**EHR 3206 International Ethics**

**Course Description:**

This course will focus on moral issues in international affairs and the ways that recent approaches in ethics can be used to address them. Topics will include justice in war, terrorism, and humanitarian intervention; global justice and the alleviation of poverty; rights of cultural minorities; harms to women, the relation of gender and culture, and women’s human rights; the ethical responsibilities of multinational corporations in the context of economic and technological globalization; democracy across borders; and the preservation of the environment. The course will give special attention to human rights as a framework for approaching these issues, but will also consider the alternatives offered by consequentialist ethical theories, communitarianism, and feminist care ethics, and the challenge posed by cultural relativism.

**Course Objectives:**

Ethical issues in international affairs are among the most important concerns facing citizens in contemporary society. This course aims to give undergraduate students an appreciation of the various philosophical frameworks through which such difficult value questions and dilemmas can be approached. While eschewing relativism, the philosophical study of ethics enables students to understand certain conflicts of values, as well as the importance of human rights and goods in this domain. The distinctive contribution of philosophy in addressing these hard questions consists in its emphasis on close analysis of texts, the cultivation of the art of rational argument, and the understanding of the role of principles in guiding practice. The course considers such important approaches as just war theory, and also its application to terrorism; global poverty and proposals for dealing with it; the rights of women worldwide, and philosophical issues that may arise from the diversity of cultural practices. An understanding of the new ethical issues that arise from globalization, in economic, technological, political and social contexts, is also an important course objective. The demanding term paper will give students the opportunity to cultivate their research skills, and the required oral presentation will exercise their capacity for persuasive rational argumentation.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course the students should have learnt the following:

* Ethical frameworks and some fundamental theories of international ethics
* Moral principles within and among states
* Hard Questions: Universal Standards and Diverse Cultures
* Justice in a global context
* Economic, technological, and political globalization: ethical issues
* Ethics and the environment

1. Environmental economics and politics. Moral bases for respecting the environment; obligations to future generations. Ecofeminist approaches. Possibilities of international cooperation to protect the environment in the face of global ecological crises.
2. Wrap up and in-class part of final; distribution of take-home final.

**Course Outline**

1. Introduction:
2. Ethical frameworks and some fundamental questions.
3. Is morality ultimately possible among nation-states?
4. The challenges posed by realism and by relativism.
5. Approaches to international ethics: human rights; consequentialism; needs-based theories; care theory.
6. Alternative perspectives in political philosophy, e.g., liberalism, communitarianism, and feminism, as they apply to international relations.
7. Moral principles within and among states
8. War and violence. Are traditional just war theories applicable in contemporary contexts? The moral status of the nation-state.
9. Terrorism, just war theory, and ethics.
10. The justification of humanitarian intervention.
11. Hard Questions: Universal Standards and Diverse Cultures
12. Perpetual peace and human rights. The scope of human rights and their regional and national enforcement within the framework of international law
13. Women’s Human Rights. Do international documents need to be revised to explicitly include women’s human rights, or can existing rights be used to advance women’s equality?
14. Women’s equality and multicultural perspectives. The tension between diverse--and sometimes oppressive--cultural practices and universalistic norms. Can human rights be used to set limits to these practices?
15. Justice in a global context
16. The recognition of cultural and national identities, and the rights of minority cultures. Justice in immigration.
17. International distributive justice. Is there a moral requirement for global redistribution of resources or wealth, and if so, what is its extent? Hunger and welfare in developing countries. Food and international politics. Justice, benevolence, or welfare rights as grounds for dealing with hunger and poverty.
18. Economic, technological, and political globalization: ethical issues
19. Economic globalization: global corporations and their social responsibilities; “global care chains”
20. Globalization and the Internet: issues of access, democracy, and rights
21. The globalization of democracy—the scope of democratic communities and their demarcation in political, social, and ecological terms—should they be limited to traditional nation-states and communities within them? Proposals for transnational decision-making.
22. Ethics and the environment
23. Environmental economics and politics. Moral bases for respecting the environment; obligations to future generations. Ecofeminist approaches. Possibilities of international cooperation to protect the environment in the face of global ecological crises.
24. Wrap up and in-class part of final; distribution of take-home final.

**Methodology**

The facilitator(s) will employ the following methods; Case study, Guest lecturing, Group work, Interactive lectures, Class discussion, Guided exercise.

**Assessment Mode**

Take home exercise 15%

Practical exercise test 15%

End of semester examination 70%

**Reading List**

Charles Beitz et al., eds. *International Ethics* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1993

Joel Rosenthal, ed. *Ethics & International Affairs,* 2nd ed. (Georgetown Univ. Press. 1999).

Andrew Valls, ed., *Ethics in International Affairs* (Rowman & Littlefield. 2000).

Susan Okin et al. *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1999).

Nicholas Fotion, “Reactions to War: Pacifism, Realism, and Just War Theory,” in A. Valls, ed., *Ethics in International Affairs*, pp. 15-32.

Thomas Nagel, "War and Massacre," in C. Beitz et al, eds. *International Ethics*, pp. 53-74.

Michael Walzer, "The Rights of Political Communities" (from *Just and Unjust Wars*);

David Luban, "Just War and Human Rights;"

Michael Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States: A response to four critics;"

David Luban, "The Romance of the Nation-State;" in C. Beitz et al, eds., *International Ethics*, pp. 165-243.