Teaching Portfolio

Shannon Sylvie Abelson

Contents

Teaching Statement ………………………………………………………………………… 2

Sample Teaching Evaluations …………………………………………………………… 4

Courses Taught and Teaching Interests ……………………………………………… 7

Selected Sample Syllabi

Sustainable Business ……………………………………………………………….. 8

Ethics of Technology in Everyday Life ………………………………………. 15

Sample Class Exercise ……………………………………………………………………… 23

Teaching Statement

My teaching always focuses on the development of philosophical work that emphasizes skills essential to good interpersonal communication: the development of clear and concisely expressible ideas, the communication of such ideas in a manner accessible to others, and the ability to justify those ideas to others in discourse. I have taught both historical and applied topics in philosophy at Indiana University Bloomington and at my M.A. institution, Virginia Tech. I have served as an Associate Instructor, as well as the primary Instructor of Record for three courses, all of which involved the development of original course materials. The two most recent courses I have designed and taught focused on environmental ethics. The first was an introductory level applied course on the ethical problems of anthropomorphic climate change, which I taught in Spring 2019. In the Spring of 2021, I designed and taught an applied ethics course on sustainable business practice.

The courses I have designed always focus on cultivation of the ability to participate in a forum of ideas, as I believe that such skills are integral to substantive contribution in any discipline. I have designed and mediated structured debates, research presentations, and peer review workshops, as well as always encouraged robust discussion in my classrooms. All of these activities require the careful and clear expression of ideas, something that I have found is one of the aspects of learning that students most enjoy mastering. My most rewarding teaching experience was the participation by my students in a mock climate forum in my Climate Ethics course, in which students assumed a selection of various social and socioeconomic perspectives on climate change mitigation practices and debated each other to reach compromises. They informed their positions both with philosophical principles they had learned throughout the course and their own unique perspectives.

I have also served as an Associate Instructor for the recently developed Philosophical Methods course in the Philosophy Department at Indiana University, where my primary responsibilities were to guide and mediate ongoing tutorials between multiple pairs of students. These students composed a research paper over the course of the semester, while receiving weekly feedback from myself and their tutorial partner. At the end of semester, they presented their work in a conference-style format.

I strive to include unexpected components in my courses in order to broaden student interest and provide new windows into philosophical learning. For the first course I taught as Primary Instructor, I designed an introductory survey of ethical ideas to be accompanied by science fiction case studies. My advisor at Virginia Tech, Joseph C. Pitt, had used this approach with short science fiction stories to great effect in his introductory classes, so I decided to model that with my own twist. My students studied primary texts in moral philosophy and then applied and debated those ideas in the context of classical episodes of the television series Star Trek. I found that the integration of this extra dimension in the course was a source of excitement for the students and provided an unintimidating entry point to complex philosophical ideas.

My experience in course development and teaching strongly inform my identity as a philosopher, as one of the most important ways in which I believe my work can leave a positive impact is through the encouragement of others to pursue a philosophical education. And yet I consider the project of refining and improving my teaching skills as one that is ever ongoing. As such, I continue to seek out new teaching experiences and professional development opportunities. For the 2022-2023 academic year I applied for and was selected to teach Indiana University’s College of Arts and Science’s general education public speaking course, for which I completed a 35-hour training workshop on rhetorical pedagogy. I have also attended the American Philosophical Association’s Association of Philosophy Teacher’s special session, where in 2020 I presented on my development of the model Climate Ethics forum we conducted in my Spring 2019 Climate Ethics course.

Selected Teaching Evaluations

Indiana University collects student evaluations of instructor performance each semester and makes such information accessible to instructors. Below are unedited evaluations from my 8-week Spring 2021 Business Ethics: Sustainable Business course, held online via Zoom due to Covid-19.

**Qualitative**

#### What did you like most about this course and instructor?

| Table for [QTitle]. |
| --- |
| Comments |
| I liked how approachable and accommodating professor Abelson was. She encouraged me to do my best work. |
| Where do I start. She facilitates discussion well in class and is very energetic about the subjects. I absolutely love the videos she has teaching the readings. She explains what needs to be explained without boring anyone and always has good/interesting references to keep attention. She also gives very good feedback on essays and understands students struggles and is willing to work with them. I recommend anyone to take this course with Professor Abelson because she is one of my favorite professors. I could go on and on about how great she is but I feel like whoever is reading this gets the idea by this point. Overall, easily 10/10 if not ranked higher. |
| I found the content very interesting |
| The course went over a lot of interesting topics that I feel is important for everyone to learn. She was very kind to everyone and cares a lot about her students doing well. |
| Super nice and friendly |
| This instructor was very responsive whenever I had questions or concerns and was very flexible with deadlines, which was very beneficial and helpful. |
| Made the class fun with her upbeat personality and dry humor. |
| I liked the flexibility of this course, how we had the assignments of the essays but we could choose our prompt, which one to revise, etc. |
| The content, and the professor, were extremely interesting. Additionally, the material taught to us is relevant to the world today. |

