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Course Description and Objectives:

Whether or not you realize it, you engage in moral reasoning on a regular basis. It is a basic part of being human that we struggle with and ponder how we should act and who we should be. The basic fact of the matter, however, is that the conclusions we come to about these questions vary wildly. Many of our profoundest social problems come from disagreements about moral questions. Sadly, all too often these debates involve little substantial discussion. In particular, much of recent work in this field (context: recent here means from the 1700s until approximately 1980) has tended to present humans as fundamentally rational creatures and to see our bodies as not “really” us. This course will follow some important new fields in ethics. Over the past 40 years or so, philosophy has started to take human embodiment seriously; the result of this has been a fundamental rethinking of the meaning of being a body. We will look at ideas like posthumanism and the cyborg, new understandings of the relationship between sex and gender, disability studies, sexual orientation and critical race theory in regards to classical liberalism. The course will focus on the moral consequences of some of this work.

Course Policies and Requirements:

Class Discussion: A discussion based class works only if everyone is prepared, open-minded and above all respectful. This is especially true of an Ethics class, since many of you may have strong and deeply held beliefs. I would ask that everyone remember that the point of this class is to **UNDERSTAND** and **ANALYZE** different philosophical writings about Ethics. This course is **not** intended as a forum for discovering TRUTH. In short, this is an academic class like any other -- you will be responsible for **understanding** the positions of different philosophers. Whether or not you choose to agree with anything we study is a personal choice of yours. There is a very important distinction between understanding and advocating an idea. I expect everyone to respect this distinction so that we will be able to explore ideas that are both explosive and controversial.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Regardless of the source (newspaper, magazine, textbook, internet, etc...), if you want to use someone else’s description of an idea, you must give it full credit or you will receive a zero.

Attendance: It is in the nature of a Philosophy class that the material needs to be worked through together; if you’re not in class you’ll miss the discussion of the texts and your participation grade will be significantly lowered.

Participation: Philosophy classes are based on understanding and analyzing, not memorizing; passive listening will not be adequate. You’re expected to

come to every class prepared to discuss the readings. Be on time and bring the materials covered for that day. Please note that attendance does not count as participation. For this class to work, your active engagement with the materials, questions and comments are essential. Participation is 10% of the course grade.

Class participation can include the following:

- Participating verbally in class in a way that shows completion of the reading and critical reflection on the text and course concepts
- Participating in writing shared with me via email
- Bringing in a current event/news article that relates to course topics. You can present it to the class yourself or give it to me to present.
- Bringing a specific question you have about the reading to class. You can ask it yourself or give it to me via email.
- Applying course content/concepts to television shows or other works of pop culture
- At the end of the semester, part of the final exam will include a summary of your participation activities as well as an argument for what grade you think you should receive for participation.

Paper: You will be responsible for 1 paper which will analyze readings and class discussions. Specific instructions and questions will be forthcoming. Please note on the schedule when this is due. Lateness will result in 10% a day reduction in credit.

Exams: The midterm and final exams will each consist of essay and short answer type questions. They will look for thoughtfulness in addition to an ability to present material clearly and accurately.

Technology: Obviously, no cell phones in class. You will also not need to use a laptop, so you will do your note taking on paper.

Grade Breakdown:

Grades will be assigned as such:	Paper	20%
	Participation	15%
	Midterm	25%
	Final Exam	25%
	Quizzes	15%

Course Texts: no text for this course...we will be reading short excerpts from a number of sources. Below are likely to be some of them (no particular order):

- Donna Harraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto."
Clare, Eli, *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure* (2017).
Lewis, T.L., "Ableism 2020, An Updated Definition" (2020).
Okun, T. "White Supremacy Culture."
Elizabeth Barnes, *Minority Body*, (2016).
Mills, Charles, "The Metaphysics of Race."
Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Critical Race Theory."
Elaine Blum, "Beauvoir's Ambiguity and Unruly Bodies."

David Boothroyd, "Sexing the Ethical Subject."

Niharika Dinkar, "Erotics of the body politic."

Daniel Silvermint, "Passing as Privileged."

Lisa Marie Rollins, "Transracial Lives Matter: Rachel Dolezal and the Privilege of Racial Manipulation."

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1990).

SCHEDULE:

Week 1 **Methodology and What is Morality?** We will do a quick trip through moral theory

Week 2 **Identity Theory Questions**

Week 2&3 **Sex and Gender...**what are their Metaphysical and Moral Status

Week 4 & 5 **Sexual Orientation**

Midterm

Week 6 & 7 **Race...its Metaphysical and Moral Status**

Week 7 & 8 **Disability...**what is it and what are the moral issues arising from it?

Week 9 & 10 **Posthumanism and the idea of the cyborg**

Week 10 **Final Exam**