**PHI 3638 Moral Problems Term \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**3 credit hours Professor: Carol S. Gould, Ph.D.**

**Classroom**

**times**

**Professor Gould’s Contact Information:**

**Email:**[cgould@fau.edu](mailto:cgould@fau.edu)

**Tel:** 561.297.3892

**Fax:** 561.297.2095

**Office:** Social Science, 279 (Boca Campus)

**Office Hours: TBA**

The best way to contact me is via email. I generally reply to emails within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays.

If you have a concern that others might share, rather than personal or confidential, please use the Questions/Concerns forum on the discussion board.

**Description of PHI 3638 online**

This course will examine moral problems of vital contemporary importance, such as animal rights, a patient’s right die, physician–assisted suicide, moral of the mentally ill, designer babies and human enhancement. The course will introduce you to the standard ethical theories, which form the foundation of moral deliberation about moral issues.

**\*This course has no pre-requisites**

**Course Goals**

At the end of the course, you should

1. understand the nature of a moral dilemma and the problem of “dirty hands”

(2) grasp the difference between asserting a moral claim and rationally defending

that claim

(3) understand the central moral problems we confront in contemporary life

and some of the prominent arguments on different sides of these issues

(4) be acquainted with the basics of the major ethical theories

(5) have an improved ability to deliberate on moral issues in your life

How well you meet these goals will be based on the following:

**Assessments**

A blog with 6 entries (30%)

Participation (10 %)

There will be various ways for you to participate in class, such as fruitful participation in class and in structured debates, and to participate in posted discussion topics on the Blackboard Discussion Board.

Tests (40 %) 4 tests (may be given on blackboard) The questions will be short answer &/or or true/false.

Final (20 %) The final is cumulative.

**Texts: 1.** Judith Boss (editor), *Analyzing Moral Issues: A Reader* (6th edition)

**2.** Joel Feinberg, *Doing Philosophy* (fifth edition)

**3.** Assigned posted articles, podcasts, films, or websites

**Study Questions**: For every topic, you will be given study questions, and you should do the Critical Reading Questions at the start of the assigned articles in the Boss text.

Some are designed to help you pick out the important points in the texts and course modules, others to help you reflect critically on important philosophical questions. For the latter, there may be no right answer, but rather a well-defended one. You will need to keep up with these, as your tests and final will be based on them.

**Grading Scale:** 93-100—A 67-69—D+

90-92—A- 63-66--D

87-89—B+ 60-62—D-

83-86—B 59 and below--F

80-82—B-

77-79—C+

73-76—C

70-72—C-

**Please log on to the course Blackboard page at least two times a week. You will find postings of links, podcasts, current articles, etc.**

**Writing Your Blog**

Any written assignment must be professional, well organized, grammatically correct, and free of misspellings. All references must be properly cited using the University of Chicago style (see [Academic Integrity](http://www.fau.edu/CTL/AcademicIntegrity.php) and [Plagiarism](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/); for help with formatting citations, go to [www.library.fau.edu/depts/ref/instsrv/tutorial/web3.htm](http://www.library.fau.edu/depts/ref/instsrv/tutorial/web3.htm)).

*Please check the assignment directions to verify when and how feedback will be provided.*

Each entry should be at least 500 words. You should put the word count in parentheses at the end of your entry. The best way to do an entry is to write it first as a Word document (or functional equivalent) so that you will be able to craft it carefully and to check spelling, grammar, and word count. If you fall slightly short of 500 words, do not pad your entry.

*Your blogs and your discussion assignments should express your own original thoughts* and make clear references to the texts, when appropriate.

I expect and encourage you to consult with your classmates on assignments and to do so on the Discussion Board. Whatever you turn in, however, must be your own work.

***You should read and consult the Feinberg book at the beginning of the term. It is an invaluable resource for all of the assessments.***

**Netiquette & Classroom Etiquette**

1. Online Language: Many of us text, email, tweet, and post to Facebook. Thus, on-line, we have gotten used to relaxing our grammar and spelling, and/or professionalism. In this class, however, you are adult students and professionals—your communication should convey respect, maturity, and professionalism. Also, please note that online, you do not have the advantage of gesture, facial expression, and conversational context. Thus, other students may interpret sarcasm or wit as insulting or rude.
2. Professional Language: *Profanity is never acceptable in assignments or in the classroom*. Why? As a person who cares enough about education and self-improvement, you should strive to raise your facility with language. Thus, you should aim to avoid clichés, phrases so overused they are empty of meaning. Most instances of profanity fall into this category. I am confident that each of you can be more original in expressing your ideas.
3. Respect for Yourself and Others: Disrespect towards racial, national, religious, or sexual identity is intolerable in an academic and other professional setting.

**Policy on late work**

It is of the first importance that you work consistently and that you do all assignments and tests on time. No make-up tests, except for unusual acts of God or

Nature

Late blog submissions will be marked down, except in extraordinary, *documented*, circumstances.

**Class Schedule**

This course has six sections, some of which will cover more material than others. We shall spend two weeks on each.

For each topic, you should read Boss’ introduction to the unit. You will also receive other kinds of material (PowerPoints, films, podcasts, etc.).

