

**PHI 241: ETHICS**  
**University of Wisconsin–Rock County**  
**Course Syllabus: Fall 2010**  
Lec 001, 3 Credits, MW 10:30a – 11:45a

**Professor:** Dr. Stephen E. Schmid  
**Office:** A145  
**Phone:** 758-6551  
**Email:** [stephen.schmid@uwc.edu](mailto:stephen.schmid@uwc.edu)  
[stephen@seschmid.org](mailto:stephen@seschmid.org)  
**Web page:** <http://seschmid.org>

**Office Hours:**  
TW: 12:00p–1:30p  
or, by appt.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Course Packet  
*A Rulebook for Arguments*, 3rd ed.                      Weston

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** There are two primary objectives of this course. First, this course will examine the major theories concerning the nature of right and wrong actions and how one ought to act. Furthermore, we will apply these theories to current issues. By no means are the ethical issues discussed in this class the only ethical topics of concern to modern philosophers. Rather, this is a sampling of the major ethical positions and their application to some real-life issues.

The second objective of this course is to improve your critical thinking skills. We will exercise these skills through writing assignments, exams, and class discussion. Improving one's analytical skills not only makes one a better thinker, but a better communicator. A characteristic of both is the ability to see through simplistic and fallacious arguments. The skill of effectively locating and analyzing the reasons and evidence in arguments is germane not only to philosophy, but to any discipline or aspect of life. In terms of this course, one should consider all assignments a form of argumentation; every paper or answer is an argument for some particular thesis or conclusion. I hope this course will help you write and think more effectively and persuasively.

This is not Sunday School. I will not tell you what to think based on my authority or anyone else's. I will not try to convert you to the School of Schmid. Nor will I accept beliefs unaccompanied by arguments. I will expect you to think on your own, to honestly assess your thoughts, to struggle with the difficult issues we will encounter, and to bring your own convictions and intuitions into the process. I will assess the quality of your arguments and whether they are rationally persuasive. In the end, I hope to have provided you with the tools and necessary knowledge to continue the process of critically thinking about these and other issues.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** There will be one paper, two exams, a presentation, and post-presentation responses.

**Paper:** The paper will be based on a real-life case study and will be three to four pages in length. The specific details for the paper will be posted to the class web site.

**Exams:** There are two exams. Each exam will test for knowledge of the readings, lectures, and class discussions covered prior to the exam. Each exam may include one or more of the following: identification questions, true and false questions, short answer questions, and/or extended essay questions. Exams will be conducted on D2L.

**Oral Presentation:** Three students at a time will prepare for class a presentation of a contemporary moral issue of their choice. The topic we discuss in class, namely abortion, is not a presentation option. Nor are the closely related topics of stem cell research and bioethics. Some suggestions include: surrogate motherhood, hate speech, gun control, gay marriage, sexual morality, flag burning, capital punishment, piracy, legal ethics, drug legalization, civil disobedience, environmental ethics, or religion and state. Grades will be assessed on the presentation itself (including organization of ideas, clarity of idea presentation, and consideration of differing views), the quality of the handout/slides, the leading of discussion following the presentation, and the quality of resources used to prepare the presentation.

The following is the basic structure for the oral presentation: (i) pick partners; (ii) sign up for a presentation date and schedule a conference with me to approve your topic; (iii) use library resources to find at least three interesting articles on your chosen contemporary moral issue; (iv) prepare and bring to your presentation either a two-page handout or a PowerPoint presentation that outlines the most important points in the articles and gives an accurate summary of the main arguments; (v) present for 20-25 minutes on your topic; and, (vi) be prepared to lead class discussion following your presentation (this will require that you prepare several thought-provoking questions about the material). In researching your presentations, you are allowed no more than one web sites as a resource. You must list at least two other non-internet sources.

**Post-Presentation Responses:** Every student not presenting is required to engage the presentation in two ways. First, one must be present for the presentation. Unexcused absences will lower your Responses grade. Second, write and hand in **at least** a one-page, double-spaced response to the presentation. The presentation response is due at the beginning of class the day following the presentation. Post-presentation responses should address the substantive issues in the presentation, how convincing you found one side or another of the issue, whether your view changed from the time you first considered the topic on the blog page, and why. These papers are small argumentative essays and should be written as such.

