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Ethics and International Affairs, SIS 614.001
American University
Spring 2005, Monday 9:55 am-12:35 pm
Professor Julie Mertus

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Course Summary

This course studies how different ethical traditions address central moral problems in international affairs. It compares and applies ethical traditions to some of the most pressing issues of our day: approaches to terrorism; the demands and limits of patriotism; efforts to diffuse anti-Americanism; America's sentencing of foreign nationals to the death penalty; the apparent tradeoff between human rights and technology transfers; responses to terrorism and the international drug trade; the accumulation of foreign debt and the choices made in plans for economic development; the proliferation of multinational corporations and global environmental crises.

The ethical traditions considered in this course include: realism; natural law; declaratory international law; cosmopolitanism; utilitarianism; contractarianism; and liberalism. We consider how each of these traditions provides the guidelines and vocabulary for ethical judgment. We also examine feminist and distributive justice critiques of the traditions, with particular attention to the changing international context and the normative challenges presented by globalization. In so doing, we are constantly reminded that the answer to the question "how shall we live?" can only be made in the "context of boundaries – between people and politics."¹

Each class meeting considers a new ethical tradition through the use of a case study (or "problem"). This "hands on" approach helps students develop their skills in policy analysis while gaining an understanding of the different approaches for debating the morality of international choices and actions. Students from all academic backgrounds are welcome. The course may be of special interest to students of international peace and conflict resolution, foreign policy, international development, international politics, international law, public affairs and philosophy and religion.

¹ Ken Booth, Tim Dunne and Michael Cox, "How Might We Live: Global Ethics in a New Century,"p. 1 in *How Might We Live: Global Ethics in a New Century* (2004).

Course Goals

This course seeks to encourage:

- practical application of philosophy and ethical theory to contemporary social problems;
- awareness of difficult ethical choices in global affairs and, in particular, consideration of how ethical and moral considerations influence leadership and decision making;
- exploration of the possible grounds for moral and ethical evaluation of the actions of states and of other important international actors (such as multinational corporations, intergovernmental organizations, etc.).
- development of students' practical skills in policy analysis;
- interdisciplinary inquiry transcending traditional boundaries among academic disciplines and, specifically, providing a solid background in the foundational concepts and issues of both applied ethics as well as normative international relations.

Course Requirements

There are three requirements for this seminar:

1. Completion of Case Studies (“Problems”)(50%): There are nine case studies throughout the semester. A major component of preparing for class will be reading and analyzing these studies.

Students are required to write a paper on six out of the ten (10) case studies. Three must be finished prior to break and three after break. Papers are to be put in a three-ring binder. Binders are to be brought to class each week. Although they may be checked at any time, they will be graded on two occasions: during break and at the end of class. The last class will provide an opportunity for review of the case studies.

Papers should serve three goals:

1. Demonstrate that you have read the problem and carefully considered the questions posed for each problem (questions are placed on the syllabus, with possible additions on Blackboard).
2. Provide evidence that you have read and understood the class readings.
3. Show a connection between the problem and the class readings.

2. Critical Book Review/Presentation (30%):

The syllabus lists seven additional books as recommended. At the beginning of class, you are to pick one of the books to read, analyze and present to the class. Your analysis should relate the book to some of the ethical traditions we are discussing in class. Quote class readings. You may bring in additional readings outside our class, but additional research is not required.

The days in which the books may be reviewed are spread throughout the semester. People reviewing the same book should coordinate their class presentations. In so doing, relate the book to the general themes of the course.

In preparing your review, keep in mind the following pointers.

