Spring 2016  
Course Title: Foundations of Philosophical Ethics  
Course Number: BIOE 5700-THST 698.05  
Section Times/Days: T 7:15-9:45 – UH 4511 (Bioethics Conference Room)  
Instructor: Dr. Tiffany Cvrljak  
Office Hours: T, 6-7 and by appointment  
Email: cvrljak@ucla.edu

Course Description  
This course introduces students in bioethics to the theories and problems of moral philosophy. Our methods will include both a historical and a systematic component. We will be tracing the development of ethical theories through their lineages in order to understand the arguments that ground contemporary debates. We will study the dominant ethical theories represented in bioethics today, including natural law and virtue ethics, deontology, consequentialism, and theories of rights and justice. Students will understand the function and importance of ethical frameworks for the articulation of bioethical problems. Although the course’s interest is ultimately on the bioethical implications of foundational approaches to ethics, the focus will be theoretical in scope. Original works from Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Mill, Rawls, and others will be studied.

Student Learning Outcomes  
Familiarize with the main ethical theories of bioethics and identify the philosophical components of the public discussion on bioethical issues.

Track the relationship between bioethical principles and their dependence on underlying theoretical justifications.

Engage in the critical analysis of bioethical questions and articulate their theoretical and practical dimension.

Appreciate the importance of ethical dialogue across different philosophical traditions.

Develop strength with the methods of philosophical reasoning and careful argumentation.

Prerequisites:  
Graduate status

Required Texts  


Plato: Republic (any translation, but my favorite is Hackett Classics 2nd Edition, translated by Grube)
Additional texts available online via our course website.

**Course Work:**
- Class Preparation & Participation: 10%
- In Class Presentations: 40%
- Midterm: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%

**Statement on the University Mission in Relation to Courses in the Bioethics Institute**
Courses in the Bioethics graduate program at Loyola Marymount University seek to provide educational opportunities that will enable students to reflect systematically on contemporary issues in bioethics through a challenging liberal arts and sciences curriculum with a commitment to social justice.

Courses in the Bioethics Institute require students to think, speak, write, and reflect critically about the deepest ethical questions of the day, especially those emerging in the areas of the life sciences and medicine. To do this, students are required also to “acquire the arts of precise and elegant expression, a sound and critical grasp of ideas, a familiarity with the modern world’s ways of knowing itself, a personal understanding of this nation’s history and multicultural heritage, and an appreciation of other cultures and societies around the globe.” (University Bulletin)

**Statement on Academic Excellence in the Bioethics Institute**
In keeping with the larger context of LMU’s mission, academic excellence is grounded in critical thinking, moral reflection, and articulate expression (both in written and oral form). Such critical thinking, reflection, and expression are rooted in the discipline of academic work. Critical thought and reflection, as well as the ability to articulate one’s ethical beliefs clearly and thoughtfully, are the result of disciplined work, which constitutes the necessary condition for academic achievement. The Bioethics Institute maintains high expectations for academic excellence. Students in the Bioethics Institute’s courses are expected to be engaged listeners and careful readers as well as to write and speak cogently about substantive ethical matters. They are expected to understand and analyze pertinent primary texts, scholarly literature, and to assimilate lectures on complex topics. Moreover, students are expected to generate their own questions about the material under consideration, questions appropriate to the area they are studying, reflecting a firm grasp of the basic course content and methodological approach.

Courses in the Bioethics Institute may require approximately 150 pages of reading a week and up to 40 pages of writing over the course of the semester. Moreover, class attendance, preparation, and participation are not optional, but essential. Faculty are not required to prepare detailed “study guides” that repeat or summarize class and lecture content, nor are they required to prepare students for quizzes or exams beyond the content of the course lectures. Grading standards are high for all courses in the Bioethics Institute.

**Tentative Nature of the Syllabus**
This syllabus represents the professor’s best judgment and projection of the conduct of the course. However, the professor reserves the right to modify the assignments and requirements for this course. Ample notification (written or oral) will be given for any changes. Students are responsible for any changes or modifications announced in class or posted on LMU’s course management system MyLMUConnect.
Course Requirements
This is a seminar course that uses a combination of lectures and group discussion as the primary modes of in-class instruction. Students may be assigned about 150 pages of reading per week and are expected to come to class prepared to actively engage in discussion. In the course of the semester, students will be expected to submit about 30-50 pages of writing (double-spaced, spread out across multiple assignments) and give a ten minute class presentation based on their final paper.

