LEADERSHIP ETHICS
LDST 450, Sections 1 / 2
Monday, Wednesday 1:30–2:45pm / 3:00–4:15pm
Jepson Hall, Room 108
Fall 2019

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Marilie Coetsee
Primary Email:1 coetsee.jepson@gmail.com
Office Hours: Wednesday 4:30–5:30pm and by appointment.
Office Location: Jepson Hall, Ethics Suite, Room 119D

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will use our study of secular Euro-American philosophical ethics as a tool for making students more perceptive and judicious in their reasoning about important ethical challenges that confront leaders. We will begin in the first half of the semester by examining what prominent theories of normative ethics can teach us about the ethical norms and constraints that apply to leaders on an individual level as they make decisions about how to respond to particular ethical dilemmas that they face. More specifically, we will consider what utilitarian ethics, Kantian ethics, and virtue ethics have to say about how leaders ought to balance their own interests, the interests of their group, and the interests of our broader global society when they make executive decisions about problems in which these different interests are put at odds with one another. As we will see, each theory has a different understanding of the nature of the interests that are most morally relevant for a leader to consider—utilitarians urge leaders to focus on persons’ interests in happiness, Kantians urge leaders to focus on persons’ interests in having their rights and freedoms protected, and virtue ethicists urge leaders to focus on persons’ interests in living meaningful, flourishing lives. So, in addition to discussing how leaders ought to balance the interests of themselves, their group, and the global community, we will also discuss whether and how leaders ought to prioritize certain kinds of interests over others.

Our study of virtue ethics will lead us to an exploration of select questions in moral psychology. As we will see, even leaders who are consciously committed to acting on the right moral principles can still fail to successfully execute on their commitments. We will look at how leaders’ emotions and implicit attitudes can either undermine or enhance their ability to successfully navigate ethical challenges in cases where reflective reasoning is insufficient to support ethical conduct. To aid student in seeing how our academic study of normative ethics and moral psychology applies to real world ethical problems, we will use our material to analyze two historical case studies: first, President Truman’s decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945 and, second, President Kennedy and NASA’s decision to spend billions of

---

1 This will be the primary email for communication about the class. Since my other email address inbox (at mcoetsee@richmond.edu) gets filled up quickly with unimportant emails, I use coetsee.jepson@gmail.com as a separate email for students to make sure I don’t miss their emails.
dollars to send astronauts to the moon in 1969, even amidst pressing problems concerning poverty and civil rights at home.

In the second part of the course, we will move from our study of normative ethics and moral psychology to investigate major theories of political philosophy. In this portion of the course, we will be less focused on individual decisions leaders make about how to handle specific moral dilemmas that confront them, and more focused on what sorts of general rules they are (or are not) justified in imposing on members of their groups. In particular, we will consider what social contract, perfectionist, and communitarian political theories have to say about what sorts of rules leaders may impose on their groups and the key goals and constraints they should take into account in the process of carrying out that imposition. One important question that arises in consideration of these matters is that of how and to what extent members of a group ought to mutually contribute to decisions about rules (and other matters) that affect the group. In the final section of the course, we will thus reflect on the ethics of collective decision-making, focusing in particular on the role that group deliberation might play in such decision-making and on the form that that group deliberation should take. We will apply the lessons we learn in political philosophy to several different kinds of real world problems, two of which will include (first) that of fair compensation, benefits, and incentives for employees of corporations and firms, and (second) political disagreement about what to do with publicly-displayed Confederate Monuments.

**Course Objectives**

- Students should develop practical wisdom in responding to important moral problems. They should be able to recognize morally relevant details in complex problems and judiciously assess their import. They should also be cognizant of the critical role that emotions and implicit attitudes play in their ability to reliably act as responsible moral agents.

- Students should understand and be able to apply core principles of political ethics relevant to social contract theory, perfectionism, and communitarianism. They should be able to use these principles to assess whether and when a leader is justified in trying to compel followers to follow particular rules.

- Students should appreciate the moral difficulties that attend collective decision-making in contexts where members of the group hold diverse values and perspectives, and acquire tools for facilitating such decision-making in an ethically responsible way.

- Students should learn to have constructive dialogue with diverse others about important moral disagreements. They should learn to clearly articulate the reasons for their ethical views, and also know how to understand the kinds of reasons that might motivate other people’s opposing views. Finally, students should be able to critically assess and re-evaluate their own views in light of questions and concerns raised by others.