- a. *Provide a description, not a summary, of the book.* Sufficient description should be given so that the reader, as he reads the review, will have some understanding of the author's thoughts. This account of the contents of a book can often be woven into the critical remarks.
- b. *Be critical, not merely descriptive.* A critical review is one in which the writer describes and evaluates the book in terms of the aims and purposes of the author, and supports this evaluation with evidence from the text.
- c. *Build an argument based on what is there, not on what you want to be there.* While a critical review is a statement of opinion, it must be a considered judgment including: (i) a statement of the reviewer's understanding of the author's purpose; (ii) how well the reviewer feels the author's purpose has been achieved; (iii) evidence to support the reviewer's judgment of the author's achievement.
- d. *Quote with care.* Refer to specific portions of the books to illustrate your statements and conclusions. Generally, however, extensive quotes are not advisable. Do not leave quotes dangling, without analysis. In reviewing a draft, ask yourself whether quotations are awkwardly placed and, if so, adjust their usage.
- e. *Structure your paper.* The opening paragraph, like the concluding one, is in a position of emphasis and usually sets the tone of the paper. Among the various possible introductions are:
 - a statement of the thesis
 - a statement of the author's purpose
 - a statement about the topicality of the work or its significance
 - a comparison of the work to others by the same author or within the same genre
 - a statement about the author

The main body of the review should logically develop your thesis as organized by your outline. Changes in the outline may need to be made and transitional paragraphs introduced, but the aim should be toward logical development of the central point. Quoted material should be put in quotation marks, or indented, and properly footnoted.

Questions to consider: What is (are) the overall thesis(es) -- the points of view or conclusion? What are your reactions? Did the book(s) enhance your understanding of the issues? How does the book relate to the ethical traditions discussed thus far in class?

Has the book challenged you intellectually, increasing your knowledge, raising new questions, and/or presenting the material in a novel, even provocative manner? Or does the author simply rehash what everyone already knows? Would you recommend any or all of these books, and at what level -- secondary, undergraduate, graduate? What book on this subject still needs to be written?

3. Participation (20%):

Faithful attendance and active, informed participation are required. Please contact me before class if a serious health problem or other emergency will preclude you from attending class (work or internships are not considered an emergency). You will be asked at the end of the course to self-grade your participation. (Your self-grade will be one factor considered by the instructor in calculating your grade). One major component of participation is your input into the class round-up on the last day of class.

Readings:

I have requested that all books be placed on reserve. All other readings will be available on Blackboard.

Required:

10 Case studies (all available on Blackboard, including some additional ones)

Booth, Ken Tim Dunne, Michael Cox, eds. *How Might We Live? Global Ethics in the New Century*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Held, Virginia. *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political and Global* (New York: Oxford, 2005).

Nardin, Terry and David Mapel, eds. *Traditions of International Ethics*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Nussbaum, Martha et al., *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

Walzer, Michael, *Politics and Passion : Toward a More Egalitarian Liberalism* (New Haven: Yale 2005).

Choose one of the following books for presentation and paper (or substitute a book on the same topic with permission of professor):

Caney, Simon. *Justice Beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory* (New York: Oxford, 2005).

Gibney, Mark, *Five Uneasy Pieces: American Ethics in a Globalized World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005)

May, Larry. *Crimes against Humanity : A Normative Account* (New York: Cambridge, 2004)

Peters, Todd. *In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization* (New York: Continuum International Publishing 2004)

Robinson, Fiona, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory and International Relations*. (Boulder: Westview, 2000).

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999)

Vertovec, Steven and Robin Cohen, *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice* (New York: Oxford, 2003)

Class Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class. Students who do not attend class for any reason still will be responsible for assignments and class notes.

Jan. 23: Course Introduction

Jan 30: The Ethical Traditions: Part 1: Realism

PROBLEM:

American Military Retaliation for Terrorism: Judging the Merits of the 1998 Cruise Missile Strikes in Afghanistan and Sudan

Consider how a realist would analyze President Clinton's policy options in responding to terrorism in 1998. If your last name ends in A-L, pretend that you are a supporter of the decision to bomb and write a brief memorandum to the President outlining your position and urging him to adopt it. If your last name ends in M-Z, pretend that you are a

dissenting voice within the administration and write a brief memorandum to the President outlining your position.

