

Religion 252: Religious Ethics and Social Issues

Spring, 2009
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Objectives:

This course is intended to develop your understanding of the complexities of ethical thought about selected social issues and the contribution of religious and philosophical reflection to moral decision-making.

The course is also intended to provide an opportunity for you to improve your written and verbal communication skills.

Textbooks (available at the SU Bookstore and on Reserve):

Munson, Ronald (ed.), Intervention and Reflection: Basic Issues in Medical Ethics, 8th edition. [I&R]

Regan, Tom (ed.), Matters of Life and Death, 3rd edition.

Reserve Articles available on Blackboard – Several articles used in this class are available online under REL 252 on Blackboard.

Requirements:

Attendance: Because your active participation in classroom discussions is a central component of this course, **regular attendance is a course requirement**. Frequent absences **will** lower your final grade.

Participation: All students are expected to contribute to all group discussions and debates. It is important that you read the assignments carefully **before** class and that you **come prepared** to discuss the issues at stake. **In-class debates will presuppose completion of the assigned reading.**

Quizzes: There will be short, unannounced written assignments in class from time to time.

Exams: In-class exams will be administered on **February 17, March 24**. There will be a final exam.

Positions Papers: Short position papers will be assigned from time to time.

Grades: Student grades will be based on the quality of (1) participation in the seminar discussions and debates (20%), and (2) performance on the exams, quizzes, and other written assignments (50% on in-class exams, quizzes; 30% final exam)

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

- January 13 **Introduction and Overview of the Course**
- Discussion: Harvard Business School Case: "Peter Green's First Day,"
(available Blackboard [Bb])
- January 15 **No Class. Dr. Wallwork is lecturing out of town.**
- "Biblical Ethics," in Selections from The Bible Reader: An Interfaith Interpretation. [Bb]
Regan, Matters of Life and Death, "Introduction," pp.1-2, 12-20.
- January 20 **Moral Autonomy**
- Film: "Please Let Me Die"**
- Munson, I&R, ch.2, "Autonomy," pp. 102-125
Munson, I&R, Part V, "The Principle of Autonomy," pp. 777-781.
- January 22 **Moral Autonomy**
- Munson, I&R. Dworkin, "Paternalism," pp. 125-134.
- January 27 **Refusing Treatment and Suicide**
- Film: "Dax's Case"**
- Regan, Matters of Life and Death, ch.3, pp.69-120.
- January 29 **Refusing Treatment and Suicide**
- "Jewish Ethics" and "Life, Sacredness of," in Dictionary of Christian Ethics
"Suicide," Encyclopedia Judaica. [Bb]
- February 3 **Ethical Theory and Moral Decisions**
- Munson, I&R, Part V, pp. 741-769.
Immanuel Kant, "Good Will, Duty and the Categorical Imperative" " [Bb]
Bentham, "Quantitative Utilitarianism" [Bb]
- February 5 **Moral Character: Virtues, Care and Feminist Ethics**
(Come prepared to discuss the "Dilemma of an Accountant" in class on Feb 5)
- "Dilemma of an Accountant." (Bb)
Munson, Part V, "Theories Without Principles," pp. 782-791.

- February 10-12 **Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide**
- Film: "No Heroic Measures"**
- Regan, Matters of Life and Death, ch.2, pp.30-68.
- February 17 ****FIRST EXAM****
- February 19 **Animals and the Value of Life**
- Regan, Matters of Life and Death, ch.8, pp.280-321
- February 24 **Research Ethics**
- Film: "Balancing Society's Mandates"**
- Munson, I&R, Ch 1, pp. 3-22 (to "Research Involving Animals").
- February 26 **Research Ethics**
- Munson, I&R, I, Ch.1, pp.25-44 (Starting "Summary"), and p. 51-55 ("Principles of the Nuremberg Code" & "Belmont Report").
- March 3 **Violence and War**
- Regan, Matters of Life and Death, Ch 4 "Morality and Violence: War, Revolution and Terrorism," pp. 121-158.
- March 5 **Abortion**
- Regan, Matters of Life and Death, ch.6, pp.195-234.
(In class abortion debate—prepare arguments pro and con)
- March 10-12 **SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS**
- March 17-19 **Genetic Intervention**
- Munson, I&R, Ch. 5, pp. 271-312.
- March 24 ****SECOND EXAM****

- March 26 **Reproductive Ethics**
Munson, I&R, Ch 6, pp. 365-393.
- March 31 **Surrogate Motherhood**
Munson, I&R, Ch. 6, pp. 394-396, 409-413, 430-436
- April 2 **Cloning**
Munson, I&R, pp. 438-447.
(Come prepared to participate in cloning debate)
- April 7-9 **Defective Newborns and Rights of Handicapped**
Film: "Better Off Dead"
Munson, I&R, Ch. 10, pp. 623-657.
- April 14-16 **World Hunger**
Regan, Matters of Life and Death, Ch. 7, pp.235-275.
- April 21 **Mayfest**
- April 23 **Environmental Ethics**
Regan, Matters of Life and Death, ch.9, pp. 322-376.
(In class role-playing debate using ethical positions outlined in Regan, ch.9)
- April 28 **Reflection and Review (Last day of classes)**
- May 1 Final Exam: 2:45-4:45pm

Academic integrity statement: The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

Disability Statement: Students who may need academic accommodations due to a disability are encouraged to discuss their needs with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. In order to obtain authorized accommodations, students should be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309 (315) 443-4498 and have an updated accommodation letter for the instructor. Accommodation and related support services such as exam administration are not provided retroactively and must be requested in advance. For more information about services and policy, visit the Office of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/> or contact the office at the addresses below:

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