

Ileana Szymanski  
Philosophy Department  
Sustainability workshop  
Course infused: PHIL 120: Ethics

The course PHIL 210: Ethics was infused with sustainability in the following *practices*:

1. Syllabus and hand-outs were distributed on-line only.
2. The instructor made evident use of double-sided paper for lecture notes.

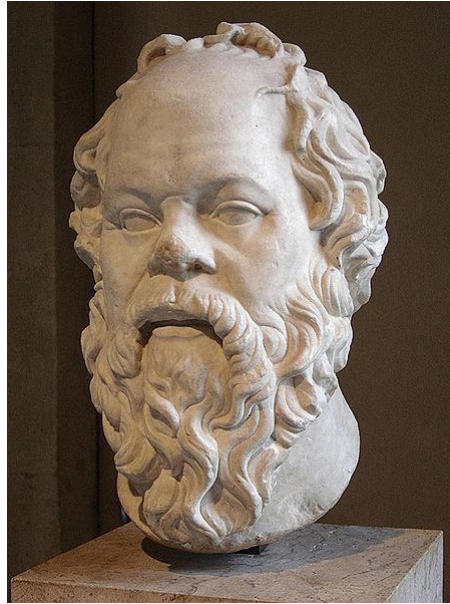
It was also infused with sustainability in the following *components*:

1. Homework assignments
2. Extra credit assignments
3. Final paper
4. Class discussion topics (optional)

This is a paragraph from the course syllabus that states the commitment to sustainability that students are invited to make:

**Sustainability:**

Our course will be infused as much as possible with sustainability. On account of this, please note that whenever you are going to submit something in writing you are encouraged to use double-sided printing, re-using paper, adjusting font size (not smaller than 11 points) and/or margins so that your work fits in one page only; also, use the header of the page to include your name; no cover sheets are required. The University's sustainability task force heads the Earth Week events—these are included in our course calendar." (Szymanski, Ethics syllabus, Spring 2011)



**University of Scranton**  
**PHIL 210: Ethics (Section 8)**  
January 31, 2011-May 20, 2011.

Instructor Information:

Dr. Ileana Szymanski  
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St. Thomas Hall 453  
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Office hours: M, W 1:00PM-2:00PM; F 11:00AM-12:00PM, and by appointment

Class Meets:

T/R 2:30PM-3:45PM  
STT 263

## **Course Description:**

We have all been faced with ethical dilemmas in our lives; these are times when we honestly do not know what to do, or when we do know what to do and see that it will have consequences very difficult for us to deal with. In this course we will examine some ethical dilemmas that affect us directly or indirectly. We will explore some answers that philosophers have given to how to deal with ethical dilemmas (what decisions we should make, and how, and how to deal with the consequences of acting in one way or another). We will do this by exploring readings and films that can serve to exemplify ethical scenarios. The films will be watched out of class—either on your own time, or as a group.

As we proceed into our course we will see that there are many answers to the same questions. Beware! While philosophers seem to ‘contradict’ each other (in some cases they explicitly do), each one tries to contribute a piece to a puzzle that will not end so long as human beings exist. In other words, we will be exploring different answers presented and you will have to make up your own mind as to whether there is one (or more than one) that you believe is the truest or most helpful.

## **Required texts:**

*Ethics: Selections from classical and contemporary writers*, edited by Johnson and Reath, Wadsworth, 2007. ISBN: 0495130028. Available at the UofS Bookstore.

*No Exit and Three Other Plays*, by Jean-Paul Sartre. Vintage, 1989. ISBN-10: 0679725164. Any copy of the play *No Exit* (also known as *Huis Clos*) will work. Available at the UofS Bookstore. For an online version of the play see: <http://www.csun.edu/~vcoao087/342/NoExit.htm>

A copy of each of these texts has been put on reserve at the Weinberg Memorial Library.

Other texts (excerpts) will be made available through the reserve desk at the Weinberg Memorial Library.

**Evaluation components:**

Homework Assignments: 20%

In-class group work: 10%

Take-home exam: 20%

In-class exam: 20%

Learning Portfolio: 30%

**Description of evaluation components:**

1. Homework assignments: We will have 10 homework assignments (due dates in the syllabus) throughout the term; they will be no more than 2 pages each and *may* include answering questions from the textbook, questions posed by the instructor, reflecting on a piece of news, reflecting on a film, looking for definitions of key terms, etc. Hard copies of homework assignments are due in class. A grace period is extended until 4:30PM the same day only.
2. In-class group work: We will do 5 in-class group exercises throughout the term; the exercises will be completed in class, and the grade received will be the same for all members of the group. Groups have the responsibility to make sure all their members work towards the grade. Groups will be formed spontaneously in class. If you arrived late to class and therefore missed the group exercise, or if you missed class on a day where we had a group exercise, you will not be able to re-submit it unless you had a medical or family emergency.
3. A take-home exam will be distributed a class prior to when it is due. Students will respond to questions in essay format and/or short answer format.
4. An open-book exam will take place in class.
5. Learning portfolio: this will be an individual effort consisting of a series of documents surrounding one topic/author. It will be submitted on the first day of final exams at a time to be announced. This takes the place of the final exam and, as

such, it should be taken very seriously. A student that fails to submit the component on the date and time specified for it will not be able to re-submit it unless s/he had a medical or family emergency.