Class Preparation & Participation: 10%
Class participation accounts for 10% of the final grade and reflects the quality of a student’s preparation for class and contributions to class discussion. To adequately prepare for class, students will need to complete the assigned reading and take notes for the purpose of contributing substantively to in-class discussion. Students should bring copies of the readings and their notes to class each week. Participation will be assessed in terms of students’ in-class engagement with the texts, willingness to take learning risks, and conscientiousness towards the contributions of others.

In Class Presentations: 40%
During the course of the semester, you will offer 2 in class presentations. The professor will assign you to two specific readings from the syllabus. You will be asked to articulate what you consider the central points of the selected reading and present them to class. In order to do so, you must:

- Read carefully, summarize, and highlight important points in the text
- Explain how the text expresses central aspects of the ethical theory to which it discusses
- Point to a particular dimension in the text that you find important, clarifying why it is so
- Prepare a 4-6 page (double-spaced) essay of your findings. This essay will be turned in, and you will deliver the material in a 15 min presentation.

Criteria: Your essay is neither a book report nor a critical assessment. It is, rather, an intelligent synthesis. Refrain from quotations and regurgitation. We will discuss this assignment further in class.

Midterm Exam and Final Exam 50% Combined
Details on the exams will be given later in the semester.

Grading & Assessment
Your final grade for this course is composed of the above elements. Written assignments will be submitted, evaluated, and returned electronically via MyLMUConnect, where you can check the status of your grade at any time. The grading scale and standards used for this course are included below.

Technology
MyLMUConnect: The majority of course materials you need to prepare for class each week will be available on MyLMUConnect. MyLMUConnect is also your best source for finding the most up-to-date assignments and instructions: if you should find a discrepancy between what is printed on this syllabus and what is posted on MyLMUConnect, go with the latter.

Email Communication: At times I will communicate with the entire class using campus email systems, so it is essential that you regularly check your lion.lmu.edu email address or forward your lion account email to your preferred email address. I respond to email messages during the work week within 48-hours of receipt. For matters requiring a more immediate response, indicate “urgent” in the subject line.
Classroom Conduct

Classroom Behavior: This is a seminar-style course where active listening and respectful communication skills are crucial for maintaining a constructive learning environment. If at any point your behavior in class jeopardizes the safety of the learning environment for others, you will be asked to leave for the remainder of class time and must meet with me prior to the next class period. If at any point you feel threatened in the classroom environment, please communicate this to me and/or the Director of the Bioethics Institute.

Electronic Devices: Please turn off and put out of sight all electronic devices (other than a computer, if/when allowed) during class-time. The interruptions they cause disrupt class, interfere with the learning process, and are ultimately disrespectful to your classmates and myself. Unauthorized use of electronic devices, including using computers for non-course related purposes, will be treated as an absence from class.

Absences: Because this course only meets once per week, attendance at every class is significant for student learning. I do not make distinctions between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, though I do appreciate advanced notice if you are unable to attend. All absences, for any reason, are given a participation grade of 0 for that week. Regardless of your presence or absence, you are responsible for making up the missed material and submitting the requisite coursework for each week.

Policies

Late Assignments: Students are expected to complete assignments by the stated deadline, unless special accommodations have been made in advance. An assignment submitted within one week after the deadline will still be accepted for credit, but will lose a full letter grade.

Incomplete: Students needing more time to complete the requirements of this course may request an initial grade of Incomplete and subsequently lose one full letter off their final course grade. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests to expulsion. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the “LMU Honor Code and Process” which appears in the University Bulletin.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Students who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should present the appropriate documentation from the LMU Disability Support Services Office to me at the beginning of the semester. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities who do not yet have the appropriate documentation should contact the Disability Support Services Office (Daum Hall Room 224, 310-338-4535) as soon as possible. Visit http://www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.