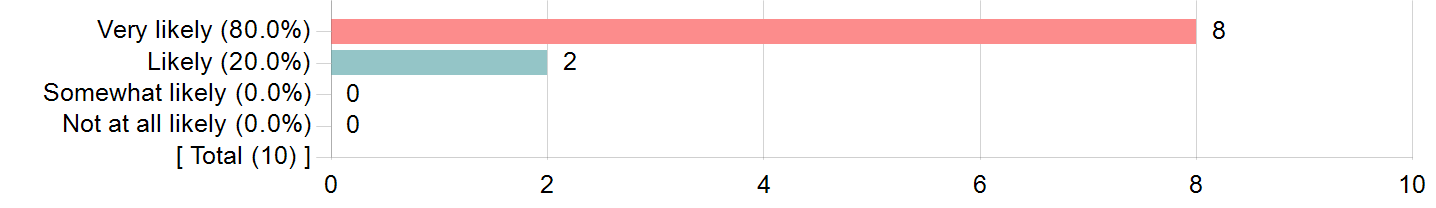
#### What did you like least about this course and instructor?

| Table for [QTitle]. |
| --- |
| Comments |
| NA |
| Despite all the good things I said, there is room for improvement. I feel that having activities that are more interactive with the text could help, but the quizzes are fine on their own for the most part. Also, I think that we should not do breakout rooms on zoom because often we would just talk for the first few minutes and then it would go silent. I feel that the group discussion would have helped me more, but the rooms is not something you cannot control really. I feel like this class should meet twice a week if Professor Abelson is teaching because she kept it interesting for me the whole time despite having class for like over 2 hours. |
| structure of weekly hw |
| There was a lot of workload in this course but it was an 8 week course so it was expected. |
| No complaints |
| I think the course was a little fast–paced because it was only for the second half of the semester. If the course was spaced out throughout the semester, I think it would have been more effective. |
| Nothing |
| Shannon was very kinds and wanted to see everyone do well, I like how passionate she was about the topic and also how she was understanding about issues we had with learning during the pandemic. |

**Quantitative**

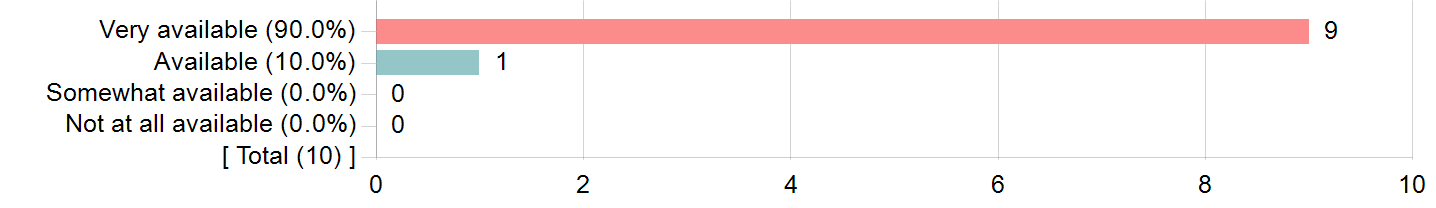
#### How likely would you be to recommend this course with this instructor?

How likely would you be to recommend this course with this instructor?



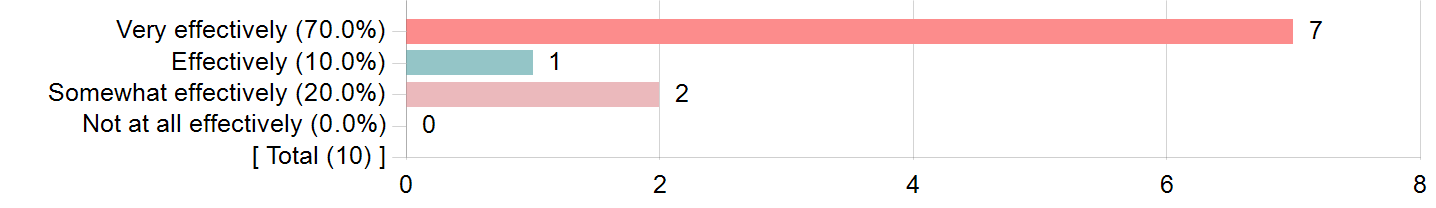
#### How available was the instructor to provide help when needed (in person, by email, office hours, etc.)?

