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*Discord and Unity:  
Engaging Contemporary World  
through Ethics and Philosophy*

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**Prerequisite / Co-requisite:**

None

**Description:**

The course discusses important moral, social, and political dilemmas of today and places them in the categories of debates in contemporary philosophy and ethics. We will focus on ongoing public deliberations related to such issues as: the condition and future of democracy, rising challenges of bioethics, problems of social justice, the changing position of the state and citizenship in the globalizing world, the role of language as a means to understanding social reality, or the challenges of multiculturalism to classical models of rationality, with the goal of helping students to productively discuss these dilemmas through the application of philosophical and ethical concepts.

Essential to our pedagogical approach is the understanding of philosophy and ethics as permeated by discord and unity. While striving for finding unity in variety, and harmony in diversity, philosophy has been defined by internal discord that has generated intellectual categories to which we will introduce our students, including: Consent vs. Agonism; Normativity vs. Responsibility; Liberty vs. Equality; Minimal vs. Welfare State; Cosmopolitanism vs. Patriotism; Representation vs. Discourse; Relativism vs. Universalism; Reason vs. Commitment. By showing how internal tensions in scholarship have been translated into generative categories that propel intellectual debates, we are hoping to help students learn how to engage in democratic argumentation on issues that have been a source of conflict in contemporary politics and societies. The course thus aims to prepare students for deliberative and critical understanding of moral and political ideas present in contemporary life, while developing a civic attitude based on the responsibility and understanding of the tensions of diversity and unity in the world today.

**Learning Outcomes\* (definition and examples at end of form):****After taking this course, the students will be able to:**

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- understand the importance of reflexive and critical approach in everyday life as a condition of democratic freedom
- characterize the basic assumptions of ethical and philosophical conceptions discussed in the seminar, and use them in everyday life
- diagnose and take a position on ethical, existential, and political dilemmas using the concepts and arguments learned in the seminar
- adopt open attitude towards other ethical, religious, and cultural world-views and engage in democratic deliberations with them

**Bibliography/ Texts / Supplies – Required:**

- 1) Appiah, K.A., *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2006;
- 2) Singer, P., *Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Values*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, pp. 137, 18722;
- 3) Searle, J., *Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World*, New York: Basic Books, 1999, pp. 111-34;
- 4) Baggini, J., *The Pig That Wants to Be Eaten: 100 Experiments for the Armchair Philosopher*, New York: A Plume Book, 2006, pp. 67-70;
- 5) Gaus, G.F., *Political Concepts And Political Theories*, Oxford: Westview Press, 2000, pp. 722;
- 6) Baggini, J., Fosl, P.S., *The Philosopher's Toolkit. A Compendium of Philosophical Concepts and Methods*, Wiley-Blackwell: Oxford, 2010, pp. 17681;
- 7) Chantal Mouffe, 'Politics and Passions', *Ethical Perspectives*, 2000, 2-3, pp. 146-50.
- 8) Rachel Shteir, 'Taking Beauty's Measure', *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 11, 2011;
- 9) Chmielewski, A., 'Duty and Beauty. Evolutionary Ethics in Relation to the Darwinian Aesthetics', *Studia Philosophica Wratislaviensia*, Wrocław 2012, pp. 252-65;
- 10) Taylor, Ch., 'Cross-Purposes: The liberal–communitarian debate', in: Derek Matravers, Jonathan Pike (eds.), *Debates in contemporary political philosophy*, Routledge 2003;
- 11) Chmielewski, A., 'The Enlightenment's Concept of the Individual and its Contemporary Criticism', *Polish Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 1, No. 2. 2007, pp. 41-59;
- 12) Shusterman, R., 'Fallibilism and Faith', *Common Knowledge*, 13, 2-3
- 13) Vattimo, G., 'A Dictatorship of relativism?', *Common Knowledge* 13, 2-3, Duke University Press 2007;
- 14) Quinn, Ph.L., Religion and Politics, in: William E. Mann (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford 2005, pp. 305-28;
- 15) Chmielewski, A., 'Faith and the Limits of Fallibilism', in: Dorota Koczanowicz, Wojciech Małeckie (eds.), *Shusterman's Pragmatism. Between Literature and Somaesthetics*, Rodopi, Amsterdam 2012, pp. 115-27;
- 16) MacIntyre, A., 'Is Patriotism a Virtue?', in: Derek Matravers, Jonathan Pike (eds.), *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy*, London–New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 286-300;