**N.B.: Extra credits are available as substitutions for the homework assignments only.** *Any* form of **plagiarism** will be pursued to the full extent.

### **Medical or family emergencies:**

If you have a medical or family emergency, advise the instructor as soon as possible. If this affects your other courses it is a good idea to contact your Dean's Office so that they can let all of your professors know. If you missed class components (group work, etc.) talk to me about it so that I can decide what other assignments I can give you in place of the ones you missed. If you do not talk to me, I will assume you are not interested in making up those assignments. Also, note that proof of medical or family emergency may be requested.

### **Class absences:**

You may miss up to 3 classes with no questions asked. However, if you miss a quiz or any other evaluation component that day and you did not have a medical or family emergency then you will receive a zero on the components you missed. You are responsible for asking your fellow students what was covered in class, and keeping up with the assignments and readings. Absences additional to the 3 that are allowed without any questions will result in the loss of 1/3 of a letter grade per absence.

### **Communicating with the instructor:**

The preferred method of communication is in person. E-mails must include the title of the course and section in the subject line and your student ID in your signature.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

In order to receive appropriate accommodations, **students with disabilities must register with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and provide relevant and current medical documentation.** Students should contact Mary Ellen Pichiarello (Extension 4039) or Jim Muniz (Extension 4218), 5th floor, St. Thomas Hall, for an appointment. For more information, see <http://www.scranton.edu/disabilities>.

**Writing Center Services:**

The Writing Center focuses on helping students become better writers. Consultants will work one-on-one with students to discuss students' work and provide feedback at any stage of the writing process. Scheduling appointments early in the writing progress is encouraged. To meet with a writing consultant, stop by during the Writing Center's [regular hours of operation](#), call (570) 941-6147 to schedule an appointment, or complete the [Writing Assistance Request Form](#) online. You can also schedule an online appointment using [Google Docs and Google Talk](#).

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**Education for Justice:**

Each year, the University's Education for Justice Office has activities that focus on one theme. This year's theme is peace and reconciliation. The events that Education for Justice will sponsor are included in our course calendar.

### Tentative schedule of readings and course calendar:

DATE	COURSE MODULE	READING	ASSIGNMENT	EXTRA CREDIT	SECONDARY RESOURCES / EVENTS
T 2 1	Introduction	n/a [Snow Day]			
R 2 3	Introduction	n/a			
T 2 8	Introduction	"An Introduction to the Study of Ethics."	Turn in syllabus signature sheet.  [Watch <i>Paradise Now</i> .]		"What Is Philosophy?" by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong ( <a href="http://www.dartmouth.edu/~phil/whatis/wsa.html">http://www.dartmouth.edu/~phil/whatis/wsa.html</a> ) "Reading a Philosophical Work" ( <a href="http://www.molloy.edu/sophia/reading/contents.htm">http://www.molloy.edu/sophia/reading/contents.htm</a> ). Lecture by Bishop John Rucyhana <a href="http://matrix.scranton.edu/news/royalnews/articles/2011/01/25/bishop-john-rucyahana.shtml">http://matrix.scranton.edu/news/royalnews/articles/2011/01/25/bishop-john-rucyahana.shtml</a>
R 2 10	Virtue ethics: The individual and society	"I Am Palestinian, Arab, Christian, and Israeli" (Fr. Elias Chacour).	Hm1: movie sheet for the film <i>Paradise Now</i>	XC1: Turn in reading sheet for "I Am Palestinian, Arab, Christian, and Israeli"	Father Chacour's website: <a href="http://www.pilgrimsofibilin.org/content/view/16/27/">http://www.pilgrimsofibilin.org/content/view/16/27/</a> Wikipedia entry for Fr. Chacour: <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/">http://en.wikipedia.org/</a>