How available was the instructor to provide help when needed (in person, by email, office hours, etc.)?



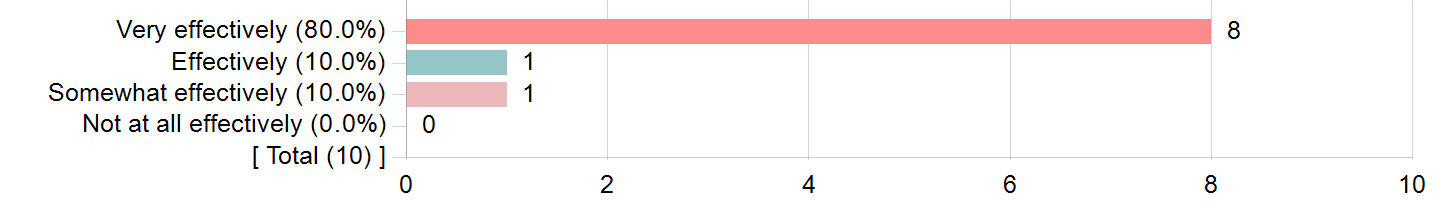
#### How effectively did out-of-class work (assignments, readings, practice, etc.) help you learn?

How effectively did out-of-class work (assignments, readings, practice, etc.) help you learn?



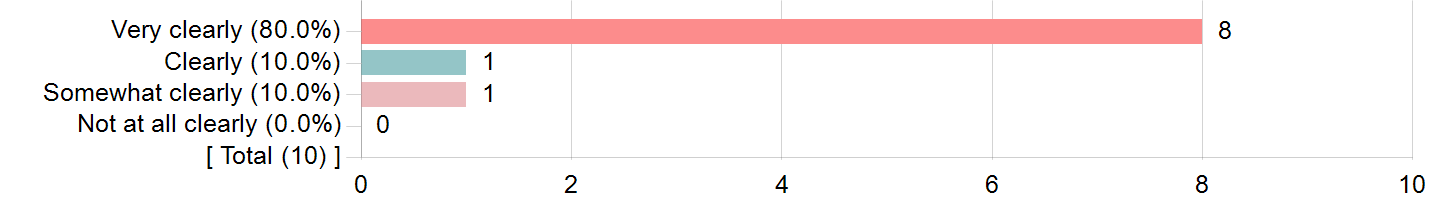
#### How effectively was class time used to help you learn?

How effectively was class time used to help you learn?



#### How clearly were course learning goals and objectives communicated to you?

How clearly were course learning goals and objectives communicated to you?



Courses Taught and Teaching Interests

(\* indicates courses I am also able to teach at the graduate level)

Primary Instructor:

Climate Ethics\*

Sustainable Business

Introduction to Ethics: Ethics and Star Trek

Associate Instructor and/or Grader:

Medieval Philosophy

Philosophical Methods\*

Virtue Ethics

Aesthetics

Symbolic Logic

Public Speaking

Ethics

Applied Ethics

Existentialism

Bioethics\*

Introductory Epistemology and Metaphysics\*

Courses I would be Happy to Teach:

Philosophy of Biology

Philosophy of Technology\*

Philosophy of Big Data

Environmental Ethics\*

Philosophy of Physics\*

General Philosophy of Science\*

Philosophy of Climate Science\*

Sample Syllabi

Philosophy P-240: Business and Morality: Ethics in Context

Sustainable Business



Meeting Times: 2nd 8 weeks: Tues. (asynchronous) and Thurs. 4:55 pm-7:25 pm EST (synchronous)

\* This class meets entirely online! \*

Instructor:

Shannon S. Abelson Office Hours: Thurs. 1:30-3:30pm EST

[abelson@iu.edu](mailto:abelson@iu.edu) and by appointment

Office Hours meeting room: ….

**Course Description**

This course will examine fundamental problems of moral philosophy in a business context, with a special focus on sustainability. We will examine ethical business principles and practices as they relate to the local and global environment, including climate change, and socio-economic issues.

