

SYLLABUS
PHILOSOPHY 3306 SECTION TR9

Ethics and Society

Spring 2013

Penny S. Repetti

**Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday: 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
and by appointment.**

**Philosophy Department: 3308 Boylan Hall
(718) 951 – 5311**

My office: 3316 Boylan Hall

Email: prepetti@brooklyn.cuny.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a philosophy course, the focus of which is on the study and application of ethics. The strategy will be, first, to discuss students' personal ethical principles, then to expose students to various kinds of ethical theories, which she/he may utilize in her/his assessment of various ethical issues that arise in the world. Some topics that we will be examining are: abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, etc. Though we will begin in this fashion, proceeding from theory to practice, we will also do the opposite--that is, by looking at various issues that arise in the world, we also may assess the plausibility of various ethical theories by seeing how well they stand up in such concrete contexts.

RULES FOR THE COURSE:

The following special rules apply, subject to revision without notice. Read very carefully. There will be reading assignments for each class meeting. Philosophy reading assignments **must** be read at least once, and **should** be read at least two times each. This is no spectator course; you must be prepared to answer pointed questions about the assigned readings and to participate in group discussions for each class meeting. I will spot quiz you by name or as a group at any time to assess reading preparation.

On the first day of class, you will be assigned a take-home writing assignment, which will then be used for in-class discussions during the first week or two of class. This writing assignment must be typed and will be collected. No grade will be assigned for this assignment; however, failure to fulfill this requirement will result in a grade of zero added to your numeric average. There will be several in-class writing assignments and classroom group assignments throughout the semester, a take-home paper which will be assigned and due during the second half of the semester, in-class quizzes throughout the semester, an in-class midterm exam and an in-class final exam. Exams may include any combination of T/F, multiple choice, fill-in or essay questions. Make-up exams are subject to strict conditions: they require my permission, are devalued 10 points per day until you speak to me to make arrangements, and are altered (e.g., made more difficult) as I see fit; others will have a grade of zero added to their average. The opportunity to revise

and resubmit assignments will be explained for each assignment when it is assigned.

Your numeric average is calculated as follows: the midterm and final are averaged in twice, the paper and all quizzes are each averaged in once and all in-class group assignments will be averaged together and considered as one quiz grade, (which will then be averaged into your numeric grade once). There will not be a curve on any of the above listed grades; however, course grades are *not* based *solely* on numeric averages from exams, etc. Your grade may also be raised by good class participation and good attendance. Negative or disruptive behavior during class could result in the lowering of your numeric average as well. Prompt attendance is *essential*. Your course average may be lowered 2 points per unexcused absence and 1 point per unexcused lateness or early exit; you may fail as a result. **Please note:** Students will be excused for non-attendance because of religious beliefs as explained in the Brooklyn College Bulletin (20012-2013) on page 56. Please read page 56 carefully for a full explanation of the New York State Education Law and please speak with me regarding the above, so that we can work together to ensure that everything goes smoothly for you. You will be marked absent *unless* you notify me of your presence during attendance or *immediately* after class. If you are absent or late, you are responsible to get assignment, exam, and all other information from your classmates. I advise that you exchange telephone numbers and/or email addresses with at least two of your classmates. After receiving the information from your absence, you may then make an appointment with me if you have any questions. If you don't drop the course or withdraw by the deadline, you tacitly consent to these rules.

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, students will:

- improve critical thinking by developing skills of explaining, examining and responding to philosophical theories, issues and claims in the area of social ethics.
- be able to discuss serious moral issues by making reference to philosophical theories and concepts in the area of social ethics.
- be open to challenging prior beliefs through the use of reasoning.
- improve their writing skills by being able to examine and explain their own views, similar views and opposing views in the area of social ethics.
- improve oral communication skills by listening objectively to opposing views and being able to verbally respond through the use of argument.
- have the ability to develop ideas by using supportive evidence appropriate to the discipline.
- develop the ability to reflect on one's learning and to understand difficult material.
- be able to identify and explain a criterion used to judge what is good morally or aesthetically

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disabilities Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell, at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services, please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her.

COURSE PACKET:

Instructions for the purchase of this packet will be explained in class.