

PHIL 335—REGIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ETHICS BOWL (RIEB)—Fall 2011

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Office Hours: TR 3:20-4:50 PM; W: 9:00AM—noon; or by appointment

Course Description:

RIEB prepares students for a statewide competition in moral problem solving. Course content includes (1) review of moral theory, (2) introduction to/refinement of skills in moral problem solving, (3) application of moral theory to moral dilemmas across a wide range of personal, social, and professional environments, and (4) oral presentation of solutions to moral dilemmas.

Students *must* participate in the RIEB competition on Saturday, December 3, 2011!

Course Goals:

- I. Acquisition/honing of skills in applying moral theory to moral dilemmas. To wit:
 - A. Deepen appreciation of moral theories and their implications to achieve:
 1. A more nuanced appreciation of ethical theory and its applications;
 2. Improved skills in textual exegesis
 - B. Acquisition of moral problem solving skills, specifically:
 1. Skills in exegesis and analysis of moral dilemmas;
 2. Skills in application of moral concepts to particular moral conundra;
 3. Skills in researching the nature and contexts of particular moral conundra;
 4. Skills in researching theoretical analyses of discrete moral issues; and
 5. Skills in oral and written justification of resolutions of moral dilemmas.
- II. Application of skills in I.A.-B. to moral dilemmas across a wide range of moral dilemmas

Course Requirements:

- I. **Attendance:** *Attendance is mandatory. I expect nothing less than perfect attendance from everyone.* Missing class—including absence, arriving late, or leaving early—will result in a significant reduction in your grade. **(I MEAN THIS!)**
- II. **Readings:** Class meetings consist of discussion about the readings. Readings are available at <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>. ***It is absolutely essential that you complete assigned readings and are prepared to discuss them in class on the day assigned.*** Always bring your copy of assigned readings to class, as we will often examine particular passages. The readings often will be difficult. Do not despair. We will work together to maximize your understanding of the concepts and the authors' arguments, and I will work with you, in class and in office hours, to answer any questions you may have. However, adequately understanding these authors requires significant effort on your part. ***I cannot overstate the importance of seriously studying readings, careful intellectual preparation (for example, come prepared to answer the following questions), and attendance—in which very complex material is clarified.*** As you read, attempt to determine the following:
 - A. What is the author's **position**?
 - B. What **reasons—moral and factual**—does the author give to support the position?
 - C. What **evidence** supports the reasons given?
 - D. What does the reading contribute to the moral dilemma under consideration?

- III. **Participation:** As the course is preparing you to participate in an oral competition, you should become increasingly comfortable speaking in front of the group, and doing so in an organized fashion. Each week some portion of class periods will be devoted to formal oral presentations. Less formally, *I will randomly call on students to answer questions about and give analyses of the readings. You are expected to respond intelligently and clearly, so get in the habit of organizing your thoughts about assigned readings.*
- IV. **Research:** Each student must assume responsibility for background information on the cases/dilemmas for which s/he will be the point person. This will require outside efforts on your part to ensure that you know the particulars of your cases inside and out.
- V. **AJs:** Every other week you will write/revise an AJ for one of the cases for which you are the point person. Given your on-going research on your cases, I expect to see increasing detail and sophistication on your understanding of the nuances of the dilemma you are addressing, and of your arguments for a particular resolution. **Each AJ must have attached a FORMAL bibliography, so that I may track your research progress.**
- VI. **RIEB Competition:** We will participate in the annual California Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl competition, Saturday, December 3, 2011, held at USC (Los Angeles).
- VII. **Exams:** This course includes no written exams. You should view class participation as mini-exams and your performance in the actual RIEB as your final exam.

Grading:

- 1. Attendance, analysis of readings, & participation jointly count for **20% of course grade**, or 100 points. **You start out with these points and, with good efforts, retain them.**
- 2. Research and written AJs will jointly count for **50% of the course grade**, or 250 points.
- 3. Participation in the RIEB competition ***is required to pass the course.*** Your performance is worth **30% of the course grade** (150) points—unless you fail to attend the competition, in which case this component constitutes 100% of your grade.