The main question that will frame our discussions throughout the semester is, “**What responsibilities, if any, do businesses have to create and promote sustainability, both internally and externally?”**

Every Tuesday an asynchronous lecture will be posted on Canvas. We will meet synchronously on Zoom every Thursday.

This is an 8-week long class, and so moves ***very quickly***. It is important that you stay caught up on readings and assignments, as if you fall behind it will be harder to catch up.

**Readings**

Readings are to be completed **before** class on the day for which they are assigned. They will be posted online. Completing the readings is an essential part of this class and weekly graded writing assignments will test your comprehension of the assigned readings (so don’t skip them!) The lowest written assignment grade will be dropped at the end of the term.

**Required Text:** All readings provided on Canvas

**Films**

This course will also make substantial use of films and documentaries, always to be watched before class time on Thursday for the week they are assigned. All films will be freely accessible via the IU library’s online database, so you do not need to rent them or secure physical copies. All films should be able to be streamed in a browser without the need for any additional software. The runtimes for the assigned videos are printed in the syllabus so you can plan ahead how much time to budget for these per week.

**Course Work**

* There will be **two short papers** on topics related to readings and class discussion, that present a well-reasoned, well-supported, original argument on a position related to the course theme. The short papers should be no more than 1,000 words long.
* In place of a final exam, you will complete **a third, intermediate length paper**, up to 2,000 words, that will be a revision and elaboration of one of your two previous papers, using comments received from me and from your peers.
* Papers should be double-spaced, size 12 legible font, with proper citations (in-text or footnote/endnote) and a reference page. The citation format is up to you, but if you have no preference use MLA: <https://libraries.indiana.edu/file/mla-style-quick-guide-pdf>
* **All papers must be submitted electronically on Canvas—please do not email them to me!** Papers must be submitted as either a Word file or PDF. Please no Pages, LaTeX, or otherwise files.
* Every week you will be required to submit at least **two Canvas discussion posts** of substantial quality on the assigned material for the week. Discussion posts will be due Saturday by Midnight EST for the week they are assigned.
  + The content of these posts is flexible, but they should demonstrate serious engagement with the assigned material (film and/or reading). They can pose a question and offer a tentative answer, object to a claim, provide additional evidence for a position, or argue in support of some view.
  + **Discussion Board Grading Scheme:**

Posts will be graded based on quality of contribution:

**100:** Excellent post that poses and answers a substantial question or offers an insightful commentary on the topic.

**85:** Substantial post that shows engagement with the topic.

**70:** You posted only once, or your posts were superficial.

**50:** You posted some words, but they were barely/not connected to the topic.

**0:** No post/ post that violates discussion board policies.

* + **The lowest weekly discussion board grade will be dropped at the end of the term.**
* Lastly, there will be **a weekly Canvas quiz** following the asynchronous lecture. These can be completed any time before we meet on Thursday.
  + **The lowest weekly quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the term.**

**All written work must be submitted on time. Please do not hesitate to contact me in advance if you think you will not be able to complete an assignment on time. Accommodations will be much more likely if you contact me before the deadline has passed.**

**Attendance Policy:**

**Attendance in all synchronous class sessions is mandatory unless you contact me beforehand.**

**Cameras:** I kindly request that you keep your cameras ON during the synchronous session, unless you let me know in advance of a reason why you do not feel comfortable doing so that day (the reason does not need to be anything specific). You can do so by either email, or just sending me a private Zoom message during class. This is not to say you can never turn off your camera to grab some coffee or if you’re not feeling well; rather you should just have your camera on as a default, unless something comes up.

Please do not leave your Zoom window open during class and walk away to fold laundry or play video games, etc. **The goal of these sessions is not merely to listen, but to engage in a communal discussion of these topics.**

**In order to protect student privacy, synchronous class sessions will not be recorded.** Any notes or slides used during synchronous sessions will be made available on Canvas after class.

**Grade Distribution**

**Short Essays:** 40% (20% each)

**Canvas Quizzes:** 10%

**Final Essay:** 35%

**Discussion Posts:** 15%

**Academic Integrity:** “As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (Code). When you submit a paper with your name on it in this course, you are signifying that the work contained therein is all yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand. All suspected violations of the Code will be handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final grade, a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean of Students.”

