PHI 105: Ethics Bowl

Room: Day Hall, 206 Lecture

Class Days: Tuesday

Class Time: 6:30-7:30pm

Instructor: Elizabeth Whiting Pierce, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Mondays from 9am-noon, Tuesdays from 3pm-5pm, Wednesdays from 9am-noon

Office: Cornwell 211

Email: epierce@mhu.edu

Course Description:

This course trains students to craft compelling, publicly accessible arguments on how to solve pressing contemporary challenges in ethical ways. It also introduces students to the basic practices of professional comportment.

Course Student Learning Outcomes

* Students will propose ethically sound solutions to contemporary social challenges (problem solving)
* Students will explain the ethical and pragmatic strengths and weaknesses of various possible proposals for solutions to contemporary social challenges (problem solving and critical thinking)
* Students will express their arguments verbally in compelling and publicly accessible fashion (oral communication)
* Students will exhibit professionalism—promptness, effective communication, courtesy—with established and emerging leaders at the NCICU Ethics Bowl

Communication

Folks, I am an email junkie. That’s probably the best way to communicate with me. I will do everything in my power to answer your emails in 1-2 business days. Please note, 2 business days is not the same thing as 48 hours. I try to stay away from email on the weekends.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Students with a disability may request accommodations for this class (extra time on tests, different testing environment, note taking services, etc.) by meeting with MHU’s Disability Services Coordinator, Judith Harris and developing an Academic Accommodations Plan. Ms. Koontz can be reached by phone (828-689-1410), email (Judith\_harris@mhu.edu), or personal appointment at Robinson Infirmary, Room 306. I will be *happy* to work with students to fulfill their Academic Accommodations Plan. For the sake of fairness, however, I cannot give special accommodations to any student who has *not* developed an Academic Accommodations Plan. So, please visit Ms. Harris as early as you possibly can in the semester if you need her services.

Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that requires college employees to report incidents wherein students have been or continue to be in physical danger (sexual abuse, physical assault, suicide attempts). *College professors* are “mandatory reporters” which means that I am legally required to report these dangers to the Title IX coordinator, Jennie Matthews, if a student reports them to me.

I share this information so you can choose when and how to confide in me. I am happy to listen and talk with students about Title IX experiences they wish to have reported (or to listen and talk with students about non-Title IX personal and professional challenges and successes). For students who want support but do not wish to have their experiences reported, I am happy to walk with you over to see a confidential reporter (i.e. Stephanie McLeskey, Andrew Hoots, Judith Harris, Stephanie Shelton, and Cassie Pavone).

Inclement Weather Policy

As a general rule, this class will meet as long as MHU remains open (i.e. we’ll only cancel class for bad weather if the campus as a whole closes or starts late, etc.). If you face unsafe traveling due to weather, please stay safe and shoot me an email (see attendance policy). *Do not assume that inclement weather will count as an excused absence for exam days*. Watch the weather and contact me at 24 hours in advance if you are afraid weather will cause you to miss an exam. I withhold the right to deny a make-up opportunity for anyone who misses an exam due to weather without my express permission to do so.

Academic Integrity

Mars Hill University is committed to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. Our Honor Code calls us to uphold these core values in the work that we do and the lives that we lead. As a community, we honor and expect honest work, fair and respectful treatment of all members of the community, and trust as the touchstone of our work with one another. When members of our community break this code, it is our duty as an academic community to repair what has been damaged and to follow clear guidelines that support and promote the fundamental values of academic integrity.

**Mars Hill University Honor Code**

We, the students of Mars Hill University, pledge ourselves to uphold integrity, honesty, and academic responsibility in and out of the classroom.

**Mars Hill University Honor Pledge**

On my honor, I have neither given nor received any academic aid or information that would violate the Honor Code of Mars Hill University.

Cell Phone Use

Please keep cell phones stored in your bags and set on airplane mode or off during class.

