

SAMPLE SYLLABI

A. Environmental Ethics, Law and Public Policy

Course Description:

The seminar introduces philosophical ethics, law, and public policy through an engagement with environmental issues of population growth and resource use, sustainability, non-human animal welfare, biodiversity loss, environmental justice, and global climate change. No prior experience with philosophy is required. The two main goals of the course are to provide students with a more sophisticated conceptual vocabulary to make and evaluate ethical, legal, and policy arguments across domains and to engage students' reasoning, analysis, and reflection on environmental issues in particular.

Course Schedule:

Class 1 (August 27): Introduction: Discuss Course Objectives and Review Syllabus

Class 2 (August 29): (1) Aldo Leopold "Thinking Like A Mountain" (2) Aldo Leopold "Land Ethics" (3) Rachel Carson *Silent Spring* (excerpt)

Class 3 (September 5): Lynn White "The Historical Roots of Ecological Crises"

Class 4 (September 12): John Gray "Straw Dogs"

Class 5 (September 17): J. Callicott "Holistic Environmental Ethics and Problem of Ecofascism"

Class 6 (September 24): Steven Vogel "Why 'Nature' Has No Place in Environmental Philosophy"

Class 7 (September 26): (1) Garrett Hardin "The Tragedy of the Commons" (2) Paul Ehrlich "The Population Bomb"

Class 8 (October 1): (1) Paul and Anne Ehlich "The Population Bomb Revisited" (2) Mark Sagoff "Do We Consume too Much?"

Class 9 (October 3): (1) Introduction Summary of the Discovery of Climate Change (2) Simple Models of Climate Change p. 1-13 and 20-35 (3) Impacts of Global Warming

Class 10 (October 10): (1) James Lovelock "State of the Earth" (2) Eileen Crist "Beyond the Climate Crises: A Critique of Climate Change Discourse"

Class 11 (October 15): Walter Sinnott-Armstrong "It's Not My Fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations"

Class 12 (October 17): (1) Naomi Klein "The Right is Right" (2) Michael Maniates

“Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?”

Class 13 (October 22): (1) Peter Singer “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” (2) Dan Pearlman and Glenn Alderson “The Roles of Values”

Class 14 (October 24): (1) Holmes Rolston “Feeding People versus Saving Nature?” (2) Robin Attfield “Saving Nature, Feeding People and Ethics”

Class 15 (October 29): (1) Mark Dowie “Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict Between Global Conservation and Native Peoples” (2) Letter to WWF Abuse of Baka by Anti-Poaching Squads (3) Wildlife Conservation Efforts Are Violating Tribal Peoples' Rights

Class 16 (October 31): (1) Martha Macintyre “Politicized Ecology: Local Response to Mining in Papua New Guinea” (2) Daniel Tubb “Muddy Decisions: Gold in Choco Colombia (3) Erica Redner “In the Name of Development: Moving Cerrejon Mountain, Its Coal, and Its People”

Class 17 (November 5): *Tennessee Valley Authority v. Hill* (1978 Supreme Court) p. 1-28

Class 18 (November 7): *Massachusetts v. EPA* (2007 Supreme Court) p. 7-38

Class 19 (November 12): Christopher Stone “Should Trees Have Standing?”

Class 20 (November 14): (1) Peter Singer “Animal Liberation Movement” (2) Mary Midgley “Is a Dolphin a Person?”

Class 21 (November 19): Elliot Sober “Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism”

Class 22 (November 26): (1) Guha and Martinez-Alier “Varieties of Environmentalism” (2) Mariana Walter and Joan Martinez-Alier “How to be Heard When Nobody Wants to Listen”

Class 23 (November 28): (1) Maria Mies and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen *The Subsistence Perspective: Beyond the Globalized Economy* Chapter 1 and 5 (2) Silvia Frederici “Feminism and the Commons” (3) Leirre Keith “The Girls and the Grasses”

Class 24 (December 3): (1) Bill Lawson the Value of Environmental Justice (2) Rachel Massey “Environmental Justice: Income, Race, and Health”

Class 25 (December 5): (1) Marvin Soroos “Global Climate Change and the Futility of Kyoto Process” (2) Christopher Napoli “Understanding Kyoto’s Failure” (3) B.L. Sah and Divya Joshi “The Politics of Global Warming”

Class 26 (December 10): (1) Terry Anderson and Donald Leal “Free Market Environmentalism: Hindsight and Foresight” (2) “Using Market to Address Climate Change” *State of the World 2009* p. 103-106