Text: NB: Always bring text to class:

Readings in PHIL 335: @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>.

Rules of the Game:

- 1. Come to class prepared to discuss your analyses of the readings.
- 2. I will do all I can to help you succeed in this class. I keep office hours so you will be able to come to discuss case analysis (really, I do). Such conversations are both fun and likely to improve your philosophical abilities. Besides, you pay to have my expertise available to you; so you may as well get your money's worth.
- 3. If you have problems understanding/applying course material, come see me as soon as you realize you are in trouble. Wait until the week before the competition and you—**and your team**—will suffer egregiously!
- 4. I try to accommodate personal obligations/crises without being a complete sucker. **If you are unable to complete a graded assignment on the assigned date, you must notify me before class on the day the assignment is due.** If you do not, you will receive a “zero” for the assignment. If properly notified, I will consider an alternative.
- 5. To prevent unpleasant surprises, I post grades frequently. I curve grades only at semester's end, and only if no one gets a natural 'A', which is uncommon.

Reading assignments:

- 8/25 ***INTRODUCTION TO MORAL PROBLEM SOLVING***
READ: (1) Syllabus—available at <http://www.csuchico.edu/phil/course/course.html> & @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>; (2) “AJ Basic process”; (3) Case 1: Medical Outsourcing—(2) and (3) @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
- 8/30 ***MORAL THEORY AND PERSONHOOD***
READ: (1) “Who Counts?”; (2) “Appeal to Respect for persons” (3) “Towards a Theory of Respect for Persons”—all @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
- 9/1 ***MORAL THEORY in MORAL PROBLEM SOLVING: Appeal to Consequences***
READ: (1) “Bentham: An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation”; (2) “Appeal to Consequences”; (3) “Obligation to Rescue”—all @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
WRITE: All 5 steps of a consequential analysis for Case 1: “Medical Outsourcing”
- 9/6 ***Moral Problem Solving and the Appeal to Autonomy***
READ: (1) “Appeal to Autonomy”; (2) “A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics”—both @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
WRITE: Using only the appeals to consequences and autonomy, complete steps 1-3 of an AJ for Case 1: “Medical Outsourcing”
- 9/8 ***Moral Problem Solving and the Appeal to Rights***
READ: (1) “Appeal to Rights”; (2) “HIV.Duty to Warn.Rights”—both @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
- 9/13 ***Moral Problem Solving and the Appeal to Virtues***
READ: (1) “Virtue Ethics.Hursthouse” and (2) “Appeal to Virtues”—both @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
- 9/15 ***Moral Problem Solving and the Appeal to Justice***
READ: (1) Locke.On Property”; (2) Nozick—Anarchy, State, Utopia; (2) @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
WRITE: Using only the appeals to rights and virtues, complete all 5 AJ steps for Case 1: “Medical Outsourcing”
- 9/20 ***Moral Problem Solving and the Appeal to Justice***
READ: (1) Justice as Fairness (Rawls) @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
- 9/22 ***Moral Problem Solving and the Appeal to Justice***
READ: (1) Appeal to Justice; (2) Appeal to Cost effectiveness @ <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
- 9/27 ***Moral Problem Solving and the Appeal to Justice***
TBA
- 9/29 Organizing for the competition
READ: “2010-11 IEB Regional organizational rules”- <http://sites.google.com/site/csucebf09/>
WRITE: Using the two most relevant (in your opinion), competing CARVE principles, complete all 5 AJ steps for Case 1: “Medical Outsourcing”
- 10/4 ff—TBA

SATURDAY, DEC. 3, 2011: CALIFORNIA REGIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ETHICS BOWL

FINAL EXAM: **Thursday, December 15 @ noon**
 Office hours during finals week: Monday and Wednesday, 1:00-3:30 pm