					<a href="http://wiki/Elias_Chacour">wiki/Elias Chacour</a>
T 2 15	Relativism: understanding cultural differences	"Relativism"	Hm2: report on the sacrificial practices of the Ashanti and the Aztec.		Film: <i>Hotel Rwanda</i> .  Wednesday February 16: Education for Justice Lecture by Carolyn Forché.
R 2 17	Relativism: understanding cultural differences	"Is There a Single True Morality?"	[Watch <i>Bend It Like Beckham</i> .]		Monday February 21: Education for Justice lecture by Paolo Dall'Oglio
T 2 22	Relativism: vs. Universal laws	"Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals" (pp. 200 "Now, I say, man and, in general, every rational being..." – 205).	Hm3: movie sheet on <i>Bend It Like Beckham</i> .	XC2: Movie sheet for <i>Bride and Prejudice</i> .	Films: <i>Bend It Like Beckham, Bride and Prejudice</i>
R 2 24	Universalism	Universal Declaration of Human Rights ( <a href="http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml">http://www.un.org/en/docume nts/udhr/index.shtml</a> ); US Bill of Rights ( <a href="http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html">http://www.archives.gov/exhib its/charters/bill_of_rights_transc ript.html</a> )			
T 3 1	The individual and the government: Self-interest and power over others	"Leviathan" (pp. 136-143).	Hm4: reading sheet for "Leviathan" (pp. 136- 143)	XC3: Turn in movie sheet for <i>The Visitor</i> .	Films: <i>The Visitor, Profit</i> (TV mini-series).
R 3 3	The individual and the government: Self-interest and power over others	"Leviathan" (pp. 143-149).	Hm5: bring in a piece of news (current or not) or a case from a movie or TV show that discusses power over others as a motive for a person's		



			ethical decisions. Examples: cheating in an exam, lying to get a job, blackmailing to get ahead, Ponzi schemes, etc. <b>Take-home exam given out to students.</b>		
<b>T 3 8</b>	The individual and the government: Self-interest and power over others	"Beyond Good and Evil."	<b>Take-home exam due.</b>		
<b>R 3 10</b>	Utilitarianism: pleasure and the view of the majority	"An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation".	<b>Hm6:</b> Turn in reading sheet for "An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation" (pp. 208-215).	<b>XC4:</b> Answer three out of the 6 questions on p. 215.	
<b>T 3 15</b>	Utilitarianism: pleasure and the view of the majority	"An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation".			
<b>R 3 17</b>	Utilitarianism: pleasure and the view of the majority	n/a		<b>XC5:</b> 1-page defense or attack of Utilitarianism as an ethical theory.	<b>March 18: Semester mid-point!</b>
<b>T 3 22</b>		<b>Holiday break.</b>			
<b>R 3 24</b>		<b>Holiday break.</b>			Monday March 28: deadline to submit entry to Education for Justice contest

T 3 29	Virtue ethics: The individual and the family	"Euthyphro" (pp. 17-26).	Hm7: Answer to study question 1 (p. 26)	XC6: Turn in reading sheet for "Euthyphro."	
R 3 31	Virtue ethics: The individual and the family	"Euthyphro" (pp. 17-26).	Hm8: Bring in a piece of news (current or not) <i>or</i> a case from a movie or TV show that discusses family loyalty as a motive for a person's ethical decisions. Examples: murder, arranged marriage, generosity, self-sacrifice, etc.		Films: <i>Bend It Like Beckham, Bride and Prejudice, Bombay.</i> TV Shows: <i>Criminal Minds, Without a Trace</i> , etc.  Education for Justice lecture by Rajmohan Gandhi  Friday April 1: teach-in on Peace and Reconciliation
T 4 5	Virtue ethics: Does this tell us what to do?	"The Enchiridion" (Augustine-- pp. 109-110). "The Encheiridion" (Epictetus-- pp. 93-104).			
R 4 7	Existentialism	"Existentialism"		XC7: Reading sheet for "Existentialism."	Films: <i>Rebel Without a Cause, The Hours, Wit.</i>
T 4 12	Existentialism	<i>No Exit (Huis Clos)</i>	Hm9: Reading sheet for <i>No Exit</i>		Films: <i>Rebel Without a Cause, The Hours, Wit.</i>
R 4 14		n/a <b>Open book exam</b>			Friday April 15: Earth week begins.
T 4 19	Existentialism	News: Cases of suicide, teen suicide, bullying, suicide because of sexual orientation	[ <i>Watch The Hours</i> ]	XC8: Movie sheet for a film of your choice that depicts an ethical situation.	Films: <i>The Laramie Project; Ma Vie en Rose.</i>

		<a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/04/us/04suicide.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/04/us/04suicide.html</a>			Earth Day Fair.
R 4 21		<b>Holiday break</b>			
T 4 26	Existentialism	n/a	Hm 10: Movie sheet and reflection on <i>The Hours</i> .	XC9: Movie sheet for <i>Wit</i> .	
R 4 28	Morality and feelings	"A Treatise of Human Nature"		XC10: Reading sheet for "A Treatise of Human Nature."	Take Back the Night event.
T 5 3		Case study TBD			
R 5 5		Discussion of final portfolio components and topics.			
T 5 10		Case study TBD			
R 5 12		General discussion on ethics: which one is our final perspective? Can there or should there be <i>one</i> ?			
M 5 16		Final exams begin.	<b>Final portfolio due.</b>		