the course that can not be answered by your advisor, I can be reached via e-mail at mday@sjcme.edu.

Sincerely,
Matthew Day

Student Resources



COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Current information regarding College policies affecting your course can be found on the Resources/Policy section of the ANGEL course homepage.

On this page, you will find vital information, including the following:

- Current Student Handbook, outlining course-specific policies
 - *Includes grading rubric*
- Access to support resources, including advising and online tutorial services
- Student Success Guides

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Instructions on how to submit your assignment to your instructor can be found on your ANGEL course site.

Course Overview



COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course provides a critical study of the most important competing ethical theories enabling students to learn to formulate rational responses to the most pressing ethical questions.

Throughout history there have been numerous attempts to establish formal principles that would effectively guide people in their day-to-day living, and serve

as foundations for law, governance, and religion. To some extent, each ethical theory has been a product of its time. Some theories, however, remain influential today in that they form the basis of many of our current ethical debates. This course will explore these major ethical theories, including, including the principles of Cultural Relativism, Psychological Egoism, Utilitarianism, Moral Ethics and Natural Law Theory. The central principles of the ethical theories will be detailed, and their strengths and weaknesses will be discussed. Examples and case studies will be cited in order to highlight and give context to the principles and their applications.

While one may strongly disagree with a particular ethical perspective and its conclusions, it is important to understand its major premises. The better one understands his or her opponent's argument, the better they can either accept or refute them. You are not graded on whether you present a "right" or "wrong" position on an ethical issue, but rather on how well you articulate the arguments for and against it, and how clearly you explain why you agree or disagree.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the major ethical principles of Cultural Relativism, Natural Law Theory, Psychological Egoism, Utilitarianism, Deontology, Social Contract Theory, and others;
2. Evaluate and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each of the major ethical theories;
3. Discuss the major ethical debates of our time, and describe the arguments both for and against them;

4. Assess and describe your own ethical principles; and
5. Apply the knowledge gained from the course to your own life and to ethical issues you feel strongly about.

COURSE FORMAT

This is an accelerated five week online course with an additional week in the classroom, providing the opportunity to continue the online dialogue in a group setting. You will acquire the skills outlined in the course objectives through the following:

- Readings from the textbook and required readings, which may include case studies.
- Lecture notes
- Active dialogue with your instructor and fellow learners via the course discussion board
- Active dialogue and discussion in person with your instructor and classmates.
- **Class Participation:** You are expected to participate in the online dialogue **at minimum two times per week per discussion question**, preferably on non-consecutive days.

COURSE GUIDELINES

It is expected that each student will have reviewed and be familiar with the required texts for this course, e.g., Rachels, James. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* prior to arriving on campus. Consistent class attendance and participation are expected. It is also expected that all assignments will be submitted within the timeframe noted below. Late assignments will not be accepted except in the event of extenuating circumstances and only upon prior approval of the instructor.

Each student will present an ethical debate or research topic, approved by the instructor, to the class during the one week residency. We will discuss possible topics at the beginning of the class. You must provide the instructor and other class members a one-page abstract/outline at the time of your presentation. There will be two brief in-class short essay exams covering the main themes discussed in the text, class lecture, and discussion.

EVALUATION

- Class and Online Participation.....40%
- In class exams30%
- Final Project.....30%

PLEASE NOTE: If life gets in the way of your online classroom responsibilities, you must notify your instructor as soon as you are aware that events may occur that may inhibit you from participating at the required level.

Class Schedule

PERIOD	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
First week	Readings and introductions	Read Rachel's <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> . Submit 1-2 paragraph biography to the discussion board summarizing who you are, where you live and work, and your particular interests. Also respond with a comment at least once to other's contributions.
Day 1 On Campus	Cultural Relativism and Ethical Subjectivism	Chapter 1. "What is Morality?" and "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" and "Subjectivism in Ethics" in <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>
2	Natural Law Theory Psychological and Ethical egoism	Chapter 4. Does Morality Depend on Religion? in <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> . Chapter 5. "Ethical Egoism" in <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>
3	Utilitarianism Retribution and punishment	Chapter 6. The Utilitarian Approach in <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> . Chapter 7. The Debate Over Utilitarianism in <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> Chapter 8. Are There Absolute Morals? And Chapter 9. Kant and Respect for Persons in <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>
4	Social Contract and Feminism Virtue Ethics	Chapter 10. The Idea of a Social Contract. And Chapter 11. Feminism and the Ethics of Care and Chapter 12. The Ethics of Virtue in <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>
5	Evaluating the ethical principles	Chapter 13. What Would a Satisfactory Moral Theory be Like? Student presentations

Week 3	Human Cloning	<p>“Some Basic Points About Moral Arguments” and “Will Cloning Harm People?” in <i>The Right Thing to Do</i>.</p> <p><i>Online assignment: reflection on reading and position on cloning, and response to other students</i></p>
Week 4	Euthanasia	<p>“Ethics and Natural Law” in <i>The Right Thing to Do</i>. “Utilitarianism” in <i>The Right Thing to Do</i>.</p> <p><i>Online assignment: reflection on reading and position on euthanasia, and response to other students.</i></p>
Week 5	Capital Punishment	<p>“In Defense of the Death Penalty” Ernest van den Haag “Case against the Death Penalty” Hugo A. Bedau (Essays from “The Right Thing to Do”)</p> <p><i>Online assignment: reflection on reading and position on capital punishment and response to other students.</i></p>
Week 6	Research Papers	<p><i>Online assignment: Post summary abstract of research paper (summary and findings), and reflections on at least two of your fellow students research.</i></p> <p>Submit paper to instructor.</p>

Final Project



Your final project will be the completion of the topic you choose and present during the on-campus session. Begin with a brief overview of your topic. Highlight the ethical controversy surrounding it and give a case example (either made up or from the news). Then discuss two ethical theories from the texts and how they might argue for or against the issue. Conclude by describing your own position on the topic and your arguments supporting that position. Use brief and properly cited quotes and/or examples to help highlight your points. Write in your own “voice”. Phrase and explain your thoughts in a way a friend or peer would understand. The paper should be roughly 8 – 10 double-spaced pages (standard 12 font and 1 inch margins). I should also include at least 3 academic resources citations. The paper is due during the last week of class.

The Online Learning Environment



Online Discussion: What Is Expected of You

1. Class participation using the course discussion board is an essential learning activity and a required component of this course. You will be posting at least twice per week, excluding the week you are on campus.
2. If life gets in the way of your course, then you must notify your instructor as soon as possible. Your instructor is here to help you learn as much as you can; he/she needs to know what is happening in order to facilitate your learning.
3. You are required to substantively contribute to the ongoing discussion. Substantive postings are thoughtful and add value to the discussion by offering your critical and creative thoughts and by building upon the thoughts and comments of others.
4. All postings in response to discussion questions should be on point, concise, and succinct.
5. The purpose of engaging in discussion is to extend your learning and to deepen your understanding of concepts presented in the course. The expectation is **not** to have everyone repeat what was read in the week's readings but to share ideas, perspectives, experiences, and understanding; always trying to go beyond what we (currently) know.

ANGEL Information

This course has an online ANGEL component. Please review the checklist below. Before your course begins you will receive a letter from the College with instructions on how to access your account, which will include your log on and password.

If you need technical support, please contact the 24-hour Collegis HelpDesk:
1-(877) 725-4357 or email: <https://hdo.collegis.com>

Checklist for Online Learners

In order to complete this course, you will need the following:

- ANGEL account (will be assigned to you by Saint Joseph's College)
- Basic computer skills
- Computer with speakers or headphones
- Internet access
- Required materials