

LGST 1000
ETHICS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
Fall 2023

Professor Amy Sepinwall
Huntsman Hall, Room 642
sepin@wharton.upenn.edu

Office hours:

- Wednesdays 9:15-10:00 PM over [Zoom](#)
- By appointment if you are unavailable at that time

Teaching assistant:

Caroline Hackley, 3L at Penn Law
chackley@pennlaw.upenn.edu

Office hours by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

This is a course with three aims: First, and most importantly, the course is intended to provide you with the tools to answer the question, “what should I do?,” as regards a morally weighty issue, and as that question might arise in your future professional lives (and perhaps in other contexts too). Second, the course aims to acquaint you with some of the most prominent post-enlightenment accounts of moral and political philosophy – a knowledge base that some might say every good college education should provide. Finally, the course seeks to improve your analytic and critical thinking and writing skills: you will learn some logic and acquire other tools that will enhance your ability to construct your own arguments, and to identify and criticize others’.

You will do all of this by gaining acquaintance with seminal philosophical accounts and applying them to questions like:

- Should for-profit corporations be engaging in politics or otherwise trying to make the world a better place?
- Are high CEO salaries morally justifiable? Why or why not?
- Do we have obligations to assist the domestic or global poor? Why or why not?
- Are there moral limits to the market? E.g., should people be permitted to sell babies? Their bodies?
- Should we seek to redress injustices from long ago? Do we have obligations to future generations (e.g., environmental conservation)?

GRADING

1. **Introductory Video** – 1% (bonus point!) – Due 9/3 (Sunday) at 10 pm
2. **Class Participation** – 15%
3. **Midterm** – 25% -- 11/2 from **7-9:00 PM, Nov. 2, JMHH F95**
4. **She Said reflection** – 5% -- Due by 11:59 PM on Nov. 8
5. **Pop quiz** – 10% -- In class. Date ???
6. **Final Exam** – 45% -- **on the Registrar's designated date** during the final exam period. Date TBD – check [here](#)

- **General policy:** You must complete each of the above to pass this course.

1. **Introductory video (1%) – due by Sunday, Sept. 3 at 10 PM.**

Please create, and upload to Canvas, a video of not more than 1 minute that tells me:

- i. Your full name, as written on roster and pronounced slowly
- ii. The name you would like to be called, pronounced slowly
- iii. Your preferred pronouns
- iv. Where you are from
- v. Your class year, major/concentration, minor, etc.
- vi. One fun thing you did this summer

2. **Class participation (15%)**

The success of the course, and your success in it, depends in significant part on your active participation. You should come to class having read the materials assigned for that session, and be prepared to offer critical insights. **The primary mode of class participation will involve my calling on students.**

I will sometimes welcome and encourage students to volunteer their thoughts in class. Students' participation grade will be dictated far more by **quality** than quantity of participation.

- **What counts as “quality” participation?** The purpose of our class discussions is to gain clarity together on an author's position and the reasons to accept or reject it. Quality interventions are those that help advance this purpose: they describe an author's position, or provide reasons for accepting or rejecting it. Quality interventions are also those that are responsive to my questions. Unhelpful interventions are those that raise issues not clearly relevant to the discussion at hand; those that have the effect of obstructing our progress to clarity; and those that fail to demonstrate proper respect for others in the room. (This last is not intended to deter disagreement. In fact, disagreement is enthusiastically welcomed! But it should be pursued respectfully.)

3. **Midterm:**

The midterm will be held **between 7-9:00 PM on November 2, in JMHH 95**. It will be closed book, and it will test you on Units I, II, and as much of III as we have covered by 10/31. The midterm will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

4. **She Said Assignment** – I will hold a movie night on November 8, at 7 pm, at which we will watch the film, *She Said*. The film will also be available through Penn Library Reserves if you are unable to join us for the movie night. (Bonus for attending movie night: snacks!) Please write a one-paragraph reaction to the film. Your reaction should identify one ethical issue the film raises, and

one consideration on each side of that issue. Please submit your reaction paragraph to Canvas by **11:59 PM on November 8, 2023. Late assignments will receive a 0.**

5. **Pop Quiz:** During one class session, I will give you a quiz on the reading assigned for that day's class. The quiz will last twenty minutes.

6. **Final Exam:**

The final exam will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. You will be required to answer each multiple-choice question and then short-answer follow-up questions will have you defend your answer or define and apply some of the terms in the multiple-choice question.

The final exam will be cumulative. It is designed to test your analytic skills and assimilation of covered class materials, and your ability to evaluate these critically.

