San José State University
Philosophy 57
Phil 61, Moral Issues, Section 04, Spring 2016

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Nathan Osborne
Office Location:	FO 208
Telephone:	N/A
Email:	Nathan.osborne@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Thursday 1030-1130am & 320-420pm

Class Days/Time:	Tuesday Thursday 9-10:15AM
Classroom:	DMH 149B
Prerequisites:	English Remediation completed or a post baccalaureate.
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Area C2: Humanites & Arts, Letters

Course Description

This course is a general introduction to ethical theories and topics. We will go over questions such as whether there are objective moral distinctions, what makes right acts right and wrong acts wrong, and how we know (if we do) that actions are right or wrong. We will cover the strengths and weaknesses of theories such as relativism, egoism, Existentialism, Utilitarianism, and Kantianism. We will also test these theories against real life ethical dilemmas, such as the darkest hour in Western History, and see many of these theories at play in selected works (such as in Alan Moore's *The Watchmen*).

Course Goals

This class will expose students to significant works of the human intellect and imagination, drawing from a broad range of different philosophies. Students will examine the historical and cultural circumstances which helped shape the various thinkers' philosophies. Students will also be able to relate these concepts back to their own lives and recognize their relevance in the contemporary world. These skills will enable students to fully participate in social and cultural communities, further enriching their personal and professional lives.

Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns;
2. Respond to such works by writing both research---based critical analyses and personal responses; and
3. Write clearly and effectively.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

Moral of the Story - Rosenstand
The Sunflower - Weisenthal
Lifeboat Ethics – Hardin (emailed)
Eichmann in Jerusalem- Arendt (emailed)
Ethics of Ambiguity- de Beauvoir (emailed)

Other Readings

Any additional readings or handouts I will provide them via email or in class.

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

Lifeboat Ethics Essay: Hardin writes a very intriguing piece on his view of ethics. You will be required to take a position on his article and support your position by utilizing the theories we have learned so far.
The Watchmen Essay: Your second Essay will be on the film The Watchmen (based on Alan Moore's graphic novel).
Watchmen poses many ethical dilemmas, and certain characters beautifully embody the ethical theories we have covered so far. You will be required to analyze in detail one of these ethical dilemmas and discuss how specific characters reactions are akin to philosophical stances we have studied.
The Sunflower Paper: We will confront one of the darkest hours of human history and explore the possibilities and limits of forgiveness.
Final Essay: Ethics Applied Today. You will be required to explore a contemporary ethical quandary and utilize at least one of the thinkers we have studied to come to a conclusion about how to solve/approach it.
Participation: is a key component in your overall experience in the classroom, which is why it is being weighed so heavily. Participation is not merely showing up and sitting quietly (though a low attendance tends to correlate with a low participation grade, as one does need to be in class in order to participate); it is making your presence known by participating in class and small group discussions and in class writing assignments. The frequency of participation and quality of comments will be taken into consideration when assigning a grade (this does not mean you will be marked down for asking questions, on the contrary I encourage you to ask questions about anything you don't understand); what this deals with namely goes back to being respectful of others and staying on a relevant topic during class discussions.

University policy F69-24 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf states, "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading."

Grading Policy

Grading Criteria:

A: Superior achievement; far exceeds demands of assignment.
B: Goes beyond adequate achievement; exceeds demands of assignment.
C: Achieves assignment purpose adequately; fulfills assignment.

D: Problems outweigh strengths, does not quite fulfill assignment.
F: Problems overpower strengths, clearly does not fulfill assignment.

Grade Breakdown:
In Class Participation – 22%
Hardin Essay – 16%
Watchmen Essay – 21%
Sunflower Paper – 20%
Final – 21%

Note that "All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades." See University Policy F13-1 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf for more details.

Classroom Protocol

1. *A good philosophy class is centered not on a dull lecture and student regurgitation of information, but rather on dialog and debate in conjunction with a guided discussion designed to break down the readings into something more manageable. With this in mind, the class will have a strong emphasis on in-class discussion, and therefore attendance, preparation (having actually read the assigned reading), and participation will all be essential to your experience in this course and will make up a considerable portion of your final grade. We will work frequently in small groups, and it will be imperative that we all work together to foster a trusting and comfortable environment for everyone.*
2. *With that in mind, respect for one another is absolutely essential for this class. Feel free to disagree and debate with each other, but do so in a respectful manner. For example, try to refrain from interrupting others while they are talking, and remember to critique the idea—and not the person—you are debating. Coming to class and maintaining an open mind is also vital for good dialog to flourish.*

Any disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated. Please feel free to email or speak to me if at any time you feel uncomfortable with the classroom environment. Similarly, I will speak to you if I perceive any problematic assumptions, biases, or prejudices that are making others uncomfortable.

University Policies

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU's policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. To learn important campus information, view University Policy S90–5 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf and SJSU current semester's Policies and Procedures, at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as the next step.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The Late Drop Policy is available at

http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/**.** Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

University Policy S12-7, http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- "Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material."
    - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
    - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- "Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent."

