

**SYLLABUS: Fall 1998**  
**CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES**  
**PHILOSOPHY 255**

Stephen Scholz

Class meets Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30 - 1:50pm  
in Mitchell Hall 221

**Office: Humanities Bldg Room 565 (Fifth Floor)**

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**Webpage:** <http://www.unm.edu/~scholz/syllabusF98>

**Office Hours: Tues., Thurs. 2:00 - 3:00pm (and by appointment)**

**Course Description:** Our moral beliefs are among the most basic of the things that make up our identities, they are among our most prized possessions and determine how we live, what we do and how we see ourselves as people, but our moral beliefs vary as much as any beliefs can and where they conflict they can cause bitter disputes. This course will cover a number of interesting and pressing moral problems. The goal is to find the underlying bases of these problems and understand the various points of views regarding them. The moral issues we shall examine are the sorts that provide the content of much of the political and social debate of our times. Undoubtedly each of us has strong opinions about each issue. While it is not the goal of this class to promote any one viewpoint or to change your views, we will closely examine and critically assess our own views as well as opposing viewpoints with the hope of appreciating the depth and complexity of both the problems and our myriad solutions to them.

**Class Format:** The class will consist mostly of in-class discussions on the readings with only minimal lecturing by the professor. There are three main requirements if this sort of class. The first is attendance. You will be evaluated on your class participation, so regular attendance is mandatory. Second is being prepared for the discussion, since there will few if any lectures it is imperative that you do all of the reading on time, before each class. I will call on people randomly to begin and lead discussion each class meeting. Lastly, we shall be dealing with some volatile issues, about which we have strong opinions. For a frank and meaningful discussion about these issues to succeed, we must demonstrate respect and consideration for each others beliefs.

**Required Materials:**

Jeffrey Olen & Vincent Barry, *Applying Ethics*, Wadsworth 1996 [Available in the Bookstore.]

Additional readings to be handed-out by instructor as needed.

**Grading:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Class Participation	30%	Participation will be evaluated based on attendance and the satisfactory completion of the <i>Discussion Starters</i> .
Three Short Papers	10% x 3	Each paper will be typed, double-spaced. Optional rewrites will be allowed for all short papers. Topics will be suggested by the instructor or students may suggest their own, subject to approval by the instructor.
Final Paper: 6-8pgs	40%	No rewrites can be accepted. Rough drafts will be read if presented one week before final paper is due.
Total	100%	

**Grade Policy:** Late papers will be assessed a penalty of one grade for each day late (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) unless excused by instructor. All grades can be appealed in writing no more than one week after receiving the mark.

**Discussion Starters:** Before each class day students will prepare a short (3-4 sentences) paragraph, which he or she can begin a discussion regarding the day's assigned reading or subject matter. The Starter may be an informed question, a comment, or elucidation of the reading materials. The Starters are mandatory but may be made up for excused (only) absences.

**Schedule** (subject to change)

<b>Week</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Week 1	Introduction, Methodology	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 1 (up to Moral Virtue), Chapter 2 (all)
Week 2	Moral Basics	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 1 (all)
Week 3	Sexual Morality	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 3 <i>Introduction, Plain Sex</i>
Week 4	Sexual Morality <b>1st paper due</b>	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 3 <i>Between Consenting Adults, Why Homosexuality is Abnormal, Homosexuality and Nature, Case Presentations</i>
Week 5	Abortion	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 5, <i>Introduction, An Almost Absolute Value in History, A Defense of Abortion</i>
Week 6	Abortion	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 5 <i>On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion, Virtue Theory and Abortion, Case Presentations</i>
Week 7	Capital Punishment	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 7 <i>Gregg vs. Georgia, On Deterrence and the Death Penalty</i>
Week 8	Capital Punishment <b>2nd Paper Due</b>	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 7 <i>Capital Punishment and Social Defense, Case Presentations</i>
Week 9	Social Justice/Welfare	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 8 <i>Introduction, What Libertarianism Is, The Right to Eat and the Duty to Work,</i>
Week 10	Social Justice/Welfare	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 8 <i>Radical Egalitarianism, Choosing a Future, Case Presentations</i>
Week 11	Affirmative Action	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 9 <i>Introduction, The Justification of Reverse Discrimination, Reverse Discrimination and Preferential Treatment</i>
Week 12	Affirmative Action <b>3rd Paper Due</b>	<i>Applying Ethics</i> : Chapter 9 <i>Reverse Discrimination Is Unjustified, Case Presentations</i>
Week 13	Elective Subject ( <i>ex. Cloning, Censored Media</i> )	<i>Class members determine the elective subject from a list of approved topics. Readings typical come from outside sources.</i>
Week 14	Elective Subject ( <i>ex. Cloning, Censored Media</i> )	<i>We read articles from Congressional reports and recent scientific journals for the Cloning subject. Chomsky and Sobel and articles from FAIR and AIM.</i>
Week 15	<b>Final Paper Due</b>	