Grading Scale

* A=93-100%, work exceeds expectations
* B=85-92%, work meets all expectations
* C=78-84%, work meets most expectations
* D=70-77%, work meets minimal expectations
* F=69% work does not meet basic expectations

Required Texts

* Articles posted on Moodle
* *Think Again: How to Reason and Argue* by Walter Sinnot-Armstrong

Attendance

You should attend class. After all, MHU is expensive. Skipping class is a massive waste of your money, your parents’ money, the federal government’s money, and scholarship donors’ money. Also, it will be nearly impossible to get good grades on any of your assignments (including the daily reading response assignments) if you skip class.

Please give me a heads up if you are going to miss more than one class in a row. Otherwise, I will worry you have gone off the deep end (car wreck, anxiety attacks, family member died unexpectedly, overwhelming depression, etc.) and start sending emails and Care Reports to everybody and their colleagues to check on you. Save us all the panic! Shoot me an email.

Assignments

Opening Statement Papers: 60%

Over the last two thirds of the semester, each student will write one opening statement per week (10 papers total) of 500-625 words. I drop your three lowest grades. Papers are due 24 hours before class time. Email me ASAP if Moodle glitches.

\*\*\**If this sounds like a lot, don’t worry.* *There’s a template. It can get to be pretty formulaic once you’ve done a couple of them.* The opening statement papers mirror your verbally delivered opening statements in an ethics bowl round. They consist of the following parts and pieces: 1) greeting to the other team and judges, 2) an answer to the stated question, usually in the form of X actor should take Y action in response to Z problem, 3) an explanation of the concrete outcomes anticipated by X taking Y action, 4) justification for why Y action or its outcome is ethically valid, 5) entertainment of counter arguments, and 6) a very short conclusion.\*\*\* Make sure to utilize good grammar, spelling, and clear prose.

Opening Statement Clip: 10%

Exactly the same at the opening statement paper except that you also submit an audio recording (due the same time as the paper) of you delivering your opening statement. Clips will be played in class. Late clips will receive no more than half credit. No clips will be accepted after the date and time when they are scheduled to be played in class.

Reading Quizzes: 20%

For the first few weeks of class, we’ll study argumentation strategies. Open book quizzes will hold everybody accountable for doing the week’s reading *and* help you hone in on critical passages or ideas. The lowest grade will be dropped. Quizzes are due 24 hours before class time. Email ASAP if Moodle glitches.

Attendance: 10%

Everybody gets one no-questions-asked absence. Just shoot me an email and let me know you’ll be missing class, and that this is the freebie week. After that, every unexcused absence results in a 3 point drop in the final grade. If you notify me ahead of time, I’m happy to excuse absences to accommodate sickness, family emergencies, approved school events, etc.

Schedule

Tuesday, 8/27: Introduction to Ethics Bowl

* No reading
* No assignment

Tuesday, 9/3

* Reading: *Think Again,* Chapter 8
* Assignment: reading quiz on Moodle before class

Tuesday, 9/10

* Reading: *Think Again,* Chapter 9
* Assignment: reading quiz on Moodle before class

Tuesday, 9/17

* Reading: *Think Again,* Chapter 10
* Assignment: reading quiz on Moodle before class

Monday, 9/23: LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH NO TRANSCRIPT RECORD

Tuesday, 9/24

* ~~Reading:~~ *~~Think Again,~~* ~~Chapter 11~~
* ~~Assignment: reading quiz on Moodle before class~~
* Reading: case 6 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 10/1

* Reading: case 1 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 10/8

* Reading: case 2 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 10/15: FALL BREAK, NO CLASS

Tuesday, 10/22: Prof out of town…Will try to meet by Skype…

* Reading: case 3 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Friday, 10/25: LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM COURSE WITH “W” ON TRANSCRIPT

Tuesday, 10/29

* Reading: case 4 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 11/5

* Reading: case 5 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 11/12, MICHELLE OSBORN VISITS CLASS

* Reading: case 6 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 11/19

* Reading: case 7 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 11/27: REMOTE CLASS, BE SAFE ON YOUR DRIVES HOME

* Reading: case 8 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 12/3

* Reading: case 9 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 12/10: DRESS FOR DAY 1 OF TOURNAMENT

* Reading: case 10 prep articles
* Assignment: opening statement paper

Tuesday, 12/17: DRESS FOR DAY 2 OF TOURNAMENT, plan for tournament, I will bring snacky stuff