Exigent Circumstances: Major life events do not always respect the academic calendar. If something should happen during the semester that seriously affects your ability to meet the demands of this course, contact me as soon as practicable. Accommodations may be made so long as (1) the academic rigor of the course is maintained, and (2) fairness to other students is respected. [*In case of a weekend emergency, it is best to text my personal cell phone (323-327-7489; don’t forget to include your name), and I will call you back.]
### GRADING SCALE & STANDARDS FOR THIS COURSE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td><strong>Outstanding</strong> Student has exceeded expectations and achieved mastery of the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96</td>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong> Student has met all expectations and demonstrated an excellent understanding of the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td><strong>Great</strong> Student has met all expectations and demonstrated a great understanding of the subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td><strong>Very Good</strong> Student has met nearly all expectations and demonstrated a good understanding of the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td><strong>Good/Satisfactory</strong> Student has met most expectations and demonstrated a general comprehension of the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td><strong>Red Flag</strong> Student has met some expectations and demonstrated a flawed comprehension of the subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
<td><strong>Not Good</strong> Student has met few expectations and shown a poor understanding of the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td><strong>Very Bad</strong> Student has not met expectations and has shown deficient understanding of the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td><strong>Completely Unacceptable</strong> Flagrant disregard for course requirements; violated honor code or failed to hand anything in.</td>
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### UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC STANDING

**Good Standing:** Graduate students must maintain a B average (3.0) in term, major, program, and cumulative GPA to remain in good academic standing.

**O Academic Probation:** Graduate students are subject to academic probation if their term or cumulative GPA is lower than a B average (3.0), or if they fail to make satisfactory progress in the program of study.

**Academic Disqualification:** Graduate students are subject to disqualification if, in two consecutive semesters on probation, their performance falls below the stated career requirement. Disqualification terminates a student’s relationship with the University for a minimum of one year.

*See the University Bulletin for complete details on academic standing*
WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Remember, this is only a tentative schedule, an attempt to articulate the subject matter that might not reflect the real unfolding of the class content. The latter depends on factors that cannot be established a priori, such as the learning pace of students, their ability to assimilate the material, as well as the need to continue in class discussions on particular points. For all these reasons, the schedule could be modified any time at the professor’s discretion. Check MyLMUConnect for the most up-to-date information.

All readings are to be completed before lecture on the date listed.

Jan 12: Introduction and Overview
Reading: None

1/19: Normativity, Relativism, and Truth
Reading: Beauchamp, Chapter 1 (“Morality and Moral Philosophy”)
Beauchamp, Chapter 2 (“Relativism, Pluralism, and Individuality in Morals”)
McBrayer, “Why Our Children Don’t Think There Are Moral Facts” (on website)
Cvrkel, “Arguments: An Owner’s Manual” (on website)

1/26: No Class

2/2: Utilitarianism
Reading: Beauchamp, Chapter 4 (“Mill and Utilitarian Theories”)
Mill, Utilitarianism (Pay closest attention to Chapter 2, pp. 6-26)

2/9: Utilitarianism, cont.
Reading: Mill, Utilitarianism (Pay closest attention to Chapter 5, pp 42-64)
Nathanson, “Act and Rule Utilitarianism” (on website)

2/16: Contract Theories
Reading: Beauchamp, Chapter 7 (“Hume and Communitarian Theories”)
Scanlon, What We Owe to Each Other (selection on website)

2/23: Deontology
Reading: Kant, Groundwork, Section 1 and Section 2, parts 4:406-4:425

3/1: No Class (Spring Break)

3/8: Deontology, Cont.
Reading: Kant, Groundwork, Section 2, parts 4:428-4:440

3/15: Virtue Theories
Reading: Plato, Republic, Books II, IV, VIII

Reading: Aristotle, NE, Book I, pp 95-110, Book II, pp 111-122
Reading: Aristotle, NE, Book VII, pp 189-208

4/5: Justice
Reading: Beauchamp, Chapter 9 ("Justice")

4/12: Rights
Reading: Beauchamp, Chapter 8 ("Rights")

4/19: Liberty
Reading: Beauchamp, Chapter 10 ("Liberty")

4/26: Final Exam Review/Workshop

5/3: Final Exams Due (11PM, online)