

Philosophy 693: Global Ethics

Synopsis:

This course is more accurately described as a consideration of “global ethical issues,” than as an attempt to articulate “a global ethic.” By this distinction, I mean two things. First, and most basically, the promise of intellectual work in this area is not likely to be the articulation of *an ethic*, be it a comprehensive one, or even more modestly a coherent framework for cosmopolitanism in global affairs. Second, I want to emphasize the *global* nature of the field. Where traditional moral philosophy has tended towards what we might call a “transactional” model of human relations, global ethics consists primarily of philosophical reflection on problems that are global in nature. Murder, lying, and cheating are classic examples of transactional ethical thinking: interactions between individuals are scrutinized with regard to their context and the action at hand is weighed as a specific moral instance—the act of violence, the decision to lie, and so on. Much philosophical work on ethics in international relations proceeds along the same premises: states are conceptualized as individual agents who weigh competing moral claims about various courses of action.

The modern world’s most significant moral problems, however, do not fit neatly into this transactional model. Climate change, terrorism, poverty, HIV/Aids, ethnic violence, religious extremism, deforestation, species loss, and food insecurity are only a few of the challenges we face at the beginning of a new century. Each of these problems is complex: multiple moral agents bear some culpability and numerous persons and institutions bear consequences. What is to be done about these various crises? Given the tremendous variety of cultures, political structures, as well as religious and philosophical perspectives involved in any one of the aforementioned global issues, ethical answers (or policy solutions) are unlikely to come easily.

This course explores such complexities along two fronts: the emergence of global ethical questions and the globalization of ethics itself. How did it come to pass that there are problems with a “global scope”? Similarly, what are the circumstances through which such problems came to be addressed within a shared “global framework” of moral precepts and political structures? Before we can turn to the constructive task of philosophy we must take stock of where we stand historically. In tracing the long arc of the modernity to its sources, we will identify a link between the quest for moral certainty and the increasing exchange between peoples and nations. Our reading of contemporary moral philosophy through the retrospective, critical lens of globalization provides an opportunity to consider anew the nature of the global ethical issues. This course is designed as a true seminar: it is intended to be a learning experience for all participants, including the instructor. Our semester together is structured around a series of cogent questions and employs a contingent schedule for readings. However, the intended outcomes for this course remain open-ended. Student directed learning will guide us in important ways and our seminar discussions may well push the course in unexpected directions. To this end, your full participation—in terms of reading, discussion, and writing—is essential for our success.

Requirements:

1. Attendance and Participation (10 points): You will need to attend each session of class, both physically and mentally. Participation involves making tangible contributions to our discussions on a regular basis and demonstrating to the seminar participants that you read the weekly materials closely.
2. Facilitation (15 points): You are required to facilitate discussion for one class session. This will require that you read the assigned pages with extra care and come to class with prepared discussion questions and materials. By the end of business hours on Monday of the week you are facilitating, you will need to start a discussion thread about the readings (or some theme that connects them) on the Global Ethics Network. I will post these questions and come with prepared materials for the second week of class, so that you are clear about my

- expectations. The sign up process is on a first-come, first-serve basis beginning at noon tomorrow (1/18). After that time, please send me an email indicating your first, second, and third choice of dates for your facilitation duties.
3. Each week, you will be required to contribute to the online discussion forum (20 points). The week's facilitator(s) will initiate this forum by Sunday evening and all students are asked to contribute their thoughts about the seminar readings before class begins on Tuesday evening. These posts need not be more than 100-200 words, but they should attempt to grapple with the core issues of that week's readings.
 4. During the course of the semester, you will be asked to write a book review (15 points). Following the conventions of a book review in a scholarly journal, you will develop a brief review essay (approximately 1500 words) treating one of the monographs required in this course. The primary task of this review will be to place the book in the context of global ethics, as defined by our readings and any additional research you feel is necessary. This review will be posted to the Global Ethics Network.
 5. The primary writing assignment is an issue paper (40 points), which requires you to concentrate your attentions on a particular ethical issue with global implications. This assignment will be detailed in greater depth in the coming weeks, but please note that there are three components. A detailed description of this assignment will be provided soon.
 - a. Mid-way through the semester, you will need to formally propose your paper topic (5 points)
 - b. By early December, you will need to develop a final version of the paper, approximately 5000 words in length, to be turned in via email (25 points)
 - c. By the final seminar session, you will need to create an executive summary of your paper, to be posted to the Global Ethics Network, and present this version to in class (10 points)
 6. The weekly discussion forum, the summary version of your paper, and possibly the book review are to be turned in via the Carnegie Council's Global Ethics Network (<http://www.globalethicsnetwork.org>). College and University classroom activities are governed by FERPA, a law designed to protect student privacy. If for any reason you are uncomfortable posting your course writings online, you cannot be legally required to do so. If you would like to set up a profile on the Global Ethics Network using an alias or pseudonym, please feel free to do so. Please set up your account and send me a friend invitation (with a note about your real name) so that I can include you in the Philosophy 693 Group.