Class 27 (December 12): (1) Brad Allenby “Geoengineering Is This Really the Best We Can Do?” (2) “Geoengineering to Shade Earth” and “Carbon Capture and Storage” *State of the World 2009* p. 96-102 (3) Ecomodernist Manifesto

B. Political Philosophy

Course Description:

All human beings find themselves living under some form of political order, whether it is theocratic, democratic, or autocratic. We rarely choose the overall political order under which we live. And yet, all forms of political organization are in some sense chosen: that is, they are products of human creativity, understanding, and behavior. This means that normative questions have a special salience in politics. Given that, unlike a law of nature, a political order can be changed or supplanted with enough human strength, ingenuity, and effort, it is natural to ask whether the status quo in politics lives up to our understanding of how things ought to be. Is our political order as good as it can be and, if not, how can it be improved? What normative values, ideas, and standards must a good government satisfy or respect? What does the best political society (perhaps a utopia) look like? These are some of the most basic questions of political philosophy that this course will introduce students to. Since, it is an introductory course, a special emphasis has been placed on *breadth*. Thus, the goal is to come away with a broad competence in the core topics addressed in the history of political philosophy.

Course Schedule:

Class 1 (Jan 28): Introduction - What is Political Philosophy?

Class 2 (Jan 30): Plato - *Republic* Book I and IV

Class 3 (Feb 4): Plato - *Republic* Book VII and VIII

Class 4 (Feb 6): Aristotle - *Politics* and “On Justice” from Book V of *Nicomachean Ethics*

Class 5 (Feb 11): Augustine - *City of God*

Class 6 (Feb 13): Thomas Aquinas - “The Nature of Justice” and Christine de Pizan - *The Book of the City of Ladies*

Class 7 (Feb 20): Niccolo Machiavelli – *The Prince*

Class 8 (Feb 25): Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan*

Class 9 (Feb 27): John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government* and “Of Property” and “A Letter Concerning Toleration”

Class 10 (Mar 4): Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* and *The Social Contract*

Class 11 (Mar 6): Mary Wollstonecraft – *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* and Edmund Burke – “Reflections on the Revolution in France”

Class 12 (Mar 11): Immanuel Kant - *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* and “Rightful Ownership”

Class 13 (Mar 13): G.W.F. Hegel – “Master/ Slave Dialectic” and “Justice, Property and Law”

Class 14 (Mar 18): Karl Marx – “Alienated Labor” and **Marx and Engels** – *Communist Manifesto* and “Against Armchair Justice”

Class 15 (Mar 20): John Stuart Mill – *On Liberty* and **Mill and Harriet Taylor** – “Subjection of Women”

Class 16 (Mar 25): W.E.B. Du Boise – “The Souls of Black Folk” and **John Dewey** – “Democracy”

Class 17 (Mar 27): Isaiah Berlin – *Two Concepts of Liberty* and **Emma Goldman** – “The Individual, Society, and the State”

Class 18 (Apr 1): John Rawls – “Justice as Fairness: A Restatement”

Class 19 (Apr 3): Robert Nozick – “A Defense of Libertarianism” and **Friedrich Hayek** – “Against Social Justice”

Class 20 (Apr 8): Michael Sandel – “The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self” and **Michael Walzer** – “Complex Equality”

Class 21 (Apr 10): Carol Pateman - *The Sexual Contract* and **Charles Mills** - *The Racial Contract*

Class 22 (Apr 15): G.A. Cohen - “Freedom and Money” and **Virginia Held** – “A Non-contractual Society” and **Martha Nussbaum** – “Political Equality”

Class 23 (Apr 17): Wallace Matson – “Justice: A Funeral Oration” and **David Miller** – “Three Types of Justice” and **Amartya Sen** - “The Idea of Justice”

Class 24 (Apr 29): Susan Okin – “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?” and **Jesse Prinz** – “Morality is a Culturally Conditioned Response”

Class 25 (May 1): Martha Nussbaum – “The Future of Feminist Liberalism” and “Cultivating Humanity” and **Amartya Sen** – “Elements of a Theory of Human Rights”

Class 26 (May 6): Carole Pateman – “Participatory Theory of Democracy” and **Joshua Cohen** – “Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy”

Class 27 (May 8): Iris Young – “Five Faces of Oppression” and “Social Connection Model”

Class 28 (May 13): Manuel Rodeiro – “Rorty’s Public-Private Distinction as Pragmatic Tool”

- All *italicized* works are excerpts

C. Introduction to Philosophy

Course Description:

The seminar will be an exploration of major philosophical theories. We will begin by looking at critical thinking and argumentation in general. We will investigate the development of philosophy from the Ancient, Modern and Contemporary periods. Central questions to be addressed include: What is philosophy? Is there only a physical world? Do we have free will? Can we devise an objective and universal ethical system? How is justice related to power?