**Course Materials**

All readings will be made available through Blackboard (under “Resources”). [B] Readings will be posted at least a week ahead of class.
**Course Requirements**

10% Participation

20% Quizzes and Reading Reflections

35% Exams: Midterm Exam (15%), Final Exam (15%)

35% Papers: Midterm Paper (20%), Final Paper (20%)

*These are discussed in more detail on the next page.*

**Other Course Policies**

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please bring your laptops to class, but only take them out if and when I request you to do so. I will generally only ask students to take their laptops out to take quizzes and to reference our reading material, so you should generally plan on taking hand-written notes. (That said, if you have a documented need for a learning accommodation that requires you to take notes on your computer, please let me know. These requests for accommodation will always be granted.)

**Late policies:** Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you want an extension on assignment. Some assignments are more time-sensitive than others, so if you think you may want an extension on an assignment, it is in your interest to discuss the matter with me as soon as possible to find out whether an extension can be granted. Please contact me by email, and—if you are granted the extension—please append a copy of the email where I grant you the extension to the end of your assignment when you turn it in. For final drafts of papers, you must email me at least 24 hours before the due date to discuss your reasons for wanting an extension. Requests for extensions on final papers will often be granted. For other assignments (which tend to be more time-sensitive), you should email me at least three days ahead of time. (If you miss the three day deadline, you may still contact me about getting an extension. However, you should have a very good reason for wanting the extension and, all else being equal, I am less likely to grant the extension.) Late assignments that are not granted an extension will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for every day they are late for up to five days. At that point I will contact an academic dean to discuss a resolution.

**Details about Course Requirements**

**10% Participation**

- Participation is based on how often you attend class and how well you contribute to class discussion while you are there. To get an “A” in participation, you should plan to attend almost every session of class and to a quality contribution in most of the sessions you attend (see below). Students get two free excused absences, which should be saved to cover emergencies, as well as minor illnesses, last-minute studying for another class, etc. A third absence in the first half of the semester will typically be unexcused and will have a significant adverse effect on your participation grade. A third absence in the second of the semester may be permitted if the student has excellent, documented reasons for why ze needs the absence.

- Though both the quality and quantity of your in-class contributions matter, the quality of your contributions will matter more than the quantity. A quality contribution is one that shows that you have done the reading and thought about it and/or, more generally, is on-topic and involves your
giving reasons for the point you try to make. Here are some examples of the kinds of quality contributions you might try to make: you may give a thoughtful attempt at answering a difficult question that I pose to the class (that is, not a question where I just ask you to repeat some obvious information in the reading), you may respond to a point a classmate makes in a way that shows that you have understood and carefully considered zir perspective, or may you ask a question with a non-obvious answer and do so in a way that shows that you have appreciated why apparently easy answers to the question are insufficient (for example: “What does this theory say about this case? On the surface it seems like it might say X, but that seems problematic because…”). If you are a more introverted student and you are worried about your participation grade you should come talk to me in office hours. I also encourage everyone to, to whatever extent possible, write down comments and questions they may want to share before coming to class.

- I will sometimes cold-call students. When I do this, it is not to stress you out but rather to make clear to you that your voice is important, even if you are not initially confident enough to use it.

**20% Weekly Quizzes, Reading Reflections, and Question Submissions**

- Weekly Quizzes: For most weeks of the course, we will have a short quiz. There will be about 11 quizzes and your top 10 quiz scores will count towards your final grade. (I may add a 12th quiz if that is needed to help people’s average quiz scores.)
  - Quiz Format: Quizzes will consist of 3-4 multiple choice questions and will be administered at the beginning of class through Blackboard. Be sure to bring your laptop! (If you don’t have a laptop let me know and we’ll make other arrangements.)
  - Study Guide: You will get a study guide for each quiz, which will be available about 24 hours before the quiz.
  - Missed Quizzes: Generally, if you miss class on a day that we are taking a quiz or are late for class and miss the quiz, you will get a zero for that quiz. This won’t be a problem if it just happens once, since you can drop your lowest quiz score. If you know ahead of time that you are going to miss a second quiz for a good reason or if the day of a quiz you find yourself seriously ill or with a personal emergency, please email me (at coetsee.jepson@gmail.com) ASAP to discuss alternatives. Please write in the subject line: QUIZ CRISIS.