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- 17) Nussbaum, M., 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism', in: Joshua Cohen (ed.), *For Love of Country*, London: Beacon Press, 1996, pp. 2-20;

**Bibliography/ Texts / Supplies– Additional:**

- 1) Nussbaum, M.C., *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 1–49.
- 2) Said, E.W., Walzer, M., *An Exchange: Exodus and Revolution, Grand Street*, 1986, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 252–9.
- 3) Mouffe, Ch., "Wittgenstein and the Ethos of Democracy", in Ch. Mouffe, L. Nagl (ed.), *The Legacy of Wittgenstein: Pragmatism or Deconstruction*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001, pp. 131–8.
- 4) Michalski, K. (ed.), *Religion in the New Europe*, New York–Budapest: CEU Press, 2006.
- 5) Taylor, Ch., "Theories of Meaning", in *Philosophical Papers*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 248–92.
- 6) Michel Foucault, 'What is Critique', in J. Schmidt (ed.), *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth century answers to twentieth century questions*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- 7) Sluga, H., *Wittgenstein*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, ch. 4.

**Requirements:**

Students are required to read the assigned texts and actively participate in class discussions. Final papers (15 pages, double-spaced for undergraduate students, 25 pages for graduate students) will build on course material (readings, discussions), and specific topics will be developed in consultation with instructors during the course.

**Grading:**

Participation in discussion – 40 percent  
 Interim written essay exam (choice of 3 topics) - 20 percent  
 Final paper – 40 percent

**Course Specific Policies on attendance, late work, make up work, examinations if outside normal class time, etc.:**

Final papers must be delivered by the program end date.

**Additional Information:**

The reader with suggested readings will be delivered in an electronic form 1 month before the course starts.

**Academic Integrity**

The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams

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and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort.

For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

**Disability-Related Accommodations**

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services(ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

**Religious Observances Policy**

SU religious observances policy, found at [http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp\\_ben/religious\\_observance.htm](http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm), recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to are religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through **MySlice/StudentServices/Enrollment/MyReligiousObservances** from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.

[Add course specific language as appropriate here about how and when academic requirements will be made up.]

Enter week/ lecture, topic for the week/lecture, and required reading in the appropriate columns below. Use the Tab key to move around in the table. To insert rows, click on the table, the **Table** menu appears, highlight **Insert** and select the action you want. To delete rows, highlight the rows you want to delete, right click and select **Delete** and then on the **Table** menu, point to **Delete** and click on **Rows**.

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Week/Lecture	Topic	Required Reading and Assignment
<p>Week 1 Introductory meeting</p>	<p>1. Discussing class program. 2. Discord and unity in philosophy. 3. Workshop - Facts and Fiction - student debate on a criminal case of a local writer-philosopher from Wroclaw accused for a murder. 2. Facts and interpretation of facts - the question of objectivity.</p>	<p>1. David Grann, 'True crime. A postmodern murder mystery', <i>The New Yorker</i>, February 8, 2008. 2. Watching the documentary movie by Andrea Vogt, <i>Crime: Crossing the Line</i>, 2011. 3. Julian Baggini, Peter S. Fosl, <i>The Philosopher's Toolkit</i>, Wiley-Blackwell: Oxford, 2010, pp. 176-181 (chs. 'Objective/subjective', 'Realist/non-realist').</p>
<p>Week 2 Relativism and Foundationalism</p>	<p>1. Relativist and dogmatic accounts of knowledge. 2. Relativism and foundationalism in politics.</p>	<p>1. Richard Shusterman, 'Fallibilism and Faith', <i>Common Knowledge</i>, 13, 2-3; 2. Gianni Vattimo, 'A Dictatorship of relativism?', <i>Common Knowledge</i> 13, 2-3, Duke University Press 2007;</p>
<p>Week 3 Language and social world</p>	<p>1. Classical view on language – representation. 2. Language game as a form of life: linguistic construction of social reality.</p>	<p>1. Julian Baggini, <i>The Pig That Wants to Be Eaten</i>, New York: A Plume Book, 2006, pp. 67-70 (ch. 'The beetle in the box'). 2. Gerald F. Gaus, <i>Political Concepts And Political Theories</i>, Oxford: Westview Press, 2000, pp. 7-22 (chs. 'Words, Definitions, and Things', 'Wittgenstein's Later analysis', 'Wittgenstein and Conceptual Investigations'). 3. John Searle, <i>Mind, Language and Society</i>, New York: Basic Books, 1999, pp. 111-34.</p>
<p>Week 4 Banality of evil?</p>	<p>1. Evil in philosophy – from St. Augustine to Nietzsche. 2. Understanding evil after Auschwitz.</p>	<p>1. Watching the movie by Roman Polanski, <i>The Pianist</i> (2002) and short interview with the author.</p>