**All papers submitted through Canvas will be examined using Turnitin.**

**Accessibility and Inclusivity**

This course is intended to be an open and inviting venue to discuss complex moral problems and themes in a scholarly atmosphere. At all times I aim to foster an environment that is welcoming to all students. I firmly believe that the only good philosophical work is that which is done when all discussants treat each other with respect.

If you require accessibility accommodations please submit requests through the office of disability services at Herman B Wells Library, Suite W 302, 1320 E. Tenth Street.

<https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/disability-services-students/>

**I reserve the right to change any aspect of this syllabus throughout the semester, but I will provide notice!**

**Schedule of Topics**



**Unit One: Foundations of Business Sustainability**

**March**

16 (asyn) **Course Introduction and Brief Non-Technical Intro to Sustainability Topics**

**Media:** *Sustainability: Good for Business* (2009, 5 mins)

**And**

*What is Corporate Social Responsibility?* (2019, 4 mins)

18 (syn) **Reading:** Lang and Murphy (2014) “Business and Sustainability:

An Introduction”

**And**

Brundtland (1987) “Our Common Future” pgs. 29-31 (from the World Commission on Environment and Development; note that this text is the first substantial introduction of sustainability in the Business Ethics literature and has inspired much of the conversation since then).

23 (asyn) **Media:** *Bottled Life: The Global Business of Bottled Water* (2012, 90 mins)

**Reading:** Dempsey (2013) “Corporations and Non‐Agential Moral Responsibility”

**Paper #1 assigned**

25 (syn) **Reading:** Gideon Rosen on Moral Responsibility (podcast)

https://philosophybites.libsyn.com/gideon-rosen-on-moral-responsibility

**Unit Two: Business and the Environment**

30 (asyn) **Media:** *Green Marketing: How Green Is It?* (2012, 47 mins)

**Reading:** (1) “Can Corporations Have (Moral) Responsibility

Regarding Climate Change Mitigation?” Hormio (2017) pgs. 314-324.

**and**

(2) 2019 IPCC Summary for Policymakers

**April**

1 (syn) **Reading**: Maeve Cook on Ethics in the Age of Climate Change

(podcast)

Optional: Battisti and Perry (2011) “Walking the talk?

Environmental responsibility from the perspective of small‐

business owners”

**Paper #1 due by midnight on Canvas**

6 (asyn) **Media:** *Fresh: Sustainable Food Production in America* (2009, 71

mins)

**Reading:** “Morality, Money, and Motor Cars, revisited” Bowie

(2013)

11 (syn) **Reading:** Merchant (2000) “Partnership Ethics: Business and the

Environment”

Note that this is an older paper that tries to provide a framework for thinking about the relationship between businesses and the natural environment, with implications for climate change.

Optional: “Seriously Personal: The Reasons that Motivate

Entrepreneurs to Address Climate Change” Kaesehage, et al.

(2019)

**Unit Three: Business and Socioeconomic Influence**

13 (asyn) **Media: *Social Business* (2019, 102 mins)**

**Reading**: Ashford and Mulgan (SEP 2018) “Contractualism”

sections 1-4

**and** Julian Agyeman (2008)"Toward a 'just' sustainability?"

Optional: Scanlon (1982) “Contractualism and Utilitarianism”

**Paper # 2 assigned**

15 (syn) **Reading:** “What McDonald's Shows About the Minimum

Wage” (NPR)

**Optional:** Friedland (2015) “Sustainability, Public Health, and the

Corporate Duty to Assist”

20 (asyn) **Media:** *The New Conquistadors* (2012, 26 mins)

**And:**

Panel on*Social Innovation and Social Justice in an Age of Pandemics* at Oxford University's Saïd Business School(63 mins)

**Reading:** De George (2017) “Rethinking Global Business Ethics:

The North-South Paradigm”

22 (syn) **No Class: Wellness Day**

**Paper #2 due by midnight on Canvas**

27 (asyn) **Media:** Why SpaceX And Amazon Are Launching 42,000+ Satellites   (17 mins)

**Reading:** “How satellite ‘megaconstellations’ will photobomb

astronomy images” (Nature)

**and**

**“**Elon Musk’s 42,000 StarLink Satellites Could Just Save The World”

(Forbes)

**Final Paper Assigned**

29 (syn) Final Paper Peer Review and Brainstorm in class

**Reading:** No new reading.

**Final Paper Due May 5th, on Canvas, by midnight**

Course Readings

Dempsey, James. “Corporations and Non-Agential Moral Responsibility.” *J Appl*

*Philos*, 30, 2013: 334-350. <https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12029>

Lang, Achim, and Hannah Murphy. "Business and Sustainability: An

Introduction." *Business and Sustainability*. Springer, Cham, 2014. 3-19.