**Class Attendance and Participation:** Class participation and discussion is an essential aspect of this course. You will benefit from attending all classes. You must be present on the day of presentations. Why? Because you are writing a post-presentation response based on the presentation that week. If you are going to miss class or arrive late on a presentation day, let me know in advance. If you have an unexcused absence on the day of the presentation, you will not receive credit on a post-presentation response. If you arrive late to class and miss more than a quarter of the presentation (approximately 5-10 minutes), you will be counted as missing the entire presentation.

**Late Assignments:** Assignments turned in late will have one letter grade deducted for each day late. If an assignment is 10 minutes late, it is one day late. I will make exceptions to this rule, if you talk to me in advance.

**Success:** For all concerned, this is a demanding course. The recipe for success is simple: do all the readings on time; come to class prepared; stay on top of the assignments and do not fall behind or wait to the last minute to complete assignments; and, work hard.

**Resources:** The class web page (<http://seschmid.org/teaching>) contains all the essential information, handouts and announcements related to this class. Moreover, certain readings and assignments may be posted to the class web page for download. In addition, there are several resources available that will ease your introduction into philosophy. These include: Weston's *Rulebook for Arguments*; the links for reading and writing philosophy papers located on the class "Links & Resources" page; and, the links to philosophy dictionaries, encyclopedias and other resources listed on the class "Links & Resources" page.

**Class Meetings:** Please attend each class prepared and on time. Please turn off mobile phones or any other devices with bells and whistles. Please be courteous and respectful to other students in the class. Please ask questions of me or other students. Please do not talk while the instructor or other students are talking. In classes of this size, distractions disrupt everyone. If someone is distracting you personally, then politely ask that person to stop. If someone's actions are distracting the class, then that person may be asked to leave the class.

**Electronic Devices and Recording Devices:** Except for laptops and instructor-approved recording devices, all electronic devices should be turned off and stored out of sight. Following UWS Board of Regents Policy, Section 4-1 (<http://www.uwsa.edu/bor/policies/rpd/rpd4-1.htm>), students needing to record lectures must have signed agreements prior to using any recording device. Any electronic device that is distracting other students or the instructor is grounds for being asked to leave the class.

**Problems with the Course or Instructor:** Students are encouraged to discuss problems concerning the teaching of this course with me. If students wish to pursue a complaint with someone else, they should contact an advisor in Student Services.

**GRADES:** Papers and exams are graded on a point system.

**Assignment Values:**

Paper	20%
Presentation	15%
Presentation Responses	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	25%

**Grading Scale:**

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	≤59

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** Following are important notes about the course not specifically covered already.

### **Inclement Weather Cancellations**

Class and event cancellations are announced on the UW-Rock County home page and on local radio and television stations including: WJVL 99.9 FM, WCLO 1230 AM, WGEZ 1490 AM, WKPO 105.9 FM, WSJY 107.3 FM, WISC-TV Channel 3, Madison, WKOW-TV Channel 27, Madison, WMTV Channel 15, Madison

Classes and events will be cancelled in blocks:

- Morning classes/events that begin before noon (announced by 6 a.m.)
- Afternoon classes/events that begin between and including noon and 4 p.m. (announced by 10 a.m.)
- Evening classes/events that begin at 4:15 p.m. or later (announced by 3 p.m.)

Students: It's your responsibility to communicate with your instructors to make up missed class time.

### **Learning Support Center (LSC):**

The LSC offers free tutoring in writing, math and other academic subjects to all UW-Rock students. Walk in or call to schedule an appointment. Andrews Hall, Room 02; 758-6565 ext.450; MTWTh 8-5:30, F 8-3

### **Campus E-mail Policy**

All e-mail correspondence to your instructors **MUST** be sent through your official campus e-mail account. For safety against computer viruses and to remove SPAM email messages, your instructor **may delete without reading** any e-mail originating outside our campus e-mail system. If you use any other e-mail account to contact your instructor – you must assume that the message **WILL NOT** be read. Students are encouraged to read their campus email regularly. If you need assistance in accessing your campus e-mail account, please contact Campus Network Administrator, Barb Palmer (office AH19, barb.palmer@uwc.edu), or Campus Instructional Technologist, Judy Konkel (office AH15, 758-6565x180, judy.konkel@uwc.edu ).