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec to establish a record of their disability.

Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays (Optional)

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See University Policy S14-7 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf.

Student Technology Resources (Optional)

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/ located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections (Optional)

Peer Connections' free tutoring and mentoring is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to inspire them to become independent learners. Peer Connections tutors are trained to provide content-based tutoring in many lower division courses (some upper division) as well as writing and study skills assistance. Small group and individual tutoring are available. Peer Connections mentors are trained to provide support and resources in navigating the college experience. This support includes assistance in learning strategies and techniques on how to be a successful student. Peer Connections has a learning commons, desktop computers, and success workshops on a wide variety of topics. For more information on services, hours, locations, or a list of current workshops, please visit Peer Connections website at http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu for more information.

SJSU Writing Center (Optional)

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services (Optional)

The SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Carlos in the new Student Wellness Center, Room 300B. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide confidential consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling and Psychological Services website at http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling.

Phil 61 – Moral Issues, Spring 2016, Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to change (with fair notice). If any changes are made I will notify you in class and/or via email.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/28	- Introduction and Syllabus *Moral of the Story* (MoS) Ch1
2	2/2 2/4	- MoS Ch3 (Ethical Relativism) - Relativism (continued)
3	2/9 2/11	- MoS Ch4 (Myself or Others) - Egoism (continued) **Lifeboat Ethics Paper Assigned**
4	2/16 2/18	- Hardin's Lifeboat Ethics - MoS Ch5 (Utilitarianism)
5	2/23 2/25	- MoS Ch6 (Deontology) - MoS Ch8 (Virtue Ethics) **Lifeboat Ethics Paper Due**
6	3/1 3/3	- MoS Ch7 (Personhood, Rights, Justice) - Rawls – A Theory of Justice
7	3/8 3/10	- Ch12 (Feminist Ethics –Ethics of Care) - Case Study – Ford Pinto
8	3/15 3/17	- Movie *(The Watchmen)* **Watchmen Paper Assigned** - *The Watchmen (Continued)*
9	3/22 3/24	- Arendt – *Eichmann in Jerusalem* - Arendt (continued)
10	3/29 3/31 ***Spring Break***	- Spring Break (No Class)
11	4/5 4/7	- Watchmen Discussion **Watchmen Paper Due** - *The Sunflower – Discussion* **Sunflower paper Assigned**
12	4/12 4/14	- *The Sunflower Forgiveness Responses:* (*The Dalai Lama, Hans Habe, Mathieu Ricard, Robert McAfee Brown, José Hobday, Matthew Fox,*) - *The Sunflower – Limits of Forgiveness* (*Primo Levi, Erich H Loewy, Herbert Marcuse, Joshua Rubenstein, Sidney Shachnow,*)
13	4/19 4/21	- *The Sunflower – Other Responses (Andre Stein, Harold Kushner, Roger Kamenetz, Dith Pran, Albert Speer)*

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		- *Sunflower Symposium* **Sunflower Paper Due**
14	4/26 4/28	- Ch7 (Contemporary Perspectives) - Contemporary Perspectives -Existentialism **Final Assigned**
15	5/3 5/5	- *Ethics of Ambiguity – De Beauvoir* - *De Beauvoir* (continued)
16	5/10 5/12	- *End of Poverty* - *End of Poverty* (continued)
17	FINALS WEEK	- Class Symposium **Final Paper Due**
Week	**Date**	**Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines**
1	1/28	- Introduction and Syllabus *Moral of the Story* (MoS) Ch1
2	2/2 2/4	- MoS Ch3 (Ethical Relativism) - Relativism (continued)
3	2/9 2/11	- MoS Ch4 (Myself or Others) - Egoism (continued) **Lifeboat Ethics Paper Assigned**
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7	3/8 3/10	- Ch12 (Feminist Ethics –Ethics of Care) - Case Study – Ford Pinto
8	3/15 3/17	- Movie *(The Watchmen)* **Watchmen Paper Assigned** - *The Watchmen (Continued)*
9	3/22 3/24	- Arendt – *Eichmann in Jerusalem* - Arendt (continued)
10	3/29 3/31 ***Spring Break***	- Spring Break (No Class)
11	4/5 4/7	- Watchmen Discussion **Watchmen Paper Due** - *The Sunflower – Discussion* **Sunflower paper Assigned**
12	4/12	- *The Sunflower Forgiveness Responses:*

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	4/14	(*The Dalai Lama, Hans Habe, Mathieu Ricard, Robert McAfee Brown, José Hobday, Matthew Fox,*) - *The Sunflower – Limits of Forgiveness* (*Primo Levi, Erich H Loewy, Herbert Marcuse, Joshua Rubenstein, Sidney Shachnow,*)
13	4/19 4/21	- *The Sunflower – Other Responses (Andre Stein, Harold Kushner, Roger Kamenetz, Dith Pran, Albert Speer)* - *Sunflower Symposium* **Sunflower Paper Due**
14	4/26 4/28	- Ch7 (Contemporary Perspectives) - Contemporary Perspectives -Existentialism **Final Assigned**