World Commission on Environment and Development. *Our Common Future*.

Oxford University Press, 1997.

https://archive.org/details/ourcommonfuture00worlrich. Accessed 17 Sept. 2022.

**Philosophy P-242:**

**Ethics of Technology in Everyday Life**

****

Instructor:

Shannon Sylvie Abelson Office Hours: TBA

[abelson@indiana.edu](mailto:abelson@indiana.edu)

Sycamore Hall 0021

**Course Description**

This introductory-level course is an examination of a selection of ethical considerations that arise when considering the application of technologies that we encounter in our daily lives. We will cover a number of ethical problems and questions that arise when considering the kinds of technology with which we have contact everyday, such as social media, big data, A.I., and developments in biomedicine. We will support our examinations with key readings on each topic. The format for each class meeting will include a lecture and discussion period covering the assigned readings. Occasionally we will view a short documentary as a supplement to our readings and discussion. This course is intended for all interested parties, but students in philosophy, computer science, information technology, and related fields may find the content particularly relevant to their course of study.

**Readings**

Readings are to be completed **before** class on the day for which they are assigned. They will be posted online via the course Canvas site. Completing the readings is an essential part of this class and weekly writing assignments will test your comprehension of the assigned readings (so don’t skip them!)

**Required Texts:** Sheila Jasanoff, *The Ethics of Invention: Technology and the*

*Human Future*. W. W. Norton & Company (2016).

All other texts will be posted on the course Canvas site.

Note: hyperlinks to online articles may be behind a pay wall, but you should be able to access them for free using your IU proxy.

**Course Work**

* There will be two short papers on topics related to readings and class discussion. The short papers should be no more than 1500 words long, double-spaced, size 12 Times New Roman (or similar) font, 1-inch margins, with proper citations (in-text or footnote/endnote). **All papers must be submitted electronically on Canvas—Please no hard copies!**
* In lieu of an in-class final exam, each student will be expected to submit a well-developed term paper by the date and time of exam: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The term paper must be 3,000 -3,500 words in length, making use of at least two assigned readings from the course and at least one outside reading approved by the instructor.
* On the first meeting of each week, 15-20 minutes of class time will be devoted to a written exercise. These will be collected and graded. Don’t get too stressed out about these: I will ask you a question that you should be able to answer in one or two paragraphs if you have done the readings.

**All written work must be submitted on time. Late work will not be accepted unless documentation of an extenuating circumstance is provided. Please do not hesitate to contact me in advance if you think you will not be able to complete an assignment on time. Accommodations will much less likely if you contact me after the deadline has passed.**

**Attendance in all class sessions is mandatory unless you contact me beforehand.**

**If you are absent on a day for which there is an in-class writing assignment AND your absence is excused, I will permit you to make up the assignment for that day.**

**Academic Integrity:** “As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (Code). When you submit a paper with your name on it in this course, you are signifying that the work contained therein is all yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand. All suspected violations of the Code will be handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final grade, a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean of Students.”

**All papers submitted through Canvas will be examined using Turnitin plagiarism detection software.**

**Grade Distribution**

**Short Essays:** 40% (20% each)

**Participation and Attendance:** 10%

**Term Paper:** 35%

**Weekly Exercises:** 15%

**Accessibility and Inclusivity**

This course is intended to be an open and inviting venue to discuss complex moral problems and themes in a scholarly atmosphere. At all times I aim to foster an environment that is welcoming to all students. I firmly believe that the only good philosophical work is done when all discussants treat each other with respect.

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**Schedule of Topics:**

**Jan** 10 **Course Introduction**

* Summary of course expectations and goals
* Introduction to philosophical consideration of ethical problems
* Brief introduction to proper philosophical argumentation, including logical structure of arguments

**What is the ethics of technology, and how do we do it?**

12 Readings: Sven Ove Hansson, “Theories and Methods for the Ethics of

Technology”

Optional further reading: James H. Moor, “Why We Need Better Ethics for

Emerging Technologies”

Nayef Al-Rodhan, “The Many Ethical Implications of Emerging Technologies”

**Unit One: Social Media and Global Connectedness**

**Social Media: Bridge or barrier?**

17 Reading: Yoni van den Eede and Katleen Gabriels, “Social Networking: The

Dialectics of Sharing”

