Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the main schools of ethical thought in the Western philosophical tradition. We examine works by philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant and Mill, and we ask how the ethical systems developed by these figures can help us to think through issues like economic inequality, the treatment of animals, and euthanasia.

Course Objectives

1. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories
2. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
3. Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values
4. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
5. The student will demonstrate knowledge across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age in ethics as demonstrated by quizzes, in-class discussions, exams, and written assignments.
6. The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge pertaining to moral philosophy as demonstrated by quizzes, in-class discussions, exams, and written assignments.

Grading

- Engagement: 20%
- Online Quizzes: 10%
- Final Paper: 20%
- Film Responses: 10%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 20%

WCAS Grading System

The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+
(3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (0.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (0.00), failure; I (0.00), incomplete; F (0.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (0.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (0.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Text(s)/Readings (Required)
- Additional materials will be posted on Canvas under “Files/Readings.”

Important Policies
[http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html](file:///C:/Users/Box/Downloads/academicinteg.html)

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html]

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student's work.

Request for Accommodations
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. For further information, you can locate the disability resources on the web at [http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html](http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html).

Attendance
Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs
that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate’s notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.

**Deadlines**

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly. For late quizzes, students will incur a deduction of 25% for each day late. For the paper, students will incur a deduction of a whole letter grade for each day late.

**Course Assignments** (readings, exercises and/or experiences)

It is expected that, on average, six hours per week of your study time will be spent on out of class assignments and exercises. These are listed below.

**Engagement:**

- **Office Hours:** I encourage you to come by the office,
- **Speaking:** You are not “absolutely” required to contribute to class discussions, but be mindful that speaking in class is a component of your engagement grade. Be respectful toward others.
- **Question of the Day:** Please prepare a well-crafted question on the readings for the day. You may be called on to share.
- **E-mail:** For the shy, sending an occasional email to me containing questions and/or commentary is a viable form of engagement.
- **Discussion Forum:** We will be using Canvas to enhance class interaction. Here, you may post questions, comments, etc., on the day’s readings or any relevant subject matter. I especially encourage you to draw in ideas, articles, etc., that you encounter in other classes and in everyday life.
- **Attention:** Your grade will also be based on what you do not say. Attendance is not just
about your body being in a particular place, but also about your mind being in a particular state.

- **Noise:** All beepers, cell-phones, palm-pilots, Blackberries, iPhones, Galaxies, Nebulas, and whatever new devices I've never heard of are to be silenced during class. If I see you texting in class, you will be given a warning, and if you do it again, you will be asked to leave.

**Readings**
- Complete the weekly readings.
- These are bound to be challenging readings, so it is good to re-read, take notes, and outline the arguments.
- Come to please prepared to discuss them.

**Online Reading Quizzes:**
- Each week there will be an online quiz on the readings for that week.
- Quizzes must be completed prior to class.

**Film Responses**
- There will be two films that you will have to watch on your own. The films will be on reserve at O’Neill library.
- If done correctly, each movie assignment should amount to 3 hours of academic engagement, for a total of 6 additional hours for the semester.
- Each movie will have a thematic prompt available on Canvas. After watching the movie take some reflection time to think about how to respond to the prompt.
- Post a thoughtful and reflective response to the prompt. I am not looking for a short paper, but rather a substantial, cohesive paragraph (at least) that advances a claim/argument/interpretation.

**Final Paper:**
- You are required to prepare a final paper for the course.
- You will select your own topic. This may be one of the moral issues we discuss in class (e.g., abortion, euthanasia, etc.), or it may be a moral issue we do not study. If you decide to do the latter, I must approve the topic.
- I encourage you to approach or contact me—whether after class, in office hours, or via phone or email—if you have any questions pertaining to paper topics, and to do so well in advance of the due date.
- Papers are to be double-spaced and written in 12-point, Times New Roman font, 1” margins, with numbered pages.
- All papers will be submitted to Canvas.
- Pay meticulous attention to grammar, punctuation, and correct format.
- Legitimate sources for your paper are restricted to the following unless otherwise indicated: assigned texts, class notes, and your own imagination and intellect.
- Use in-text citations.
- Do not exceed the required length by more than one page.

**Standards for Distinguishing between Excellent, Good, Average and Poor:**
- **Professionalism:** Papers should demonstrate good grammar as well as good spelling. They should also be copy-edited to reduce or eliminate typos.
- **Writing Quality:** Writing should be clear and exhibit good structure. Paragraphs should be cohesive and build towards a complete essay with a substantial thesis (as opposed to a string of disconnected thoughts).
• Accuracy and Understanding: Papers should be able to accurately re-create an argument or a position. They should find the relevant issues and argument(s) worthy of analysis.

• Argument: Papers should argue for or against a position rather than merely exchange opinions. Is the argument for or against a position constructed persuasively within the confines of the paper? (Note: I am not looking for your argument to be true — there is no need to guess my opinion. What I want to see is persuasion.)

• I cannot convey my attitude toward paper grading better than the late author, David Foster Wallace:

“If you are used to whipping off papers the night before they’re due, running them quickly through the computer’s Spellchecker, handing them in full of high-school errors and sentences that make no sense and having the professor accept them ‘because the ideas are good’ or something, please be informed that I draw no distinction between the quality of one’s ideas and the quality of those ideas’ verbal expression, and I will not accept sloppy, rough-draftish, or semiliterate college writing. Again, I am absolutely not kidding.”

Exams

• There will be two in-class exams, a midterm and a final.
• The exams will consist of multiple choice and essay questions.
• I will distribute a review sheet a week in advance of the exams. The exam will only consist of material from the review sheet.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Exercises/Experiences</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-31:</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Philosophical Ethics</strong></td>
<td>Readings: Rachels, “What is Morality?”; Pierre Hadot, “Philosophy as a Way of Life” (online); Ursula LeGuinn, “The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas” (online);</td>
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10-5:  **Egoism**  
Readings: Rachels, “Ethical Egoism,“; Ayn Rand, “The Virtue of Selfishness” (online);  

10-13:  **Social Contract Theory**  
*Film Response #1 Due*  

10-19:  **Care Ethics and Review**  
Readings: Rachels, “Feminism and the Ethics of Care”  

10-26:  **Midterm Exam**  

11-2:  **Abortion**  
Readings: Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion” (351); Don Marquis, “An Argument that Abortion is Wrong” (Anthology, 364); “Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect” (Anthology, 375)  

11-9:  **Euthanasia**  
Readings: Rachels, “The Morality of Euthanasia” (Anthology, 266); Singer, “Taking Life: Humans“ (online)  

11-16:  **Animal Welfare**  
Readings: Kant, “We Have No Duties to Animals” (online); Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal” (online); Carl Cohen, “The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research” (online); Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights” (online); Roger Scruton, “The Case Against Animal Rights” (online)  

11-23:  **Climate Change**  
Readings: Ernest Partridge, “Future Generations” (online); Stephen Gardiner, “The Perfect Moral Storm” (online); John Broome, “Climate Matters” (online); Pope Francis, “Praised Be,” selections (online)  
*Film Response #2 Due*  

11-30:  **Capitalism and Inequality**  
*Final Paper Topics Approved*  

12-7:  **Just War and Counterterrorism**  
Readings: Aquinas, “On War”; Emily Crookstone, “Strict Just War Theory and Conditional Pacifism” (online); Michael Walzer, “Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses” (Anthology, 282); Joseph M. Schwarz, ‘Misreading Islamist Terrorism: the “War Against Terrorism’ and Just War Theory” (online); William O’Hara, Drone Attacks and Just War Theory” (online)  
*Final Paper Due*  

12-14:  *Final Exam*