The final exam will be held **on the Registrar's designated date** during the final exam period. Date TBD – check [here](#).

COURSE POLICIES:

1. **Canvas:** There will be a course website on Canvas, which will be our primary resource. For example, the Canvas site will be the repository for all of your readings. You will also be submitting all of your assignments through Canvas.
2. **Email:** Students should check email at least daily in the event that I send a message to the class.
3. **Late assignments:** All assignments must be submitted by the deadlines stipulated above. Late assignments will receive a 0. I will make exceptions only for extraordinary circumstances. You should not request lenience unless you feel reasonably certain that your circumstances are in fact extraordinary.
4. **In-class conduct:** In order to ensure your full engagement, I do not permit use of any electronic devices in class – no laptops, tablets, phones, etc. This is for your benefit. Studies show that students are more engaged when they have no electronics in front of them.
5. **Sensitive topics:** We will be venturing into some of the most fraught topics of the day – issues of racial injustice, rights of historically oppressed groups, markets for sex, etc. In order to discuss these fully and trenchantly, we will have to allow that each of us has the freedom to speak their mind, no matter how distasteful their views may be to others in the class. This class will welcome all viewpoints but I nonetheless expect that you will proceed civilly and with respect for one another.
6. **Missed quiz/midterm/final:** If you cannot be present on the day of our quiz, midterm, or final because of an enforced quarantine or other grave issue (e.g., serious illness, family death) you will have to write the missed test on the LGST department's assigned day for make-up tests (typically the last Friday of the semester before exams for **midterms**, or on a Friday in the Spring for **finals**). You will need to show proof of your mandated quarantine, or otherwise get permission from me confirming that you have an extraordinary reason, in order to be eligible to write the make-up test.

- 7. SDS Accommodations:** Please send me a note by September 15, 2023, letting me know about any accommodations you are certified to receive for test taking or any other graded components of the course.

CALENDAR OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

All required materials for the course will be available on our Canvas site. ***Dates subject to change, depending on the speed of our progress through the materials.***

Date	Topic	Reading
8/29	Introduction	No reading
	UNIT I	Moral Theory
8/31	Cultural Relativism	James Rachels, The Challenge of Cultural Relativism
	Homework	
9/3	Utilitarianism	Upload your video introduction to Canvas by 10 PM tonight.
9/5		John Stuart Mill, excerpt from Utilitarianism
	“	“
9/7		
	Kantian Ethics	
9/12		Michael Sandel, Kantian Ethics
	NO CLASS	
9/14	REMINDER	
9/15		If you receive accommodations for test-writing (or any other graded class components) through SDS, please send me a note by this date.
	Altruism	
9/19		Peter Singer, Famine, Affluence, and Morality
	“	“
9/21	“	“
9/26		“
	UNIT II	Corporate Purpose and Operation
9/28	Corporate Purpose	Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits”
	“	Friedman (continued)
10/3		Lynn Stout, The Problem of Corporate Purpose
	Corporate Purpose;	Friedman (continued)
10/5		Lynn Stout, The Problem of Corporate Purpose
10/10	“	

10/12	NO CLASS	Elizabeth Anderson, Tanner Lecture
10/17	Meaningful work	
	UNIT III	Resource Distribution
10/19	Distributive Justice	John Rawls, Distributive Justice
10/24	Dist J (cont'd)	Rawls (cont'd)
10/26	“	Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State, Utopia
10/31	“	“
11/2	MIDTERM	7-9 PM, in JMHH 95 No class during our normal class time.
11/7	Structural Injustice	Iris Marion Young, Responsibility and Structural Injustice
11/8	MOVIE NIGHT	
11/8	Sexual harassment	“She Said”
11/9		Center for Work-Life Policy, Lack of Sponsorship Keeps Women from Breaking Through the Glass Ceiling Finds New Study
	UNIT IV	Moral Limits of the Market
11/14	Libertarian Perspective	Richard Posner and Elizabeth Landes, Selection from <i>Rethinking Commodification: Cases and Readings in Law and Culture</i>
11/16	“	Posner and Landes, continued
11/21	Communitarian Perspective	Michael Sandel, What Money Can't Buy
11/23	NO CLASS	
11/28	Communitarian Perspective	“
11/30	Higher-Ed Admissions	Ronald Dworkin, The Right to Go to Law School

12/5	Ownership of art	No reading
12/7	Environmental Ethics	Hardin, The Tragedy of the Commons Newton, "Eight Perceptions of the Natural World" Wrapping up; questions about the final exam