

COURSE SYLLABUS FORM

**American University of Beirut
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Department: Philosophy**

Course Number and Title: PHIL 101 (Applied Philosophy)

1. Course Learning Outcomes

The tools of philosophy have long been applied to practical questions: How ought I live my life? What has value? Should I obey divine authority? In this class, we will examine the answers contemporary philosophers have given to these and other questions. We will cover such topics as death, happiness, the relation between God and morality, sexual ethics, and the morality of such practices as abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, and others. By discussing and debating the arguments that philosophers have developed, I hope you will be able to come to reasoned conclusions about the questions of value and morality that we will address this semester.

2. Resources Available to Students

The readings for this course are contained in a course packet, which may be purchased at the bookstore.

3. Grading Criteria

Participation: The grading in this class reflects my emphasis on critical thinking and analysis. As discussion and debate is an important aid to critical thought, participation is expected, and will count for 10% of your grade. Participation consists mainly of contributing to class discussion, but coming to my office hours and sending questions via e-mail can also boost your participation grade.

Reading Quizzes: In order to be a successful participant in class, you must do the readings. The readings are daily, but short; the average reading load is less than 8 pages per class period. In return for this light reading load, you are expected to read the assignment carefully and come to class prepared to discuss it. Unfortunately, I have learned from experience that most students will not do the reading unless threats are used. Therefore, there will be daily (but very easy!) reading quizzes; together, these will constitute 15% of your grade. The reading quizzes are not

intended to punish you; in fact, they reward you. You will find that they are very easy; and further, if you take more than 80% of the reading quizzes, these extra reading quizzes will count as extra credit on your final grade.

Papers: You will write two papers, each of which will be 4-6 pages in length. I will give you a list of topics from which to choose. Before you turn in each paper, you will have an opportunity to have me read and critique a draft of your paper, so that you can revise and improve it. You are not required to have me read a draft of your paper, but I strongly encourage you to do so. Each paper will count for 25% of your grade.

Final Exam: There will be a final exam, which will count for 25% of your grade.

4. Schedule

Tentative Reading Schedule

Happiness

Nozick, "The Experience Machine"

Death

Nagel, "Death"

Egoism

Plato, "The Myth of Gyges"

Rachels, "Egoism and Moral Skepticism"

Herskovits, "Cultural Relativism and Cultural Values"

Pojman, "Ethical Relativism..."

God and Morality

Layman, "Ethics and the Kingdom of God"

Arthur, "Religion, Morality, and Conscience"

Hooker, "Cudworth and Quinn"

Having a Moral Position

Dworkin, "The Concept of a Moral Position"

Drug Legalization

Nadelman, "Should We Legalize Drugs? Yes"

Courtwright, "Should We Legalize Drugs? No"

Pornography

Longino, "Pornography, Oppression, and Freedom..."

Soble, "Pornography: Defamation..."

Abortion

Warren, "On the Moral..." (skip section I, pp. 201-203)

Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"

Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion", through §5 (pp. 187-195)

Thomson, §§6-8 + Warren, section I (pp. 201-3)

Animal Rights

Singer, "All Animals are Equal..."

Steinbock, "Speciesism and the Idea of Equality"

Euthanasia

Gay-Williams, "The Wrongfulness of Euthanasia"

Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"

Brandt, "A Moral Principle About Killing"

Capital Punishment

Grassian, pp. 377-389

Sexual Morality and the Enforcement of Morality

Grassian, "Sexual Morality and the Enforcement of Morality"

Rich and Poor Nations

Singer, "Rich and Poor"

Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics"

5. Course Policy (if any)

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. You will not be given a second chance, and I will not accept any excuses. If you plagiarize, you will be given a zero for the assignment and your case will be turned over to an administrative committee, which can levy a punishment of its choice, up to and including ejection from the university. When I hand out the paper topics, you will receive instructions as to what counts as plagiarism. If you are not sure what counts as plagiarism, come talk to me.