19 Reading: Joseph C. Pitt, “‘Friend’ versus ‘Electronic Friend’”

**Global Connections and the Gadgets that Build Them**

24 Reading: Jasanoff, Chapter 6: “Information’s Wild Frontiers” in *EoI*

26 Reading: Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence and Morality” AND

Elaine Weidman-Grunewald, “How Technology can Aid

Humanitarian Response”

**Unit Two: Computer Ethics, Privacy, and Big Data**

31 Readings: James Moor, “What is Computer Ethics?”

Feb 2 Readings: Terrell Bynum, “Computer and Information Ethics,” Sections 1

and 2 https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-computer/ AND

Terrell Bynum and P. Schubert, “How to do Computer Ethics – A

Case Study: The Electronic Mall Bodensee”

7 Reading: no new readings; continue Bynum and Schubert

**Privacy and Security in the Cyber Sphere**

9 Reading: Herman Tavani, “Privacy and Cyberspace”

14 Readings: no new readings; continue Tavani

**Paper # 1 Assigned in Class**

**Big Data or Big Brother?**

16 Reading: Matteo Turilli & Luciano Floridi, “The Ethics of Information

Transparency”

21 Readings: No new reading; continue Turilli & Floridi

In-class documentary: *Terms and Conditions May Apply* (2013)

23 Readings: Michael Zimmer, “But the Data is Already Public: on the Ethics of

Research in Facebook”

**Unit Three: Artificial Intelligence at our Fingertips**

**In the future, the car drives you: Self-driving Cars**

28 Reading:

Optional Further Reading: Sven Nyholm & Jilles Smids, “Automated Cars

Meet Human Drivers: Responsible Human-Robot Coordination and The Ethics of Mixed Traffic”

March 2 Readings: no new readings; finish Paper #1

**Paper # 1 due on Canvas by midnight**

7 **Spring Break – no class**

9 **Spring Break – no class**

**Computer Assistants**

14 Reading: John Danaher, “Toward an Ethics of AI Assistants: an Initial

Framework”

16 Reading: no new reading; continue Danaher

**Unit Four: Biomedical Ethics**

**Genetic Manipulation**

21 Readings: Jasanoff, Chapter 5: “Tinkering with Humans” in *EoI*

Optional watch-at-home film: *Gattaca* (1997)

23 Reading: John Harris, “Is Gene Therapy a Form of Eugenics?” AND

S. M. Reindal, “Disability, Gene Therapy and Eugenics - a Challenge

to John Harris”

In-class documentary: *Relative Risk: The Human Genome Project* (1993)

**Paper # 2 assigned in class**

28 Readings: no new readings; continue Harris and Reindal

**Embryology and Designer Babies**

30 Reading: S. Matthew Liao, “The Ethics of Using Genetic Engineering for Sex

Selection”

**April**  4 Readings: Julian Savulescu, “Procreative Beneficence: Why We Should Select

the Best Children”

**Enabling Technology**

6 Reading: Sven Ove Hansson, “The Ethics of Enabling Technology”

11 Reading: No new readings; finish Paper #2

In-class documentary: *Superhuman: Spare Parts* (BBC, 2000)

**Paper #2 due on Canvas by midnight**

**Biomedicine: Do we own our cells?**

13 Readings: Jasanoff, Chapter 7: “Whose Knowledge, Whose Property?” in *EoI*

18 Readings: Joanna Moorhead, “Henrietta Lacks: the Mother of Modern

Medicine”

In-class documentary: *The Way of All Flesh* (BBC, 1998)

**Unit Five: New Frontiers and Growing Fields**

**Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO’s)**

20 Readings: Gary Comstock, “Ethics and Genetically Modified Foods.”

**Nanotechnology**

21 Readings: Joseph C. Pitt, “Anticipating the Unknown: The Ethics of

Nanotechnology”

23 Reading: Armin Grunwald, “Nanotechnology — a New Field of Ethical

Inquiry?”