Required Texts:

- Peter Singer, *One World: The Ethics of Globalization* (Yale, 2004)
- Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Belknap, 2011)
- John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Harvard, 2001)
- Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice* (Belknap, 2007)
- Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (Norton, 2007)
- *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*, Thomas Pogge and Keith Horton, eds. (Paragon, 2008)
- *The Globalization of Ethics*, William Sullivan and Will Kymlicka, eds. (Cambridge 2007)

Policies:

1. Laptops and tablets are discouraged, but allowed, during seminar discussions. Cell phones are strictly prohibited. Please do not use your computer for recreational purposes. It is distracting to other students and negatively effects our shared learning environment.
2. In order to assure that you turn in work in a timely manner, late papers are heavily penalized. Ten percent of the paper grade will be deducted for each 24 hours the paper is late; there are no exceptions to this rule.

3. Your email correspondence with faculty, staff and teaching assistants must be professional. This means it should include a salutation and should be written in clear, complete sentences.
4. Please advise me in advance if you intend to submit (or are considering submitting) your final paper as a Qualifying Paper next semester.
5. Please note that in this course an “A” grade reflects superior academic performance, in all aspects of classroom and extracurricular learning; a “B” grade represents an above average execution of course goals and requirements; a “C” grade designates satisfactory completion of academic expectations; a “D” grade indicates unsatisfactory fulfillment of the class requirements; and an “F” grade signals a failure to meet such requirements altogether.

Reading Schedule (with due dates):

- 8/27 Introduction
 - Syllabus overview
 - Global Ethics Network website overview
- 9/3: Interrogating the Moral Agency of States
 - Immanuel Kant, “Perpetual Peace” (PDF)
 - Charles Beitz, “Cosmopolitan Ideals and National Sentiment” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Samuel Scheffler, “Individual Responsibility in a Global Age” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Alasdair MacIntyre, “Is Patriotism a Virtue?” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Thomas Hurka, “The Justification of National Partiality” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
- 9/10: Global problems for moral philosophy
 - Michael Ignatieff, “Reimagining a Global Ethic” *Ethics and International Affairs* 26:1 (PDF)
 - Peter Singer, “Preface to the second edition,” “Preface” and “Introduction” and “One Community” *One World*
 - Thomas Pogge, “Preface” to *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Richard Miller, “Moral Closeness and World Community” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Richard Rorty, “Who Are We” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
- 9/17: Imagining a Just Global Order
 - John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (2001)
- 9/24: Poverty and affluence
 - Garrett Hardin, “Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - David Miller, “Distributing Responsibilities” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Onora O’neill, “Rights, Obligations, and World Hunger” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Thomas Pogge, “Assisting the Global Poor” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Peter Unger, “Living High and Letting Die” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Peter Singer, “One Economy” in *One World*
- 10/1: Global environmental issues
 - Garrett Hardin, “Tragedy of the Commons” (PDF)
 - Stephen Gardiner, “The Real Tragedy of the Commons” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Henry Shue, “Subsistence Emissions and Luxury Emissions” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Peter Singer, “One Atmosphere” in *One World*

- Robin Attfield, “Mediated Responsibilities, Global Warming, and the Scope of Ethics” (PDF)
 - Terry Barker, Serban Scricciu, and David Taylor “Climate Change, Social Justice and Development” (PDF)
- 10/8: Globalization, gender and reproduction
 - Amartya Sen, “Population: Delusion and Reality” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Susan Moller Okin, “Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Alison M. Jaggar, “Saving Amina: Global Justice for Women and Intercultural Dialogue” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Kimberly Hutchings, “Feminist Perspectives on a Planetary Ethic” in *The Globalization of Ethics*
 - Susan Moller Okin, “Political Liberalism, Justice, and Gender.” *Ethics* 105:1 (PDF)
- 10/15: Just War and Interventionism; **Paper Proposals Due**
 - Avishi Margalit and Joseph Raz, “National Self-Determination” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - David Luban, “Just War and Human Rights” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
 - Michael Walzer, “The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics” in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*
- 10/22: Moral individuals in a global world
 - Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2007)
- 10/29: Religious Perspectives on Global Ethics
 - Michael Walzer, “Morality and Universality in Jewish Thought” in *The Globalization of Ethics*
 - Max Stackhouse, “Globalization in Christian Ethics” in *The Globalization of Ethics*
 - Peter Nosco, “Buddhism and the Globalization of Ethics” in *The Globalization of Ethics*
 - Muhammad Khalid Masud, “Muslim Perspectives on Global Ethics” in *The Globalization of Ethics*
 - Richard Madsen, “Confucianism: Ethical Uniformity and Diversity” in *The Globalization of Ethics*
- 11/5: Rethinking social contracts
 - Martha Nussbaum, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (2007)
- 11/12: Rethinking social contracts
 - Martha Nussbaum, Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 of *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (2007)
- 11/19: Focusing on lived conditions
 - Amartya Sen, Preface, Introduction, Part I, and Part II of *The Idea of Justice* (2011)
- 12/3: Critique and Dissent in Global Ethics; **Final Papers Due**
 - Amartya Sen, Part III, and Part IV of *The Idea of Justice* (2011)
 - William Sullivan, “Ethical Universalism and Particularism: A Comparison of Outlooks” in *The Globalization of Ethics*
 - Daniel Philpott, “Global Ethics and the International Law Tradition” in *The Globalization of Ethics*
 - C. Brown, “Liberalism and the Globalization of Ethics” in *The Globalization of Ethics*
- 12/10: Final Class Session; **Presentation and Summary Papers Due**