### **Assessment**

A UW-Colleges-wide assessment program has been put into place to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum, programs and services of the institution. The following areas of proficiency will be assessed because they are of primary importance in the education of our students: Analytical Skills, Quantitative Skills, Communication Skills, and the Aesthetic Engagement. The assessment will be part of a regular homework or in-class assignment but the assessment is not a “grade” and does not become part of your transcript. Assessment evaluations are compiled and used solely to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student: (a) seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation; (b) uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise; (c) forges or falsifies academic documents or records; (d) intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others; (e) engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or (f) assists other students in any of these acts. The above acts are subject to disciplinary action. Further information may be found in the UW Colleges Student Rights and Regulations Handbook at: <http://www.uwc.edu/students/uwc-student-rights-regulations-booklet.pdf>

**Sexual Assault and Harassment**

Respect for human dignity is essential to an appropriate university environment. Thus, sexual harassment of students and employees is impermissible and unprofessional conduct and will not be tolerated. Conduct determined to fall within the definition of sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with applicable due process requirements, including, but not limited to, reprimand, temporary suspension, expulsion, or discharge of the harassing individual. Further information may be found in the UW Colleges Student Rights and Regulations Handbook at: <http://www.uwc.edu/students/uwc-student-rights-regulations-booklet.pdf>

**Students with disabilities**

Qualified students with disabilities (those who have been admitted and can provide documentation of their disability) have the right to request accommodations from the university, as stipulated within Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1976 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students needing accommodations should provide early notice to staff in the campus Student Services Office because of the time required for arranging accommodations. Students may also contact the coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities in Madison at 608-262-2001 (voice) or 608-265-5766 (TDD/TTY) for information and assistance. More information may be found at: <http://www.uwc.edu/students/disability/>

**LIBRARY HOURS:**

Monday – Thursday 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday, Holidays: Closed

## SCHEDULE\*

### INTRODUCTION

- 9/8 W Introduction. Arguments  
9/13 M More Arguments and Fallacies. Read: Weston, Chs. 1-6 and 10

### MORAL RELATIVISM

- 9/15 W What is Morality? Read: Plato, *Republic*, Bk. II  
9/20 M Divine Command Theory. Read: Plato, *Euthyphro*  
9/22 W Religion and Ethics. Read: Kai, "Ethics without God"  
9/27 M Ethical Relativism. Read: *Harvard Law Rev.*, "What's culture got to do with it?"  
9/29 W Ethical Egoism. Read: Rachels, "Ethical Egoism"  
10/4 M Presentation #1. Evolutionary Ethics. Read: Ruse, Wilson, "Moral Philosophy as Applied Science"  
10/6 W Evolutionary Ethics  
10/11 M **MID-TERM EXAM**

### CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUE

- 10/13 W Presentation #2. Abortion. Introduction  
10/18 M Presentation #3. Abortion. Read: Noonan, "Almost Absolute Value in History"  
10/20 W Abortion. Read: Thompson, "Defense of Abortion"  
10/25 M Presentation #4. Abortion. Thompson  
10/27 W Abortion. Read: Warren, "Legal and Moral Status of Abortion"  
11/1 M Presentation #5. Abortion. Read: Marquis, "Why Abortion is Wrong"  
11/3 W Warren & Marquis

### MORAL OBJECTIVISM

- 11/8 M Presentations #6 & #7.  
11/10 W Utilitarianism. Read: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch. I-IV  
**PAPER DUE**  
11/15 M Presentation #8. Utilitarianism. Mill  
11/17 W Deontology. Read: Kant, *Groundwork*, Sec. I  
11/22 M Presentation #9. Deontology. Read: Kant, *Groundwork*, Sec. II  
11/24 W Social Contract. Read: Hobbes, *Leviathan*  
**THANKSGIVING**  
11/29 M Presentation #10. Social Contract.  
12/1 W Ethics of Care. Read: Held, "Feminist Transformations"  
12/6 M Presentation #11. Ethics of Care  
12/8 W Virtue Ethics. Read: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I  
12/13 M Virtue Ethics. Read: *Ethics*, (remainder of selections)  
12/15 W Review.

**12/17 F FINAL EXAM, 10:00 am**

\* This schedule of readings and assignments is subject to change.