- Required Deadline Reflections: On certain days (marked on the syllabus), everyone will be required to write a reflection on an assigned topic. These required reflections will be used as preparation exercises for your papers and/or for in-class debates. Grading will be similar to the grading of reflections with flexible deadlines (see below). Required reflections are due by 9am on Blackboard on the day of class.

- Flexible Deadline Reflections: On days for which there are not reflections that are required from everyone, alternating halves of the class will be responsible for submitting either a specific question about the reading or doing a short reading reflection.
  - Requirements: You need to make sure that over the course of the semester you do a total of five questions or reflections, submitted on the days relevant to your group.
  - Deadlines: These (flexible deadline) questions and reflections are due 9pm on Blackboard the day before class. Since there are only a limited number of these that
you have to do and you get some control over when you turn them in, I will generally not accept these questions/reflections after the deadline.

- **Grading:** Both questions and reflections will be graded pass/fail with a “✓” or a “–”. You may re-do one “–” grade. A “✓–” is a warning grade. A ✓+ or + indicates that you have done especially good work. If you have a lot of ✓’s and/or +’s at the end of the semester and you are at the edge of a higher grade, I will take those into account and (perhaps) round up your final grade. When you submit questions, you should think of questions that do not have obvious answers given in the text. (It is ok if your questions is about something that is discussed in the text that you don’t understand, but then you should phrase it in a way that shows that you tried to understand what the text says and thought about it.) For reflections, I will often have a prompt for the reflection that I will either require or encourage you to write on.

- **Format for Question and Reflection Submissions:** Your question submission should be formatted as shown below. #1 and #3 should add up to ~200-300 words (and absolutely not go over 400 words). The format for reflection submissions is the same, except that you will not have multiple numbered elements to the reflection. Reflections should be between 300-400 words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Title (e.g. “Utilitarianism, Pt 1” is enough)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question/Reflection #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A short summary of the issue you want to ask a question about. Single-spaced, with a reference to the reading and the page number of the reading you are concerned about in italics. (List the word count, which should be ~100-200 words.)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your question in bold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Your best guess at an answer to your own question. (List word count, ~100-200 words.)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**35% Exams: Midterm Exam (20%), Final Exam (15%)**

- The midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the semester and will contain an in-class portion and a take-home portion. The in-class portion will consist of multiple choice questions and short answer questions that you were given on review sheets for in-class quizzes. The take-home portion will consist of two essay questions. One essay question will be on whether or not we should have gone to the moon in 1969 and the other essay question will ask you to apply two of the ethical theories we have covered to a case study that you will get to choose. You will have the chance to revise and resubmit the latter essay.

  The midterm exam is Wednesday, October 9.

- The final exam will cover material from the whole semester, with an emphasis on the material from the second half of the semester. The format will be similar to the format of the midterm exam. That is, it will be made up of multiple-choice and short answer questions you have seen on study guides for quizzes, as well as a couple essay questions which you will be given in advance. The main difference will be that on the final exam, I will not actually ask you to answer all the short essay questions I provide you with; I will provide you with a list.
of questions and then pick a few to actually ask on the exam. You will, however, have the option to pre-write your answers to all the possible questions and then only turn in the answers to the questions I actually ask for.

The time for the final exam for this class is scheduled by the university and cannot be changed. The official time-slot for the exam depends on which section of the class you are in, but I will allow students in either section to take the exam in either of the two official time-slots. If you are taking this class Monday/Wednesday at 1:30pm, the (official) time-slot for your final exam is Tuesday, December 10 from 9–12pm. If you are taking this class Monday/Wednesday 3:00pm, the (official) time-slot for your final exam is Friday, December 13 from 2–5pm.

35% Papers: Midterm Paper (15%), Long Final Paper (20%)

15% Midterm Paper

Due Friday, September 20th, 11:59pm.

The essay topic will be on whether or not it was permissible for us to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. More detailed requirements will be distributed in class on September 2nd. You will be writing weekly reflections and doing an in-class debate to help you prepare for this essay.

20% Final Paper

Due: Tuesday, November 26th, 11:59pm.

The prompt for the final paper will be distributed by October 21st. You will be asked to pick two of the political theories we discuss and to apply them to a case study of your choice.

**Grading**

The numerical values for final letter grades are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Lowest Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96.99-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93.99-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89.99-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86.99-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83.99-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79.99-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76.99-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>73.99-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69.99-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66.99-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>63.99-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.99+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings are subject to change. (Any changes will be made at least a week ahead of time.)

