HON 202 On Being Ethical in the World

Catalog Description: Prerequisite: acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor. This course surveys the history of ethics, with particular attention to the history of philosophical approaches to ethics as well as to the process of moral decision-making in major religious traditions. These philosophical and religious perspectives are then critically examined in light of some contemporary moral problems. Among the moral problems considered are abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, sexuality and marriage, the moral status of animals, and the environment. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits.

Restrictions: Acceptance into the University Honors Program, or by consent of instructor.

Essential Equipment and Facilities: Seminar-style classroom with computer equipment.

Course Goals, Objectives and Learning Outcomes:
This course enables students to (….should specify goals, objectives and intended outcomes of course):

- To introduce how various world religious traditions understand what it means to be human and some ethical implications of these understandings
- To study the history of approaches to moral theory
- To consider contemporary moral problems in light of religious and non-religious approaches to the ethical life

Content:
We will study how major religious traditions understand human nature, the human predicament, and human destiny. This study will lead to consideration of approaches to ethics which grow out of these understandings. We will also study the history of ethics. Finally, these ethical approaches, religious and non-religious, will be applied to contemporary moral problems.
Current Required Texts:

2. Dawkins, “Atheists for Jesus” (on Blackboard under “Assignments”)
3. Dostoyevsky, “The Rebel” (on Blackboard under “Assignments”)
4. Dostoyevsky, “The Grand Inquisitor” (on Blackboard under “Assignments”)

Instructional Strategies:

1. The class will be seminar. Sometimes mini-lectures will be to establish the context and theoretical framework of our readings so as to enhance seminar conversations.
2. Students are expected to arrive at their own conclusions about issues discussed, to be able to give reasons for their conclusions, and to sympathetically understand why others may disagree.
3. Students are expected to develop further the art of conversation. Conversation requires active listening – that is, openness to what others have to say, asking questions, risking one’s opinions, and the willingness to engage in the back-and-forth of open-ended dialogue. Such conversations are essential for global citizenship in a pluralistic world.

Course Requirements:

1. *Class Attendance*: Class attendance is required. You are expected to attend all class meetings and to have assignments prepared when they are due. More than three absences or three index cards not turned in will result in zero points for class participation. For each absence beyond three there will be a 5% deductions from your possible semester grade.
2. *Class Participation*: Participation does not mean mere presence in the classroom. Instead, it means active listening – that is, the willingness to engage in the back-and-forth of open-ended and reasoned conversations by being open to what others have to say, risking our opinions, asking questions, and surfacing disagreements. Such “active listening” is essential to being a community of scholars.
3. **Laptops and Other Communication Devices:** Please note that the use of laptops and other communication devices can only be used during review days and on the two days of class presentations. On all other days they **are not** allowed to be used in class.

4. **Reading Assignments:** You are asked to study carefully all required readings by the day on which they appear on the projected course schedule. It is important to note that you are asked not merely to read all assigned materials but to study them. Such study may require several readings of the material.

5. **Class Time:** Class meetings will be, for the most part, seminar conversations.

6. **Index Cards:** In order to aid class discussion, you are required to submit an index card to me at the beginning of each class. On one side of the card, you are to write one or two important questions which you have about the assigned reading material for the day. On the other side, you are to write a response to the prior class; you may write, for example, about something important you learned, your critical reaction to something said in class, or an issue that you would like the class to revisit. Cards are to be turned in at the beginning of class.

7. **Exams:** There will be two in-class exams (midterm and final) during the semester. Review questions will be distributed at least one week prior to each exam.

8. **Quizzes:** At the end of each review session there will be a quiz. No makeup of these quizzes will be allowed.

9. **Final Project:** This is to be a “creative project,” which is both academic and personal. In this project you are to creatively think through and present the relationship of human nature, its predicament and destiny to suffering and violence. You are to do this in response to the novel *The Kin of Ata Are Waiting For You* and in light of the works studied this semester. On the final two days of class you will each give a presentation of your project to the class. This project and presentation can be done either in a group (no larger than 4) or individually.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

1. Evaluation and grading will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
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2. Grades will be assigned as follows:

   A = 100-91; B = 90-81; C = 80-71; D = 70-61; F = below 60

**Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy:**
The course syllabus should include the following statement:
Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.
Students with Disabilities Policy:
The course syllabus should include the following statement:
In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Center for Academic Success, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Bibliography (optional):

Prepared by:
Carmichael Peters, Spring 2009

Last revised:
Carmichael Peters, Spring 2010