



REL 3171: ETHICS IN AMERICA
Fall 2019
MWF 7th Period (1:55-2:45), Matherly 18

Instructor: Anna Peterson
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Office Hours: Monday and Friday, 12:30-1:30 and by appointment

Description

This class introduces students to ethics as an academic discipline while also enabling students to reflect on and analyze ethical issues facing contemporary American society. We will focus in particular on the problems and opportunities created by the diversity in different areas of American cultural and religious life. After a short introduction to ethical thinking, we will examine some of the moral questions raised by religious, racial, and cultural diversity in the U.S. We will explore the ways that issues such as justice, integration, cultural autonomy, and the common good shape visions of an ethical society. We will also address various obstacles – cultural, economic, and political – that make those visions difficult to achieve

General Education Writing Requirement

This course fulfills General Education Writing Requirement for 2000 words of graded writing (WR2). Detailed explanation of the evaluation criteria for written assignments is listed in the assignment details below. In addition, please consult the writing assessment rubric at the end of this syllabus, taken from <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/sample-writing-assessment-rubric.aspx>.

For writing support, you may visit the UF Writing Studio (www.writing.ufl.edu).

For citations, I will accept any standard format that is appropriate for humanities or social science disciplines. If you do not have a preferred style, please use MLA in-text citations.

Policies, Rules, and Resources

1. *Attendance and Participation:* Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies, found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Class attendance is required. Do not register for this class if you cannot arrive on time. Students should arrive on time and prepared to discuss the day's readings. Tardiness harms your understanding of the material and disrupts the class. After the first late arrival, the instructor reserves the right to mark you absent. The instructor will *not* provide notes or discuss material that has already been covered for students who arrive late, barring extraordinary circumstances.

Please let me know about any planned absences (for religious holidays, athletic events, or other reasons) as soon as possible. For unplanned absences (due to illness or emergency), please let me know as soon as possible and provide documentation (e.g., doctor's note) if possible.

2. *Make-up policy:* I will arrange for a make-up or early in-class exam only with sufficient notice. If you are out of town when an out-of-class assignment is due, you must email it to me on the date due and then provide a print copy when you return to Gainesville.

If you do not receive an extension from the instructor, assignment will be marked down a half grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

3. *Completion of All Assignments:* You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing any assignment or requirement.

4. *Handing in Assignments:* Please submit papers on canvas and also bring a print copy to class, as indicated in the schedule. If you cannot submit a paper in class, leave it in my mailbox in 107 Anderson Hall. Please also keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers.

5. *Common Courtesy:* Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned to vibrate during class (in order to be available for the UF emergency system). Students who receive or make calls during class will be asked to leave and will be marked absent (unexcused) for the day.

6. *Laptop and tablet use:* You may take notes on a laptop or tablet, although the instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer. Laptop and tablet users should sit at the front of the class.

7. *Academic Honesty:* All work submitted must be completed without unauthorized assistance, collaboration, or deliberate misrepresentations. Please keep in mind that plagiarism does not consist only in copying verbatim someone else's material and presenting it as if it were yours. It also includes taking ideas (even paraphrased!) from an author without according him/her/them proper recognition (through a footnote, for instance). Other forms of cheating (particularly downloading material from the Internet and presenting as if it were yours) will also be subject to the same action. **I operate under a zero tolerance policy and any instance of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course;** in such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean. All UF students are expected to abide by the Student Conduct

Code, which can be found at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php>. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These can be found at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

8. *Accommodation for Disabilities*: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Please let me know how I can help you succeed in this class.

9. *Counseling and Emergency Resources*: Resources available on-campus for students include the following:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
- b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
- c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
- d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.
- e. For security issues, please contact the University Police Department: 392-1111, or 911 for general emergencies.

10. *Software Use*: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Required Books

Anthony Weston, *A Practical Companion to Ethics*, 4th edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Irene Thomson, *Culture Wars and Enduring American Dilemmas* (Michigan, 2010).

Miguel de la Torre, *The US Immigration Crisis: Towards an Ethics of Place* (Cascade Companions, 2016)

James Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America* (Orbis Books, 2012).

Required Readings available on Canvas or online

Eck, Diana. "Prospects for Pluralism: Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75, No. 4 (Dec. 2007): 743-776.

Kathleen M. Moore, "Muslims in the United States: Pluralism under Exceptional Circumstances." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 612 (July 2007), 116-132.

Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,”
http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream,”
<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/i-have-dream-address-delivered-march-washington-jobs-and-freedom>

Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Other America,” <https://www.crmvet.org/docs/otheram.htm>

Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”
<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/mx.html> (includes link for audio)

Malcolm X, “God’s Judgment of White America”
https://www.malcolm-x.org/speeches/spc_120463.htm

Videos of King’s “I have a dream” and “The Other America” speeches here:
<https://www.pbs.org/weta/washingtonweek/blog-post/5-martin-luther-king-jr%E2%80%99s-most-memorable-speeches>

Requirements

Please Note: The requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Also, please note that a minimum grade of C is required for general education credit. I will provide specific instructions for all written assignments and the poster closer to the due dates.