**You are responsible for reading the Feinberg book. You may be given test questions on chapters 8 & 10. You will find the rest of it invaluable for your blogs and discussion posts.**

**Section1**: **Moral Theories: Basic Overview**

Readings: Boss, Chapter 1, pp.1-43

Mill, “Utilitarianism” (Boss, pp. 53-55)

Rawls, “A Theory of Justice” (Boss, pp 61-63)

Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics,” (pp.44-49)

Blog 1

Test 1

**Section 2: Are Animals Members of our Moral Community?**

Readings: Singer, “Animal Liberation,” (pp. 635-643)

Regan, “The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism” (pp. 624-629)

Narveson, “Animal Rights Revisited” (pp. 630-634)

Cohen, “Do Animals Have Rights?” (pp. 644-650)

Related: Kant, “Fundamental Principles…” (pp. 56-60)

Blog 2

**Section 3: The Death Penalty**

***September 21-October 2***

Readings: Film, *The Life of David Gale*

Van den Haagg, “The Ultimate Punishment…” (pp. 234-238)

Reiman, “Why the Death Penalty Should Be Abolished…” (pp.255-261)

Bedau, “Punishment and…” (pp.245-255)

Test 2

Blog 3

**Section 4: Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia**

***October 3-20***

Readings: Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (pp.185-189)

Pabst-Battin, “The Case for Euthanasia” (pp.190-198)

Wolf, “A Feminist Critique of Physician-Assisted Suicide” (pp.209-215)

Case of Judith Curran, p. 217

Simone Giordano, “Anorexia and Refusal of Life-Saving Treatment: The

Moral Place of Competence, Suffering, and the Family” (2010) *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology,* vol.17, no. 2, pp. 143-154

Related: “Noddings, Caring: A Feminist Approach to Ethics…” (pp.66-69)

Blog 4

Test 3

**Section 5: Ethics of Human Enhancement**

Readings: Savulescu, “Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancement of

Human Beings” (pp. 136-142)

Yin Ren, “Designer Babies: The Pros and Cons…” (pp.143-147)

Kass, “The Wisdom of Repugnance…” (pp.154-161)

Murray, “Drugs, Sports, and Ethics” (pp.311-317)

Rand, “*The Fountainhead*” (pp.49-51)

Additional reading will be posted.

Blog 5

Test 4

**Section 6: Is Addiction a Moral Problem or a Physical Disorder?**

Readings: Husak, “A Moral Right To Use Drugs” (pp. 301-307)

Szasz, “The Ethics of Addiction,” (pp.284-292)

Wilson, “Against the Legalization…” (pp. 292-300)

Additional material to be assigned

Blog 6

**Final Exam**

**A Note about Academic integrity:** If you have any questions about whether you need to cite a source or acknowledge credit to someone, feel free to consult me.

\****Keep in mind that the consequences of academic dishonesty are far worse than the consequences of a low grade or missing an assignment.***

**STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**: Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see  [http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001\_Code\_of\_Academic\_Integrity.pdf](https://exchange.fau.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=sv3UV1tvPka8h1zHPPhg4wk8N3TGStAITC8jA5flXulW9RTYA3JMapjLJeCUyv6t6eHa5wRcQDg.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.fau.edu%2fregulations%2fchapter4%2f4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf)

**Student Assistance**

1. Please avail yourself of the library. You will have some assignments requiring you to use articles from online journals. To access them, you will have to log on via “Off-Campus Connect (EZproxy)” and then go to the link “Electronic Journals.” These links can be found at http://www.fau.edu/library/

2. <http://www.fau.edu/class/> connects you to the FAU Center for Learning and Student Success (CLASS). The center has various resources for students who may need extra help or tutoring.

3. <http://www.fau.edu/UCEW/> takes you to the University Center for Excellence in Writing, which offers tutoring and helps with writing assignments. You may have an online or face-to face session with a tutor.

4. Feel free to consult with me either in my office or virtually.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located in Boca Raton SU 133 (561-297-3880), in Davie - LA 240 (954-236-1657), in Jupiter - SR 110 (561-799-8585) and follow all OSD procedures.

**Policy on Incompletes:**

As a general rule, incompletes will not be given in this course. However, should there be an extraordinary case in which I believe that you genuinely merit receiving a grade of ‘I,’ you and I will establish a date by which your work will be completed. I will determine a default grade, which will be your grade if you do not finish the work by that date.

If circumstances beyond the student’s control make it impossible for a student to complete the required work by the end of the term, incompletes will be permitted *only* if a student has completed more than 50% of the exams and assignments in the course with an average grade of ‘C’ or better.

**Technical Problem Resolution Procedure**

There is always a possibility of technical issues (e.g., lost connection, hardware or software failure). Many of these can be resolved relatively quickly, but if you wait to the last minute before due dates, you increase the chance of a glitch affecting your success. Please plan appropriately. Should a problem occur, it is essential you take immediate action to document the issue so your instructors can verify and take appropriate action regarding a resolution. Please take the following steps should a problem occur:

1. If you can, make a Print Screen of the monitor when the problem occurred. Save the Print Screen as a .jpg file. If you are unfamiliar with creating a Print Screen file, click the appropriate links below.
   * For PC users ([video](http://www.fau.edu/cel/PrintScreenTutorialPC.swf) or [script](https://blackboard.fau.edu/bbcswebdav/xid-2718164_1))
   * For MAC users
2. Complete a Help Desk ticket at <http://www.fau.edu/helpdesk>. Make sure you complete the form entirely and give a full description of your problem so the Help Desk staff will have the pertinent information in order to assist you properly. This includes:
   * Select “Blackboard (Student)” for the Ticket Type.
   * Input the Course ID.
   * In the Summary/Additional Details section, include your operating system, Internet browser, and internet service provider (ISP).
   * Attach the Print Screen file, if available.
3. Send a message within Blackboard to your instructor to notify him/her of the problem. Include all pertinent information of the incident (2b-d above).
4. If you do not have access to Blackboard, send an email to your instructor with all pertinent information of the incident (2b-d above).
5. If you do not have access to a computer, call your instructor with all pertinent information of the incident. If he/she is not available, make sure you leave a detailed message.
6. If you do not hear back from the Help Desk or your instructor within a timely manner (48 hours), it is your responsibility to follow up with the appropriate person until a resolution is obtained.