Course Schedule:

Class 1 (August 28): Introduction - What is Philosophy?

Class 2 (September 4): Reading and Writing Philosophy; Beardsleys “What is Philosophy” and Russell “The Value of Philosophy”

Class 3 (September 9): Socrates and the Socratic Method - Plato “The Apology”

Class 4 (September 11): Intro to Metaphysics – Plato “Allegory of the Cave”

Class 5 (September 16): Intro to Epistemology - Plato “Meno”

Class 6 (September 18): What is Knowledge? – Plato - “Theaetetus” and Gettier “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”

Class 7 (September 23): Rationalism - Descartes *Meditations* I and II

Class 8 (September 25): Empiricism - Locke *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

Class 9 (October 2): Idealism - Berkely *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* “Dialogue I”

Class 10 (October 7): Skepticism - Hume *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

Class 11 (October 16): End of Debate? - Kant *Critique of Pure Reason* “Preface and Intro”

Class 12 (October 21): REVIEW DAY

Class 13 (October 23): FIRST EXAM

Class 14 (October 28): Free Will vs. Determinism – Smith “Taking Aim at Free Will” and Strawson “Your Move: The Maze of Free Will” and Roskies “Neuroscientific Challenges to Free Will and Responsibility” and Frankfurt “The Principle of Alternative Possibility”

Class 15 (October 30): Cultural Relativism – Prinz “Morality is a Culturally Conditioned Response” and Midgley “Moral Isolationism”

Class 16 (November 4): Virtue Ethics - Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*

Class 17 (November 6): Deontology – O’neill “A Simplified Account of Kant’s Ethics”

Class 18 (November 11): Utilitarianism - Mill *Utilitarianism*

Class 19 (November 13): Metaethics – Moore’s Intuitionism (“The Subject Matter of Ethics”) and Ayer’s Emotivism (*Language, Truth, and Logic* - Chapter 6 stop when beings discussing aesthetics)

Class 20 (November 18): Existentialism - Sartre “Existentialism is a Humanism”

Class 21 (November 20): Social Contract – Hobbes *Leviathan* and Locke *Second Treatise on Government*

Class 22 (November 25): Justice and the Social Contract - Rousseau “From the State of Nature to Citizenship” and Wollstonecraft *Vindication of the Rights of Women*

Class 23 (December 2): Ideal Theory - Rawls “Justice as Fairness: A Restatement”

Class 24 (December 4): Non-Ideal Theory - Mills *The Racial Contract* and Pateman *The Sexual Contract*

Class 25 (December 9): REVIEW DAY

Class 26 (December 11): SECOND EXAM

- All *italicized* works are excerpts

D. Philosophy of Law

Course Description:

The course is designed to introduce you to some of the major authors and issues within Anglo-American Jurisprudence. We will begin by examining some of the philosophical underpinnings of the law: What makes law different than other systems of regulation, such as moral codes, social conventions, or the rules of a game? What do judges do when they are interpreting the law? Are they merely interpreting what the law is, or are they actually creating new law? What is the connection between law and morality, and how do rules of law and moral judgments interact and relate? We will then look at the status and nature of legal rights. Do these merely mark out particularly important interests that can nevertheless be overridden by other important interests, or are rights inviolable? Finally, we'll debate the values that public officials (e.g., judges, executives, and legislators) should implement when they make and apply law. What moral principles and policies should our penal system reflect? Did the U.S. Supreme Court make a mistake when it upheld the death penalty? Was it wrong to uphold affirmative action in higher education? Was it correct to recognize constitutional rights to abortion?

Course Schedule:

Class 1 (Jan 28): Introduction - What is Legal Philosophy?