1. Participation and attendance. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the day’s reading in an informed, active way. The participation grade will be based on four reading quizzes, given over the semester AND participation in modular debate at the end of the semester. 10% of final grade.
2. In-class writing assignment: ethical analysis of a news article. September 9. 15% of final grade.
3. Short essay (1000 words) on religious pluralism. Due October 6. 25% of final grade.
4. Short essay (1000 words) on race and civil rights. Due November 3. 25% of final grade.
5. Poster (10% of final grade) and reflection paper (15% of final grade). Poster will be presented at miniconference, November 18 and in class Nov. 20-22. Reflection paper is due in class Nov. 20.

In addition: While it is not a requirement, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Student feedback is very important and we appreciate your taking the time to provide it.

Grading Scale

A	94-100 (4.0)
A-	90-93 (3.67)
B+	87-89 (3.33)
B	84-86 (3.0)
B-	80-83 (2.67)
C+	77-79 (2.33)
C	74-76 (2.0)
C-	70-73 (1.67)
D+	67-69 (1.33)
D	64-66 (1.0)
D-	60-63 (0.67)
E	Below 60 (0)

Please note: You must receive a C or better to receive major, minor, General Education, or College Basic Distribution credit.

SCHEDULE

Week/Date	Topic/Reading
1 W 8/21	Introduction to the class
F 8/23	Weston, <i>A Practical Companion</i> , Ch. 1: Getting Started
2 M 8/26	Weston, Ch. 2: Beyond Authority
W 8/28	Weston, Ch. 3: Ethical Theories
F 8/30	Weston, Ch. 4: When Values Clash
3 M 9/2	Labor Day, no class
W 9/4	Weston, Ch. 5: Creative Problem Solving
F 9/6	Weston, Ch. 6: Making a Difference
4 M 9/9	In-class writing assignment: ethical analysis of a news article.

	W 9/11	Thomson, <i>Culture Wars</i> , Ch. 1: Culture Wars and Warring about Culture
	F 9/13	Thomson, Ch. 2: Respect for Religion but Uncertainty about its Role
5	M 9/16	Thomson, Ch. 3: Moral but not Moralistic
	W 9/18	Thomson, Ch. 4: Individualism but not to Excess
	F 9/20	Thomson, Ch. 5: Pluralism within One Culture
6	M 9/23	Thomson, Ch. 6: Antielitist but Respecting Achievement
	W 9/25	Thomson, Ch. 7: Moderation, Plain and Simple
	F 9/27	Thomson, Ch. 8: Culture, Class, and American Exceptionalism, and Ch. 9: Concluding Comments
7	M 9/30	Moore, "Muslims in the United States"
	W 10/2	Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism"
First essay due by midnight, Thursday, October 3. Submit on canvas and bring a print copy to class on Monday.		
	F 10/4	Homecoming: No class
8	M 10/7	Cone, <i>Martin & Malcolm & America</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1
	W 10/9	Cone, Ch. 2
	F 10/11	Cone, Ch. 3 King, "I Have a Dream" and "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
9	M 10/14	Cone, Ch. 4
	W 10/16	Cone, Ch. 5
	F 10/18	Cone, Ch. 6 Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"
10	M 10/21	Cone, Ch. 7 Malcolm X, "God's Judgment of White America"
	W 10/23	Cone, Ch. 8 King, "The Other America"

- F 10/25 Cone, Ch. 9
- 11 M 10/28 Cone, Ch. 10
- W 10/30 Cone, Ch. 11 and Conclusion
- F 11/1 Peer review for second essay
- Second essay due by midnight Sunday, November 3. Submit on canvas and bring a print copy to class on Monday.
- 12 M 11/4 De la Torre, *The US Immigration Crisis*, Ch. 1
- W 11/6 De la Torre, Ch. 2
- F 11/8 De la Torre, Ch. 3
- 13 M 11/11 De la Torre, Ch. 4-5
- W 11/13 De la Torre, Ch. 6
- F 11/15 De la Torre, Ch. 7 and Conclusion
- 14 M 11/18 Mini-conference
- Reflection papers due by midnight, Tuesday Nov. 19. Submit on canvas and bring a print copy to class on Wednesday.
- W 11/20 Class presentations
- F 11/22 Class presentations
- 15 M 11/25 Prepare for modular debate
- W 11/27-F 11/29 Thanksgiving holiday, no school
- 16 M 12/2 Modular debate
- W 12/4 Modular debate