



REL 3171: ETHICS IN AMERICA
Section 06HD, Fall 2016
MWF 4th period (10:40-11:30), TURL 2353

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Description

This class has two main goals: to teach important approaches and sources in the academic discipline of social ethics and to enable students to reflect on and analyze ethical issues facing contemporary American society. We will focus on some of the dilemmas and opportunities created by the diversity in different areas of American cultural and religious life.

As a foundation for thinking about ethical dimensions of contemporary issues, the course will provide an overview of ethics as an academic discipline, including introductions to major ethical theories and thinkers. We will also examine particular case studies, focusing on 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.

Required Books

1. Anthony Weston, *A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox* (Oxford University Press, 2013).
2. Robert Wuthnow, *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).
3. Robert Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (University of California Press, 2007).
4. James Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America* (Orbis Books, 2012).
5. Miguel de la Torre, *The U.S. Immigration Crisis: Toward an Ethics of Place* (Cascade Companions, 2016); ISBN 1498223699

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.

1. Attendance and participation in class discussions, including timely and close reading of all assigned texts (10% of final grade).
2. Short essay (1000 words) (30% of final grade) on Weston and *Habits of the Heart*, due in class on Oct. 7.
3. Short essay (1000 words) (30% of final grade) on pluralism and immigration, due in my mailbox by 4:00 pm on Thursday, Nov. 10.
4. Short essay (30% of final grade) on race relations and social ethics, due in my mailbox by 4:00 pm on Monday, Dec. 12.

In addition: While it is not a requirement, students are expected to provide online evaluations (during the last week or two of the semester), available at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Student feedback is very important and we appreciate your taking the time to provide it.

SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading
M 8/22	Introduction to the class	
PART I: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL ETHICS		
W 8/24	Defining Social Ethics	Weston, Ch. 1
F 8/26	Social Ethics	Weston Ch. 2
M 8/29	Religious Ethics	Weston, Ch 3
W 8/31	Deontological Ethics	Weston, Ch 5
F 9/2	Utilitarian Ethics	Weston, Ch 6
M 9/5	LABOR DAY – no class	
W 9/7	Virtue Ethics	Weston, Ch 7
F 9/9	Care Ethics	Weston, Ch 8

II. INDIVIDUALISM AND COMMITMENT IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

M 9/12	The Pursuit of Happiness	Bellah, Preface and Ch. 1
W 9/14	Culture and Character	Bellah, Ch. 2
F 9/16	Finding Oneself	Bellah, Ch. 3
M 9/19	Love and Marriage	Bellah, Ch. 4
W 9/21	Reaching Out	Bellah, Ch. 5
F 9/23	Individualism	Bellah, Ch. 6
M 9/26	Getting Involved	Bellah, Ch. 7
W 9/28	Citizenship	Bellah, Ch. 8
F 9/30	Religion	Bellah, Ch. 9
M 10/3	The National Society	Bellah, Ch. 10

W 10/5 Transforming American Culture Bellah, Ch. 11

F 10/7 Final discussion of *Habits of the Heart*
** First essay due in class today **

PART III. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

M 10/10 American “exceptionalism” Wuthnow, Ch. 1

W 10/12 The new diversity Wuthnow, Ch. 2

F 10/14 HOMECOMING – no class

M 10/17 What diversity means Wuthnow, Ch. 3

W 10/19 “Spiritual marketplace” Wuthnow, Ch. 4

F 10/21 The “big tent” Wuthnow, Ch. 5

M 10/24 Religious ethics Cone, Ch. 5

W 10/26 Resisting diversity Wuthnow, Ch. 6

F 10/28 Public goods Wuthnow, Ch. 7

M 10/31 Pluralism and the good society Wuthnow, Ch. 10

PART IV. IMMIGRATION

W 11/2 Immigration De la Torre, Introduction and Ch. 1

F 11/4 Immigration De la Torre, Ch. 2 and 3

M 11/7 Immigration De la Torre, Ch. 4 and 5

W 11/9 Immigration De la Torre, Ch. 6, 7 and Conclusion

Th. 11/10 ** Second short essay due in my mailbox (107 Anderson) by 4:00 pm today

F 11/11 VETERANS’ DAY – no class

PART V. ETHICS AND RACE

M 11/14 Martin & Malcolm Cone, Introduction and Ch. 1

W 11/16	Martin & Malcolm	Cone, Ch. 2
F 11/18	Martin & Malcolm	Cone, Ch. 3
M 11/21	Martin & Malcolm	Cone, Ch. 4
11/23-11/25	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – no class	
M 11/28	Martin & Malcolm	Cone, Ch. 6
W 11/30	Martin & Malcolm	Cone, Ch. 7
F 12/2	Martin & Malcolm	Cone, Ch. 8
M 12/5	Martin & Malcolm	Cone, Ch. 9: Two Roads to Freedom
W 12/7	Finish discussion of Cone	
M 12/12	** Final essay due at 4:00 pm today, in my mailbox in 107 Anderson **	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THE COURSE

GRADING SCALE

A	93-100 (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)

For information on UF grading policies, please see
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Please note: A “C-“ will not be a qualifying grade for major, minor, General Education, Gordon Rule or College Basic Distribution credit. For that credit, you must receive a “C” or better.

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 and unforeseeable 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 please 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:* Place all papers in my mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. DO NOT slip them under the door or leave them on the door of my office, the main department office, or the teaching assistant's office. 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 computer, although the instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class. If that occurs, the student will be marked absent for the day.

7. *Honor Code*: On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>. Any student(s) demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in *any assignment* for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct 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.

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.

GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course helps to satisfy the University of Florida General Education Diversity requirement. Diversity courses provide instruction in the values, attitudes and norms that create cultural differences within the United States. These courses encourage students to recognize how social roles and status affect different groups in the United States. Students are expected to analyze and evaluate their own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures, and to distinguish opportunities and constraints faced by other persons and groups. This class will accomplish these goals in the following ways:

1. We will identify and address the norms that underlie cultural differences within the United States, through an examination of specific issues including racial conflict and reconciliation, religious diversity, and diverse moral debates.

2. We will identify and analyze the ethical dimensions of specific social issues, including race, cultural and religious diversity and economic disparities.
3. We will examine diverse approaches to the study of ethics, including major religious and philosophical models, with an emphasis on the ways that diverse perspectives and value systems come into contact.
4. We will explore the ways that groups and individuals who hold different value systems can engage in constructive dialogue about ethical issues.
5. We will study some ways that ethical discussions about diversity and related issues influence social movements and policies.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline.

Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline.

Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed in several ways

Content knowledge will be assessed primarily through performance on the written assignments, including essays, exams, and occasional short in-class assignments. In these assignments, students will apply the information and ideas learned in the course reading, lecture, and discussions.

The *communication* outcome will also be assessed primarily through the writing assignments, in which students are required to reason well and convey their knowledge and ideas clearly. Communication will also be assessed through class discussions.

Critical thinking is fundamental to this course. This component will be assessed by measuring the degree to which papers effectively analyze information and develop reasonable explanations in a manner appropriate to social ethics and diversity in contemporary American society.

General Education Writing Requirement

This course fulfills General Education (Gordon Rule) Writing Requirement for 2000 words of graded writing (GR2).

Writing requirement credit can only be obtained once for a course. If a student meets the writing requirement credit in a course, repeating the course will not result in additional writing requirement credit.

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 consult with the university's Writing Studio (www.writing.ufl.edu).

I will accept any standard format that is appropriate for Humanities disciplines. If you do not have a preferred style, please use MLA in-text citations. UF's Writing Studio offers advice and examples; please see http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch04_o.html.