1. **Monday, 8/26**  
   Introduction to the Course: Why do Moral Theory?

   Part 1: Normative Ethics & Moral Psychology

   **UTILITARIANISM: MAXIMIZE HAPPINESS**

2. **Wednesday, 8/28**  
   Utilitarianism, Pt. 1: Personal Interests vs. The Common Good

   Singer, selections from *Practical Ethics*, Chapters 1 and 2

   Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality

   Kidder, selections from *Mountains Beyond Mountains: Dr. Paul Farmer*

   * Reflection/Question Submission: Group A (Flexible)

3. **Monday, 9/2**  
   Utilitarianism, Pt. 2: Group Interests vs. The Common Good

   Price, “The Utilitarian View of Everyday Leadership” from *Leadership Ethics*

   Driver, “Friendship and Special Obligations”

   Frederiksen, “The Relation Between Policies Concerning Corporate Social Responsibility and Philosophical Moral Theories—an Empirical Investigation”

   * Begin preparation for Hiroshima Case Study: watch “Truman and the Bomb” (23 min)

   * Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)

4. **Wednesday, 9/4**  
   Utilitarianism, Pt3: Individual Rights vs. The Common Good

   Holt, “Morality, Reduced to Arithmetic”

   Nagel, selections (pt. 1) from “War and Massacre”

   Driver, Utilitarianism on Rights and Justice

   RM Hare, selections from “Rights and Justice” and “Rules of War and Moral Reasoning”

   Watch part of Hiroshima Documentary: TBA

   * Required Reflection Due. (Instruction to be distributed.)
Kantian Ethics: Respect Rights

5. Monday, 9/9  Kantian Ethics, Pt 1: Noble Intentions as Constraints on Pursuing the Common Good—Doing vs. Allowing & the Doctrine of Double Effect

Burnor & Raley, “Deontological Ethics” (Introduction to Kant)
Driver, selections on Kantianism, Utilitarianism, and Negative Responsibility
Thomson, selections from “Turning the Trolley”
Watch part of Hiroshima Documentary: TBA

* Reflection/Question Submission: Group A (Flexible)


Shafer-Landau, introduction to “The Doctrine of Doing and Allowing” (4)
Driver, “Constraints,” “The Doctrine of Doing and Allowing,” “The Doctrine of Double Effect” (5)
Quinn, selections from “Actions, Intentions, and Consequences: The Doctrine of Double Effect”

Required Reflection Due. (Instructions to be distributed.)

7. Monday, 9/16  Debate: Was it wrong to drop the atomic bomb?

Nagel, selections (pt. 2) from “War and Massacre”
Walzer, selections from “The Problem of Dirty Hands”

Required Reflection Due. (This reflection will draw on your previous two reflections and will be used to help you prepare for the debate. Instructions to be distributed.)
VIRTUE ETHICS: TRAIN YOURSELF TO EXERCISE VIRTUE
& MORAL PSYCHOLOGY: EMOTIONAL MATURITY AND IMPLICIT ATTITUDES

8. Wednesday, 9/18 Online Class Virtue Ethics, Pt 1: Personal Interests, Human Flourishing, and Ethical Pluralism
Nussbaum, “Emotions as Evaluative Judgments”
* Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)

Nussbaum, selections from “Aeschylus and Practical Conflict.”
Nussbaum, selections from “Emotions as Judgments of Value” from Upheavals of Thought (14)
* Reflection/Question Submission: Group A (Flexible)

10. Wednesday, 9/25 Moral Psychology, Pt 1: Moral Development and Emotional Maturity
Ludwig & Longenecker, “The Bathsheba Syndrome” (11)
Brady, selections from Emotional Insight
Tentative: Selected passages/video clips on Apollo 11
* Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)

Payne, “Implicit Bias: The Psychology of Ordinary Prejudice in Everyday Lives” (Video)
Zheng, selections from “Attributability, Accountability, and Implicit Bias”
Jaworska, short selection from “Caring and Internality”
* Reflection/Question Submission: Group A (Flexible)

12. Wednesday, 10/2 Virtue Ethics & Deontology, Pt: 3: Justifying Boundaries of “Group” Interests
McCoy, “The Parable of the Saddhu”
Cottingham, “Partiality, Favouritism, and Morality”
Selected passages/video clips on Apollo 11 (TBA)
* Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)