No matter who you are, remember that good policy analysis often includes the following steps—

- I. DEFINE THE PROBLEM (carefully formulated problem statement; statement of assumptions, boundaries, and constraints)*
- II. IDENTIFY CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION (consideration of all relevant interests, including the public interest)*
- III. NOTE ALTERNATIVES (available or potentially available)*
- IV. ASSESS ALTERNATIVES WITH CRITERIA (discovery and detailing of all costs and benefits; explanation of all subjective judgments)*
- V. CONSIDER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MONITORING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION (an implementation plan; assessment of political and organizational feasibility)*

READINGS:

Ken Booth, Tim Dunne and Michael Cox, “How Might We Live: Global Ethics in a New Century,” pp. 1-28 in *How Might We Live: Global Ethics in a New Century* (2004)(hereafter *Global Ethics*).

Nardin, “Ethical Traditions in International Affairs,” pp. 1-22 in Nardin and Maple, Traditions of International Ethics.

Donnelly, “Twentieth Century Realism,” pp. 85-111 in Nardin and Maple, Traditions of International Ethics.

Feb. 6: The Ethical Traditions: Part 2: The Tradition of International Law; Declaratory International Law; Natural Law

PROBLEM:

The International Criminal Court (ICC): Could American Military Officers Be Tried in The Hague?

Weigh the Presidents’ policy options and suggest a course of action. What is the impact of this course of action on international law?

READINGS:

Forseyth, “The Tradition of International Law,” pp. 23-41 in Nardin and Maple, *Traditions of International Ethics*.

Jones, "The Declaratory Tradition in Modern International Law," pp. 42-61 in Nardin and Maple, *Traditions of International Ethics*.

Boyle, "Natural Law and International Ethics," pp. 112-135 in Nardin and Maple, *Traditions of International Ethics*.

Phillip Allott, "Globalization from Above: Actualizing the Ideal Through Law," pp. 61-80 in *Global Ethics*

Terry Nardin, "International Pluralism and the Rule of Law," pp. 95-110 in *Global Ethics*

Feb. 13: The Ethical Traditions: Part 3: The Idea of Rights in International Ethics

PROBLEM:

Governor Gilmore and the Execution of Angel Beard: International Law Versus States' Rights

How should Governor Gilmore balance diplomatic, political and legal claims in this case? How should he resolve the conflict between states rights (and communal rights) against individual rights)?

READINGS:

Vincent, "The Idea of Rights in International Ethics," pp. 250-269 in Nardin and Maple, *Traditions of International Ethics*.

Julie Mertus, "The Crisis of Legitimacy in Human Rights," *International Studies Perspectives* (Nov. 2003) (posted on Blackboard)

Kenan Malik, "Universalism and Difference in Discourses on Race," pp. 155-175 in *Global Ethics*

Peter Jones, "Individuals, Communities and Human Rights," pp. 199-216 in *Global Ethics*

Feb. 20: Critical Review #1, #2, #3

Gibney, Mark, *Five Uneasy Pieces: American Ethics in a Globalized World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005)

Caney, Simon. *Justice Beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory* (New York: Oxford, 2005).

May, Larry. *Crimes against Humanity : A Normative Account* (New York: Cambridge, 2004)

Feb. 27: The Ethical Traditions: Part 4: Liberalism

PROBLEM:

Tiltulim: Interrogation by Shaking in Israel

If your last name starts with A-H, identify the best arguments for the attorney general in this case. If your last name starts with I-N, identify the best arguments for arguments that may likely be made by a defense attorney for a Palestinian accused of terrorism. If your name starts with O-Z, identify the various positions that could be termed "liberal Israeli positions."

READINGS:

Smith, "Liberalism and International Relations," pp. 201-224 in Nardin and Maple, *Traditions of International Ethics*.

Walzer, Michael, *Politics and Passion : Toward a More Egalitarian Liberalism* (New Haven: Yale 2005).

