AVILA COLLEGE-SYLLABUS

DEPARTMENT: Humanities/Philosophy PL 255-CI "Ethics"
Sister Ruth Stuckel, C.S.J., Associate Professor
Fall, 1995 MWF 9:00AM-9:50 AM, Bor 420, 3 credits.
Communication Intensive Course (CI) A student must
earn a minimum grade of "C" to satisfy the CI
requirement.

Office Hours: 1:00-2:15pm MW, 9:30am-10:45 TTH
Other times by appointment. My office number is
942-8400, extension 2407; my home phone number is
941-9743. At either place, leave a message, and I
shall return your call as soon as possible.

Text: Pojman, Louis, Life and Death, Grappling with the
Moral Dilemmas of Our Time, Jones & Bartlett
Norman, Richard, The Moral Philosophers, Clarendon

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course presents the ethical theories of
key philosophers, such as, Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine, as
well as a methodology for decision-making. A major portion of
the course consists of an analysis of contemporary moral issues
concerning life and death issues. Students are required to
reflect upon their own value system in light of the major ethical
theories and moral issues. Through various kinds of activities
students gain insights into themselves, develop skills in
analyzing complex moral issues and are enabled to articulate a
personal value system as a framework for ethical decision making
and behavior.

OBJECTIVES: Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO's) Upon completion
of this course, the Avila student will be able to:

1. identify, explain, and evaluate the major ethical
theories of teleology, deontology, natural law, and
contractualism (ILO #1, Knowledge of major ethical
theories).

2. discuss the Judeo-Christian tradition with regard to the
major ethical contemporary issues, such as, abortion,
war, and euthanasia (ILO #2, Knowledge of the Judeo-
Christian tradition).

3. identify key philosophical persons and discuss their
influence on the development of civilization (ILO #3).

4. articulate a personal value system as a framework for
ethical decision-making and behavior (ILO #4).
HIGHER LEVEL THINKING: STRATEGIES AND SKILLS

1. Employ skeptical, valuative and logical approaches in processing information and drawing conclusions.

2. Analyze one's thinking processes, including how one's experiences, feelings, ideas and intuition affect thinking.

Students reflect upon their own value system through several kinds of activities, such as, questionnaires, surveys, reflection papers, and case studies. They are taught to relate their values to the principles and positions of the major ethical theories. Through examination of complex moral issues, the students understand the consequences of their choices based upon their values.

COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES

Communication is the ability to effectively send and respond to varied audiences and for varied purposes. The effective communicator deals with individuals and groups by writing, reading, speaking and listening. He/she can use these processes with poise and comfort to acquire, develop and convey ideas. Upon graduation, the Avila student will be able to:

1. employ active listening techniques, including summarizing, paraphrasing, questioning, and nonverbal response.

2. read a document and demonstrate an understanding of its written and quantitative content.

3. make a clear, well-organized verbal presentation.

4. write a clear, well-organized paper, using documentation and quantitative tools, when appropriate.

5. use group process skills.

LISTENING STRATEGIES. One or more listening skills are incorporated in each class through a variety of exercises, such as the following:

a. two students interview each other and then introduce each other to the class.

b. students read their reflection papers in small groups. One student reflects back to each reader.

c. periodically, a student is asked to paraphrase or to summarize a portion of the lecture.
READING STRATEGIES. The students are expected to read thoroughly the two texts.

a. The text and individual chapters are previewed. Thereafter, the students preview each new chapter. Together the overview is discussed.

b. Guided questions are used for each chapter. Important terms are defined and discussed.

c. Students research one moral issue; three sources are to be cited.

SPEAKING STRATEGIES. Class size allows students to have the opportunity to speak regularly in class. In addition each student is asked to present a five minute speech on a contemporary moral issue which he/she researches.

WRITING STRATEGIES. The format and criteria for written papers is presented with the syllabus. A week before a paper is due, the format and content are discussed in class and a model is given. The students hone their writing skills in a variety of exercises. The following are a few such exercises:

a. two reflection papers are written, typed and handed in; the length is two to three pages.

b. review questions of each chapter are written. These are discussed in small groups and in the entire

c. students are asked to summarize, to analyze, to evaluate and to compare and contrast. Original examples at required to demonstrate understanding.

GROUP PROCESS SKILLS. Groups are used regularly to review the questions at the end of the chapters and to hear each others' reflections. The spokesperson for the group rotates.

PERSONAL, SPIRITUAL, AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Avila College is committed to educating the whole person by providing opportunities for personal and social development as well as spiritual growth. Upon completion of this course, the Avila student will be able to:

1. Articulate a personal value system as a framework for ethical decision-making and behavior;
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week One:  
(Aug. 28-Sept. 1)  
Introduction of students  
Ch. 1 "The Nature of Ethics"  
* Plato: The Health of the Personality

Week Two:  
(Sept. 6-8)  
Ch. 2 "The Sanctity of Life"  
* Aristotle: Rationality

Week Three:  
(Sept. 11-15)  
* Egoism and Altruism  
Library Instruction

Week Four:  
(Sept. 18-22)  
Test 1: Chapters 1 and 2.  
Plato, Aristotle

Week Five:  
(Sept. 25-29)  
Ch. 3 "Death & Dying"  
***Paper due.