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<p>Week 5 Between life and death</p>	<p>1. Classical and modern definitions of death. 2. Bioethics and 'traditional' ethics.</p>	<p>2. Richard Bernstein, <i>Radical Evil</i>, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, pp. 205-224 (ch. 'Arendt: Radicality of Evil and Banality of Evil').</p> <p>1. Peter Singer, <i>Rethinking Life and Death</i>, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, pp. 1-37, 187-222.</p> <p>2. Watching and discussing short interview with Peter Singer from a documentary film by Astra Taylor, <i>Examined Life</i> (2008).</p>
<p>Week 6 Consent and disagreement in politics</p>	<p>1. Contractual theory of society. 2. Agonism and democracy.</p>	<p>1. Chantal Mouffe, 'Politics and Passions', <i>Ethical Perspectives</i>, 2000, 2-3, pp. 146-150.</p> <p>2. Michael Walzer, <i>Politics and Passion</i>, Yale University Press, 2004, pp. 1-20 ('Involuntary Association').</p>
<p>Week 7 Political Aesthetics</p>	<p>1. Beauty and duty. 2. Elements of political aesthetics.</p>	<p>1. Rachel Shteir, 'Taking Beauty's Measure', <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i>, December 11, 2011;</p> <p>2. Adam Chmielewski, 'Duty and Beauty. Evolutionary Ethics in Relation to the Darwinian Aesthetics', <i>Studia Philosophica Wratislaviensia</i>, Wrocław 2012, pp. 252-265;</p>
<p>Week 8 The Individual and the Community</p>	<p>1. Liberal-communitarian debate. 2. Contemporary concepts of the individual.</p>	<p>1. Charles Taylor, 'Cross-Purposes: The liberal-communitarian debate', in: Derek Matravers, Jonathan Pike (eds.), <i>Debates in contemporary political philosophy</i>, Routledge 2003;</p>

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<p>Week 9 Religion and the State</p>	<p>1. Faith and knowledge. 2. Religion and politics.</p>	<p>2. Adam Chmielewski, 'The Enlightenment's Concept of the Individual and its Contemporary Criticism', <i>Polish Journal of Philosophy</i>, Vol. 1, No. 2. 2007, pp. 41-59; 1. Philip L. Quinn, 'Religion and Politics', in: William E. Mann (ed.), <i>The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Religion</i>, Oxford 2005, pp. 305-328; 2. Adam Chmielewski, 'Faith and the Limits of Fallibilism', in: <i>Shusterman's Pragmatism. Between Literature and Somaesthetics</i>, Dorota Koczanowicz, Wojciech Mańecki (eds.), Rodopi, Amsterdam 2012, pp. 115-127;</p>
<p>Week 10 Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism</p>	<p>1. Universalism and particularism of moral values. 2. Citizenship in a globalized world: patriotism vs. cosmopolitanism.</p>	<p>1. Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Is Patriotism a Virtue?', in: Derek Matravers, Jonathan Pike (eds.), <i>Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy</i>, London□New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 286-300; 2. Martha Nussbaum, 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism', in: Joshua Cohen (ed.), <i>For Love of Country</i>, London: Beacon Press, 1996, pp. 2-20;</p>

\*Learning Outcomes definition and examples:

Learning outcomes are statements that specify what learners will know or be able to do as a result of a learning activity or course or program. Learning outcomes help instructors communicate more clearly to students what is expected of them. Outcomes also help instructors develop effective strategies for evaluating student work and learning. Outcomes are usually expressed, using action verbs, as knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes. They should be observable and measurable.

1. You/students will be able to explain the six reasons for conducting a needs assessment.
2. You/students will be able to demonstrate the ability to analyze texts using various critical and theoretical approaches
3. You/students will be able to explain in writing the importance of cultural diversity in the workplace.

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4. You/students will be able to describe, analyze, compare, and contrast socio-cultural data from diverse cultural settings.
5. You/students will be able to apply logical reasoning methods and approaches in constructing arguments and positions.
6. You/students will be able to use INFOMAP's MAP routine to draw and print a dot map and then give a verbal description of the pattern revealed.

**Note:** *This template was designed by the College of Arts & Sciences It is designed to help ensure that the proposal meets the requirements of the Senate Committee on Curricula.*