

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Thomas Weston

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SUBJECT OF COURSE:

Philosophy of Values. The course will concentrate on morality and social justice.

OBJECTIVES OF COURSE:

(1) To challenge the student to think about what kind of life to live, and what kind of society to live it in. In particular we will discuss issues about social inequality (poverty and wealth, race and gender inequality) and about social conflict and harmony (war and peace, protest and rebellion). By the end of the course you should be more skilled and confident in thinking about such issues and discussing them.

(2) To introduce the student to philosophic reasoning. This means that you should learn how philosophers reason and criticize the reasoning of others, and develop some skill in doing these things yourself.

(3) To present some of the major alternative views on morality and political theory. This means that you will learn some of the most influential ideas and theories about what makes right actions right, and what political institutions should exist. You will learn how to apply these theories to practical situations and issues.

MATERIAL COVERED:

All our readings are contained the packet of Xeroxed materials. These materials concern major moral or political theories, or applications of these theories to concrete examples from American history or contemporary affairs.

Examples will concentrate on questions of the moral justification of inequalities within a

single country, or those concerning domination or exploitation of one country by another, as well as issues of peace and war.

The views we study are *not* all equally valid. Some are definitely wrong, and some may be positively evil. We do not study a point of view only because it might be true, but because it is important to understand it.

Controversy and debate are normal and necessary in philosophy, so don't hesitate to express your disagreements with the written texts, the instructor or other students.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: (*all* must be completed for a passing grade)

- 1) Midterm Exams: Two one-hour exams in essay form will be given. The first will be given approximately in the 7th week. Each exam counts 30%.
- 2) Final Examination: Given at regularly scheduled time, counts 35%.
- 3) Short quizzes: 5-minute quizzes on assigned reading, approximately 10 per term, counts 5%. Cannot be made up.
- 4) Regular attendance and occasional class participation.

Accommodation for Disabilities

The instructor will be happy to meet with any student who may need support services due to a disability. He will cooperate with DSS in providing authorized accommodations or support services for students.

Packet of Readings Availability

When the packet of readings is ready, it can be bought from Cal Copy, next to the Pita Pit, on College Ave. Do not buy this packet if you are not sure you will stay in the course, since it is not returnable. The packet is not the same as last semester, so using an old packet is not advised.