Class 2 (Jan 30): Essential Features of Legal System - H.L.A. Hart *The Concept of Law*

Class 3 (Feb 4): The Rule of Law - Lon Fuller *The Morality of Law*

Class 4 (Feb 6): Duty to Obey Law - John Rawls, "Legal Obligation and the Duty of Fair Play"
read only 4-8

Class 5 (Feb 11): Respecting the Law - A.J. Simmons "The Principle of Fair Play"

Class 6 (Feb 13): Natural Law - Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae*

Class 7 (Feb 20): Unjust Positive Law - Anthony D'Amato "On the Connection Between Law and Justice"

Class 8 (Feb 25): Natural Law and Jurisprudence - Mark C. Murphy "Natural Law Jurisprudence"

Class 9 (Feb 27): Legal Indeterminacy – Oliver Wendell Holmes *The Path of the Law*

Class 10 (Mar 4): Common Law - Karl Llewellyn *The Common Law Tradition*

Class 11 (Mar 6): Rules and Principles - Ronald Dworkin *Taking Rights Seriously*

Class 12 (Mar 11): Utilitarian Justification for Punishment - Jeremy Bentham *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*

Class 13 (Mar 13): Retributive Justification for Punishment – Michael S. Moore “The Moral Worth of Retribution”

Class 14 (Mar 18): Capital Punishment - Ernest van den Haag “The Collapse of the Case Against Capital Punishment”

Class 15 (Mar 20): Arbitrary Nature of Capital Punishment - Stephen Nathanson “Does it Matter if the Death Penalty is Arbitrarily Administered?”

Class 16 (Mar 25): Imposing Legal Duties to Help - Ernest Weinrib “The Case for a Duty to Rescue”

Class 17 (Mar 27): Strict Liability - Richard A. Wasserstrom “Strict Liability in the Criminal Law”

Class 18 (Apr 1): Constitutional Interpretation - Robert Bork “Neutral Principles and Some First Amendment Problems”

Class 19 (Apr 3): Originalism - Stephen Macedo “Originalism and the Inescapability of Politics”

Class 20 (Apr 8): Living Constitution – Andrew Coan “Living Constitutional Theory”

Class 21 (Apr 10): Abortion Case Law - *Roe v. Wade* (p. 422-428)

Class 22 (Apr 15): Abortion Case Law Continued - *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* (p. 437-442)

Class 23 (Apr 17): Abortion Legal Changes - Donald H. Regan, “Rewriting *Roe v. Wade*”

Class 24 (Apr 29): Affirmative Action - Ronald Dworkin, "Why Bakke Has No Case"

Class 25 (May 1): Affirmative Action Case Law - *Grutter v. Bollinger*

Class 26 (May 6): Final Class – Open Discussion

- All *italicized* works are excerpts

E. Contemporary Ethical Issues (Summer Online):

Course Description:

This course will philosophically examine contentious moral issues of the day. Among the topics that will be discussed are affirmative action, euthanasia, warfare, obligations of the wealthy to the poor, redistributive taxation, prostitution, and punishment. Essentially, this course aims to introduce students to the traditional normative ethical theories of virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism and analyze their application to real problems in the world today.

This is an online course. Thus, at NO time will this course require students to be on campus. Because this is a condensed course, we will be covering material very QUICKLY.

Course Objectives:

1. understand and be able to apply normative ethical theories to complex social issues;
2. reconstruct and present various arguments made in relation to complex ethical issues
3. critically evaluate various ethical and policy arguments (including one's own);
4. develop and defend an original thesis on a contemporary social issue, that is, learn to think for yourself about it; and
5. engage in scholarly research on a contemporary social issue.

Course Schedule:

Part I – Normative Ethical Theories:

Unit One – Virtue Ethics (available June 24th)

Unit Two – Deontology (available June 26th)

Unit Three – Utilitarianism (available June 28th)

Unit Four – Cultural Relativism (available June 30th)

Part II – Contemporary Ethical Issues

Unit Five – Is Killing Wrong? (available July 7th)

Unit Six – Is Prostitution Wrong? (available July 10th)

Unit Seven – Is Affirmative Action Wrong? (available July 13th)

Unit Eight – Is Legal Punishment Wrong? (available July 16th)

Unit Nine – Is Taxing the Wealthy Wrong? (available July 19th)

Unit Ten – Is Not Giving to Those in Need Wrong? (available July 22nd)

PROPOSED SYLLABUS

A. Existentialism (I am instructing this course in Spring 2020)

Course Description:

Existentialism perhaps more than any other movement in philosophy has captured and continues to hold sway over the public imagination. While there is no consistent set of doctrines or unified methodology to existentialist philosophy, there are a number of common themes and problems, particularly revolving around the issues of freedom and the contemporary threat of nihilism.