Week Six:  
(Oct. 2-6)  
Ch. 4 "Suicide"  
Hume: Sympathy

Week Seven:  
(Oct. 9-11)  
Ch. 5 "Euthanasia"  
Video: Withholding Fluids

Week Eight  
(Oct. 16-20)  
Test 2: Chapters 3, 4, & 5 and Hume Talks

Week Nine  
(Oct. 23-27)  
Ch. 6 "Abortion"  
Kant: Respect for Persons

Week Ten  
(Oct. 30-Nov. 3)  
Ch. 7 "The Death Penalty"  
Mill: The Greatest Happiness

Week Eleven  
(Nov. 6-10)  
Review  
Test 3: Chapters 6 & 7  
Kant and Mill

Week Twelve  
(Nov. 13-17)  
Ch. 9 "War"  
Talks

Week Thirteen  
(Nov. 20)  
Marxism

Week Fourteen  
(Nov. 27-Dec. 1)  
Ch. 10 "World Hunger"  
Psychoanalysis

Week Fifteen  
(Dec. 4-8)  
Review and Summary  
Talks:

Exam Week  
(Dec. 11)  
Final Paper – orally presented to class.  
10:00-11:50 A.M.
METHODS:
1. Presentation and explanation by use of board, overheads, videos and/or handouts. Handouts which are lost are not replace.

2. Participation of students through questions, discussions, and/or sharing of personal experiences, outside readings, programs, and happenings (current ethical issues).

3. Small group discussions. Students are assigned groups the first week of school. Dyads are also used for brief periods to enable the students to express their ideas.

REQUIREMENTS: ASSESSMENT OF THE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILO).

1. ILO’s 1, 2, 3, and 4 are assessed through Class Participation which consists of three parts: attendance, preparation and participation (1/4 of Grade—150 points, includes oral presentation).

In every class period students demonstrate their knowledge of the major ethical theories (ILO #1), their knowledge of the Judeo-Christian tradition (ILO #2), their understanding of the philosophers’ influence on the development of civilization (ILO #3) and/or their own value system (ILO #4).

Attendance is required.
No deduction for the first absence.
The second and absence are three point deductions.
Each absence thereafter is a 10 point deduction.
Absences beyond six are a cause for failure.

Preparation 1) read and study the assigned text.
2) write answers to guided questions, reflections question and other written assignments.

Participation. To receive an A a student must
1) consistently demonstrate an understanding of the assigned materials by speaking, answering, asking questions and making connections with current issues;
2) employ active listening techniques, including summarizing, paraphrasing, and non-verbal responses (attentiveness);
3) give a clear, well-organized verbal presentation on an ethical issue.
2. ILO 1, 2, and 3 are assessed principally through testing and secondarily through class participation. Three tests are given so that the students can demonstrate their understanding of the philosophers, their theories and their influence on today’s society. (1/2 of the grade CI). (100 each test; 300 points)

3. ILO # 1, 2, and 4 are assessed also through one oral presentation of an ethical issue: part of 150 points of the participation grade.

Criteria for oral presentation is attached to syllabus.

4. ILO 4 - a personal value system as a framework for ethical decision making and behavior is assessed through the two reflection papers principally and secondarily through class participation. (1/4 of the grade: 150 points)

**Reflection Papers.** The student writes two reflection papers, 2-3 pages in length. These papers are autobiographical, that is, the student is to reflect on one’s lived experience. The purpose of these papers is to examine one’s life and to gain insight into one’s life. The papers are to include only material the student feels safe in sharing. Suggested topics of the first paper are these:

- Who am I? What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- Who are my heroes? Who are my enemies?
- What is sacred to me? Is there a God?
- With what weapons do I fight? What is the meaning of sex?

The final paper is an articulation of one’s ethical system; it includes one’s character strengths, principles and values.

**FORMAT** for papers is as follows:

**Introduction:** The introduction is an overview of the whole paper. It tells what the rest of the paper is going to be about. The introduction states the central idea and the three reasons for holding the position.

**Body:** The body of the paper takes up each of the reasons for the central idea. One well-developed paragraph with data, examples, and/or a personal story is given for each reason in support of the central idea. The paragraphs are to follow the order given in the introduction.

**Conclusion:** The conclusion is a summary of the paper; it includes a restatement of the central idea together with a review of the supporting reasons. The conclusion ties the whole paper together; it is a summary of the thesis and the reasons in slightly different wording.
Suggestions to improve papers:
1. Proof read the paper out loud, preferably to another person.
2. Ask another to proof read your paper.
3. Check your paper with the criteria.

GRADING: A=93-100; B=83-92; C=73-82; D=63-72; F=62-0.

POLICIES: 1. Attendance, preparation and participation are required. See chart for deductions for absences.
2. Late papers carry a penalty of one letter grade.
3. Make-up exams are the exception. If for a serious reason a student misses a test, the student makes arrangements to take the test before the test papers are returned. Only one late test is allowed.
4. A grade lower than a C on a test may be raised with additional work. The work must be done within the week assigned. 80 is maximum grade.
5. When absent, the student obtains the assignment and materials from another student. The student is expected to come prepared for the next class. Lack of preparation reduces the participation grade.
6. Cheating and plagiarism is forbidden.

CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:
1. Central idea is clear, interesting and significant.
2. The plan has the introduction, body, and conclusion. Paragraphs are unified; transitional words are used; and generalizations are supported by concrete details. There is originality and cohesion.
3. Sentences conform to conventional patterns. They show variety. The subjects and verbs agree; pronouns agree with the antecedents.
4. Style includes correct spelling and good diction.

CRITERIA FOR ORAL PRESENTATION
1. The central idea is clear and there is supporting evidence for it. The speech is organized, has an introduction which catches the attention of the group and a conclusion.
2. The speaker is dressed appropriately, has good eye contact, exhibits poise, and used props or personal experiences for effect.