13. Monday, 10/7 Debate: Should We Have Gone to the Moon?
Required Reflection Due. (This reflection will be used to help you prepare for the debate and the relevant Midterm essay question. Instructions to be distributed.)
14. **Wednesday, 10/9**  Midterm Exam

**Monday, 10/14**  *Fall Study Break—No Class*

15. **Wednesday, 10/16**  Implicit Bias and Moral Responsibility
Payne, “Implicit Bias: The Psychology of Ordinary Prejudice in Everyday Lives” (Video)
Zheng, selections from “Attributability, Accountability, and Implicit Bias”
Arpaly, selections on Huck Finn
*Reflection/Question Submission: Group A (Flexible)*

16. **Monday, 10/21**  Moral Relativism
Shafer-Landau, “Ten Arguments against Moral Objectivity”
Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism”
*Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)*

_____________________________ **Part 2: Political Philosophy**_____________________________

**SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY: IMPOSE RULES PEOPLE CONSENT TO**

17. **Wednesday, 10/23**  Introduction to Political Philosophy & Nozick’s Social Contract Theory
Instructor’s Supplement: Political Philosophy and Leadership Ethics
Shafer-Landau, selections from “The Social Contract Tradition”
Sandel, selections from “Do We Own Ourselves? Libertarianism,” *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?*
*Quiz*
*Reflection/Question Submission: Group A (Flexible)*

18. **Monday, 10/28**  Nozick’s Social Contract Theory and Wrongful Coercion
Nozick, TBD
Frankfurt, selections on “Coercion and Moral Responsibility”
Bowie, selections from “Wrongful Beneficence: Exploitation and Third World Sweatshops”
*Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)*

19. **Wednesday, 10/30**  Rawlsian Social Contract Theory, Pt 1: Economic Justice
Sandel, selections from “The Case for Equality: John Rawls,” *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?*
Rawls, selections from *A Theory of Justice*
*Quiz*
*Reflection/Question Submission: Group A (Flexible)*
Rawls, selections from *A Theory of Justice*
Okin et al, selections from *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*
(Review sections on “Accountability” in Zheng, “Attributability, Accountability, and Implicit Bias”)

* Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)

**PERFECTIONIST POLITICAL THEORY: IMPOSE RULES THAT IMPROVE CHARACTER**

21. **Wednesday, 11/6** Perfectionism Political Theory
Okin, selections from *Justice, Gender, and the Family*
George, “The Central Tradition” from *Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality*

* Quiz
* Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)

22. **Monday, 11/11** Epistocracy: Knowledge and Justified Belief
Brennan, selections from *Against Democracy*
Okin et al, selections from *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*
Estlund, short passage on identifying experts from *Democratic Authority*

* Reflection/Question Submission: Group A (Flexible)

**COMMUNITARIAN POLITICAL THEORY: IMPOSE RULES THAT BUILD COMMUNITY**

23. **Wednesday, 11/13** Multiculturalism: Millet or Melting Pot?
Kymlicka, selections from “Communitarianism” in *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*
Burnor and Raley, “Other Conceptions of Autonomy: Substantive and Relational Autonomy”

* Quiz
* Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)

**THE ETHICS OF COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING**

24. **Monday, 11/18** Deliberation vs. Majority Vote vs. Expert Decision-Making
Gutmann and Thompson, selections from *Why Deliberative Democracy?*
Selections from “Monument Avenue Commission Report”

* Reflection/Question Submission: Group A (Flexible)

25. **Wednesday, 11/20** Deliberation & Dialogue
Beinart, “Left-Wing Protests Are Crossing the Line,” *The Atlantic*

* Quiz
* Reflection/Question Submission: Group B (Flexible)
25. Monday, 11/25  Online Class
Brown, NPR Interview with Daryl Davis, “How One Man Convinced 200 Ku Klux Klan Members To Give Up Their Robes”
King, selections from “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
Lebron, “Time for a New Black Radicalism”
Weston, “Dialogue,” from The Ethical Toolbox
* Reflection/Question Submission: Group A and B (Flexible)
* Take-Home Quiz

Wednesday, 11/27  No Class—Happy Thanksgiving!

26. Monday, 12/2  Guest Speaker: Dr. Lee (of the Monument Avenue Commission)
Selections from “Monument Avenue Commission Report”
Short Required Reflection and Question for Dr. Lee Due.

27. Wednesday, 12/4  Review Session