Thus, this course will serve as a general introduction to existentialism. The primary focus of the course will be to engage the core existentialist themes of freedom, subjectivity, death, and ethics as they were developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. As such, the course aims to provide students an opportunity to grapple with these difficult subjects and learn to recognize and appreciate the impact existentialism has had on our culture.

In the first half of the course, we will introduce the concepts that drive existentialist thinking: authenticity and absurdity. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus blur the lines between good/evil, truth/fiction, and philosophy/literature.

To overcome the biases of traditional existential thought that stems from all these writers being rich, white, European, males in the second half of the course, we will consider other existentialist perspectives. First by turning de Beauvoir—the co-founder of the existentialist movement—for an articulation of Feminist Existentialism. Secondly, by turning to the Black Existentialism of Du Bois and Fanon. Lastly, we will examine Laurie Ann Paul’s work on transformative experience, which approaches many existential questions from an analytic perspective.

Course Goals:

- Understand existential philosophy in the context of traditional philosophy.
- Explore and recognize existentialism in literature, film, music, and mostly in philosophy.
- Increase your ability to logically analyze and make arguments.
- Improve your ability to write analytically

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: **Sarah Bakewell**, “Sir, What a Horror, Existentialism!”

Week 3: **Søren Kierkegaard**, *Fear and Trembling* (selections)

Week 4: **Friedrich Nietzsche**, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (selections) and “Zarathustra’s Prologue”

Week 5: **Fyodor Dostoevsky**, *Notes From Underground* (selections)

Week 6: **Martin Heidegger**, *Being and Time* (selections)

Class 7: **Jean-Paul Sartre**, “Existentialism is a Humanism” and “Erostratus”

Class 8: **Albert Camus**, *Myth of Sisyphus* (selections)

Class 9: **Simone de Beauvoir**, “Introduction to *The Second Sex*” and “The Narcissist”

Class 10: **W.E.B. Du Bois**, “Of Our Spiritual Striving” and “Of the Meaning of Progress” and “Of the Passing of the First-Born” and “The Sorrow Songs”

Class 11: **Franz Fanon**, “The Negro and Recognition” and “By Way of Conclusion”

Class 12: **Laurie Ann Paul**, “Becoming a Vampire” and “Transformative Choice”

Class 13: Final Class Discussion

B. American Pragmatism

Course Description:

The most distinctively American school of philosophy, Pragmatism, from its beginnings in the mid-19th century to today has influenced not only philosophy itself but a wide variety of areas, including natural science, political and social thought, law, psychology, education, and economics. Importantly, Pragmatism attempts to challenge many of the entrenched philosophical dichotomies of Modern Philosophy. Specifically, it broke with the rationalist notions that cognition could be examined in abstraction from action, and that truth could be defined independently of human inquiry. To explain these intellectual developments the course will involve a close study of the work of the essential pragmatist philosophers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, including Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, as well as more recent pragmatists, such as Willard Van Orman Quine, Wilfred Sellars, Hilary Putnam, and Richard Rorty.

Course Goals:

- Understand the basic themes, questions, and methods of American Pragmatism
- Appreciate the intellectual and historical context in which American Pragmatism developed
- Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of American Pragmatism, particularly in light of the teachings of alternative philosophical traditions
- Increase your ability to logically analyze and make arguments.
- Improve your ability to write analytically

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: **Charles Sanders Peirce** – “The Fixation of Belief” and “The Scientific Attitude and Fallibilism”

Week 3: **Charles Sanders Peirce** – “How to Make Our Ideas Clear” and “The Essentials of Pragmatism”

Week 4: **William James** – “The Will to Believe” and “The Dilemma of Determinism”

Week 5: **William James** – *Pragmatism* (selections)

Week 6: **John Dewey** - “The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy” and “Truth and Consequences”

Class 7: **John Dewey** – “The Quest for Certainty” and “Common Sense and Scientific Inquiry”

Class 8: **Willard Van Orman Quine** - “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” and “On the Reason for Indeterminacy of Translation”

Class 9: **Wilfrid Sellars** - “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind”

Class 10: **Hilary Putnam** – *The Many Faces of Realism* (selections)

Class 11: **Richard Rorty** – “Consequences of Pragmatism”

Class 12: **Cornel West** – “Why Pragmatism?” and “The Limits of Neopragmatism”

Class 13: Final Class Discussion

COURSE EVALUATION TOOLS

A. SAMPLE POLICIES

- **MANHATTAN MARYMOUNT’S COLLEGE’S POLICY ON ACCESSIBILITY**

Students with disabilities (learning, physical, or psychological) who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments for a course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services or enrolled in the Academic Access Program. With a student’s permission, faculty members are notified each semester by CONFIDENTIAL email that a student with documented disabilities is in their class and is eligible for accommodations. If a student has questions regarding the Office of Disability Services or wants to obtain accommodations, contact Diana Nash, Director of Academic Access & Disability Services, Room 500 Main, 5th floor Main Building. dnash@mmm.edu or 212-774-0724.