**Submit external term paper source(s) for approval**

**Virtual Reality and Hyper-realism in Gaming**

Apr 4 Reading: Robert Nozick, “The Experience Machine” excerpt

Optional further reading: Michael Madary and Thomas Metzinger, “Real

Virtuality: A Code of Ethical Conduct. Recommendations for

Good Scientific Practice and the Consumers of VR-

Technology”

11 Reading: Monique Wonderly, “Video Games and Ethics”

18 Reading: No new reading; work on term paper drafts

**In-class Term Paper Peer Review workshop**

25 **Final Class meeting: Recap and Reflections on Further Questions**

Reading: Jasanoff, Chapter 9: “Invention for the People” in *EoI*

Course Readings

Sheila Jasanoff (2016). *The Ethics of Invention: Technology and the Human Future*. W. W. Norton &

Company.

James Moor (1985). “What is Computer Ethics?” *Metaphilosophy*, 16(4): 266–75.

Joseph C. Pitt (2011). “Anticipating the Unknown: The Ethics of Nanotechnology” in *Doing*

*Philosophy of Technology: Essays in a Pragmatist Spirit*. Springer.

Joseph C. Pitt (2017). “‘Friend’ versus ‘Electronic Friend,’” in *Social Systems Engineering: The*

*Design of Complexity.* Wiley.

Armin Grunwald (2005). “Nanotechnology — a New Field of Ethical Inquiry?” *Science and*

*Engineering Ethics* 11 (2): 187-201.

John Danaher (forthcoming). “Toward an Ethics of AI Assistants: an Initial Framework.”

*Philosophy and Technology*: 1-25.

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Sample Class Exercise

from P-140 Climate Ethics

**Model Climate Forum**

**Assignment:**

This forum will weigh the moral acceptability of different approaches to climate change mitigation. You will divide into 5 groups, each representing a societal position. Your groups will research the plausible ethical interests of your position, identifying proposals you find acceptable, acceptable with caveats, and unacceptable.

We will then convene a climate forum, wherein each group will present their proposals, identify the moral considerations they invoked to reach them, and evaluate each other’s proposals.

**Objective:**

Reach a mutually beneficial agreement regarding acceptable and reasonably rejectable climate mitigation practices.

**Time:** 2.5 hours

**Groups:**

**Group 1: The Policy Makers**

Your group represents government officials at the local, state, and federal level attempting to enact effective climate policies.

Wants

(1) reduce carbon emissions;

(2) promote renewable energy;

(3) reinforce vulnerable infrastructure

(4) provide support for unsalvageable or endangered communities

Want to Avoid

(1) economic collapse or instability

(2) mass public rejection of policies

(3) unmitigated sea level rise and drought conditions

Note: You do not have unlimited funds. You have to prioritize initiatives.

Note also: you are elected officials. Mass public rejection will terminate your ability to make more policies.

**Group #2: Seminole and Miccosukee Native Tribes in Southern Florida**

Your tribes inhabit the areas in and surrounding Everglades National Park, Florida. Your land is critically endangered by sea level rise.

Wants

(1) Immediate and drastic reduction in carbon emissions

(2) monetary and otherwise support for **inevitable** displacement of large percentage of population

Wants to Avoid

(1) local economic instability

(2) unmitigated sea level rise

Note: Florida sits on a bed of limestone. Sea walls and anti-erosion efforts will not stop flooding.

Note also: the Seminole Tribe acquires the majority of its revenue through local business endeavors.

**Group #3: Southern Louisiana**

Your group is composed of the residents living in the southern part of Louisiana.

Wants

(1) Immediate and drastic reduction in carbon emissions

(2) monetary and otherwise support for **probable** displacement of large percentage of population

(3) infrastructure improvement for vulnerable land and shorelines

Wants to Avoid

(1) local economic instability

(2) unmitigated sea level rise

(3) locally rising temperatures

Note: Louisiana has some sea wall and levee infrastructure (not nearly enough to stop flooding).

**Group #4: Farmers Association**

Your group is composed of small venture farmers and workers at larger farming companies, primarily in the Midwestern region of the country.

Wants

(1) stable agricultural market

(2) monetary and otherwise support for diminished crop returns

(3) gradual implementation of renewable energy sources

Wants to avoid

(1) local and national economic instability

(2) drought conditions

(3) locally rising temperatures

Note: you export a large volume of product around the country.

Note also: drought or locally high temperatures will diminish your production.

**Group #5: Western State Residents**

Your group is composed of residents living in arid regions on the western side of the country.

Wants

(1) Immediate and drastic reduction in carbon emissions

(2) infrastructure improvement for vulnerable land and forests

(3) drought resistant support measures

Wants to avoid

(1) local economic instability

(2) drought conditions

Note: you live in a region very vulnerable to large scale fire.

Note also: you live far above sea level.