



TR 509 Comparative Religious Ethics
January 2008, 8:45 am

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Office Hours: You are welcome to stop by my office whenever the door is open, or email to set up an appointment.

Course Description

Religion, and religious worldviews, both form and inform the context and content of ethics, the systematic study of morality. This course uses a variety of methods (art, case studies, philosophy, etc.) to explore ethics in the different world religions, noting points of similarity and difference.

Course Objectives

1. To explore different approaches to ethical themes in the different world religions.
2. To compare and contrast different approaches to ethical themes in the different world religions.
3. To focus on specific case studies from a variety of different viewpoints, representing the different world religions.
4. To discuss ethics from a multicultural and inter-faith perspective.

Course Requirements

1. One or two seminar presentations on the topic or case study for the day. 50% of grade.
2. One final paper or project, either 1) comparing and contrasting two different approaches to a theme or case study in ethics, or 2) researching a specific ethical issue in one religion not of one's own. 50% of grade.

Course Texts

Required:

1. Regina Wentzel Wolfe and Christine E. Gudorf, eds., Ethics & World Religions: Cross-Cultural Case Studies (Orbis, 1999) ISBN 1-57075-240-0/9781570752407
2. Joseph Runzo and Nancy M. Martin, Ethics in the world religions (Oneworld Publications, 2001) ISBN 1-85168-247-3/9781851682478
3. Simon Wiesenthal, The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness (Schocken Books, 1998).

Recommended -- the reading is required, purchase of the texts are recommended:

1. Gary E. Kessler, ed. Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Philosophy Reader, 5th ed. (Wadsworth, 2004).
2. Larry May, Shari Collins-Chobaian, Kai Wong, Applied Ethics: A Multicultural Approach, 4th ed. (Pearson Education, Inc., 2006).

The following are recommended films that we may (or may not) have time to watch during the course:

3. Water <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0240200/>
4. Earth <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0150433/>
5. Fire <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0116308/>
6. King of Masks <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0115669/>
7. Whale Rider <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0298228/>

Course Schedule:

1. Introduction 1/7/08
2. How Should One Live? 1/8/08
Voices ch. 3 and 4 (all, but not Rand)
3. Focus on Jewish ethics 1/10/08
Runzo and Martin (RM) ch.4
Case study: The Sunflower and a selection of commentaries.

4. Islamic ethics 1/11/08
RM ch. 5
Wolfe and Gudorf (WG) Case: WG 1, 7
5. Hindu ethics 1/14/08
RM ch. 8
WG Case 4
Recommended: Water
6. Buddhist ethics 1/15/08
RM ch. 10
WG Case: 13, 16
7. Confucian ethics 1/17/08
RM ch. 11
WG Case 8
Recommended: King of Masks
8. Justice 1/18/08
Voices ch. 4 and 5
9. Politics and human rights 1/22/08
Applied Ethics ch. II (Nino, An-Na'im, Ake, Chan, Inada)
WG Case 7, 10
Recommended: Earth
10. Medical ethics 1/23/08
Star Trek?
Applied Ethics ch. IX (Lo and Becker)
RM ch. 13
Case 15, 17
11. Gender and Sexuality 1/24/08
Applied Ethics – Nussbaum (15) and Abu Lughod (423)
RM ch. 14
Recommended: Whale Rider and/or Fire
12. Wrap Up 1/25/08