- **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

I take attendance. You will be permitted three absences (for any reason) without penalty, so judiciously make decisions. Please note, however, that students will not be penalized for religious or pregnancy- or childbirth-related absences. Absences for these reasons will not be counted toward the allowed number of absences in this course. Please inform me about absences related to pregnancy, childbirth, or religious observation. Please attend class, be prompt for class, and do not depart early. There will be a significant reduction in your course grade if absence, lateness, and early departure become a problem. The reasons for this are that arriving late and departing early are disruptive to others in the class, we cover a lot of material each class meeting, I and other classmates can benefit a great deal from your participation and understanding hinges on you being part of the give-and-take of the dialogue.

- **TIMELY SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

Papers are due at the beginning of class. Do not make it a habit to walk in late on the day a paper is assigned. If you cannot hand in a paper on the due date, e-mail it to me the day before it is due. I will be accommodating if you get in touch. Otherwise, for each day a paper is late I will deduct half a letter grade. After three days late papers will not be accepted.

- **PLAGIARISM**

Intellectual dishonesty is a serious offense. It is theft of another person’s intellectual labor and it undermines the reason for getting an education in the first place: understanding and learning how to think for oneself. Please consult Student Handbook for its discussion of the nature of plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in an automatic F for the assignment. I will work with

turnitin.com as an additional means of addressing plagiarism. If you are caught plagiarizing, then you will be notified of the detection, we will have a conference about the incident, and you will be turned in to the appropriate administrative agency for determination of penalty.

- **GET IN TOUCH**

Feel free to talk to me about any issue that you might have that could potentially impact your success in the course. Visit me during my office hours or e-mail me with any questions you might have. I am a resource to help you learn. If you are confused about the readings or my expectations from you, get in touch.

B. SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

- **THINK PIECES**

One-page to two-page responses to the readings in preparation for class discussion. Stylistically more thought out and developed than free style writing, but not as formal as an essay that must be revised and cited. Simply, convey any idea you found interesting, problematic, or felt needed to be explained further. Think Pieces will serve as a springboard for discussion and demonstrate your familiarity with the assigned readings. They will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. I will accept one reading response per class meeting will not be accepted. You must submit six Think Pieces in total by the end of the semester. The first two Think Pieces must be submitted by the 6th week of the semester.

- **TAKE HOME EXAM**

Two take-home exams will be given. In each case, students will receive a prompt a week in advance and must answer in 4-5 pages typed, double-spaced, one-inch margin, 12-point font.

Sample Take Home Exam Prompt:

Introduction to Ethics – Briefly explain the major differences between a Utilitarian, Deontological, or Virtue Ethics normative framework and defend via analyzing the philosophers we have studied if you believe one is better for constructing an ethical theory.

Introduction to Philosophy - Compare and contrast: (1) the metaphysical positions of idealism and realism and (2) the epistemological position of rationalism and empiricism. Use at least one philosopher we have studied to analyze each one of these philosophical positions.

- **IN CLASS PRESENTATION**

One (8-10 minute) class presentation introducing the reading for the day. Presentation must include either PowerPoint or handout offering a summary of the main arguments and a critical evaluation of the piece.

- **FINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

The final paper is based on a topic relating to the course materials and your own particular interests and concerns. The drafting process for the final research paper is scaffolded and will begin early in the semester. Detailed instructions will be distributed by the fourth week of class.

Sample Final Research Paper Topics:

Environmental Law, Policy, and Ethics - A term paper that (1) analyzes a current environmental topic, explains the problem, demonstrates its value/relevance, (2) describes ethical, legal, economic, and/or social issues that hinder its resolution, and (3) prescribes what you believe to be a viable solution.

Introduction to Philosophy - Skepticism is an ever-present specter ready to undermine our confidence in any philosophical theory. Advise how two of the philosophers we have studied attempted to refute “the skeptic” and analyze at least one philosopher who embraced skeptical conclusions. Explain if you believe these attempts have been successful or if you believe philosophical skepticism can never be refuted.