Mar. 6: The Ethical Traditions: Utilitarianism and Contractarianism

PROBLEM:

Dangerous Liaisons? Satellites, Missiles, and Clinton's Technology Transfer Policy to China

Identify and evaluate the utilitarian and contractarian approaches which may influence President Clinton. Which approach appeals to you the most? Why?

READINGS:

Ellis, "Utilitarianism and International Ethics," pp. 158-179 in Nardin and Maple, *Traditions of International Ethics*.

Mapel, "The Contractarian Tradition and International Ethics," pp. 180-200 in Nardin and Maple, *Traditions of International Ethics*.

Mar. 20: Feminist Critiques of the Ethical Traditions: The Ethic of Care and Women's Agency -- (plus Critical Review #4)

PROBLEM:

Family, Feminism, and Nation: One Woman's Quest for an Answer in War-torn El Salvador

Identify at least three distinct ways in which an ethics of care or some other theory of feminist international ethics could be applied to this case study. How does the concept of agency factor in when weighing the various feminist frameworks and their application to this case?

READINGS:

Held, Virginia. *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political and Global* (New York: Oxford, 2005).

Kimberly Hutchings, "Towards a Feminist International Ethics," pp. 111-130 in *Global Ethics*

Critical Review #4:

Robinson, Fiona, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory and International Relations*. (Boulder: Westview, 2000).

Mar. 27: Catch-up day

Apr. 3: Globalization and its Critiques (plus Critical Review #5)

PROBLEM:

Sweating the Swoosh: Nike, the Globalization of Sneakers, and the Question of Sweatshop Labor

To what extent is Nike's claim that it was "Guaranteeing fair treatment in all of the factories producing Nike products" true? Is economic justice a relative concept? Defend your position as if you were hired by Nike as a social justice consultant reflecting on Nike's strategy from the mid-1990s through the present day.

READINGS:

Richard Higgott, "Contested Globalization," pp. 131-154 in *Global Ethics*

Robert Cox, "Thinking About Globalization," pp. 217-234 in *Global Ethics*

United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 1999: Globalization with a Human Face*, "Overview," available online at:

<http://www.undp.org/hdro/overview.pdf>

Critical Review#5:

Peters, Todd. *In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization* (New York: Continuum International Publishing 2004)

April 10: The Ethical Traditions: Part 7: Internationalism/Cosmopolitanism – Patriotism (plus Critical Review #6)

PROBLEM:

Intellectual Property Rights, Drug Access, and the Doha Round

If your date of birth is in January, February, March, April, May, or June, represent the United States. If your birth month is in July – December, represent the bloc of “developing countries.” Cast a proposal for the Cancun 2003 meeting for intellectual property over drugs which you think reasonably would appeal to the various interest groups. Shape your proposal realistically enough to merit consideration at the meeting, in an attempt to gain consensus over the proposal. Use both ethical and economic arguments in addition to briefly stating the proposal. Provide reasoning for why your proposal is likely to resonate with the other parties.

READINGS:

Martha Nussbaum, et al., *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, essays by Nussbaum, Appiah, S. Bok, Butler, Falk, Gutmann, Himmelfarb, McConnell, Scarry, Sen, Taylor, Wallerstein and Walzer, with reply by Nussbaum.

Onora O’Neill, “Bounded and Cosmopolitan Justice,” pp. 45-60 in *Global Ethics*

Derek Heater, “Does Cosmopolitanism Have a Future?” pp. 179-198 in *Global Ethics*

Critical Review #6:

Vertovec, Steven and Robin Cohen, *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice* (New York: Oxford, 2003)

April 17: Critical Review #7

PROBLEM:

Out of India: Enron and the Politics of Economic Liberalization

This case reveals much about the strength of domestic and international lobbies and political constraints. What does Enron’s investment in India, the world’s most populous democratic state, reveal toward an understanding the conflicts between trade liberalization and democratic processes? Please comment specifically on when, if ever, economic liberalization conflicts with local and national interests, and when it can serve to support such interests.

Critical Review #7

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999)

April 24: Course Round-Up