

# PHIL 2304: GLOBAL ETHICS

M-W 5:30, Saunders 409

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## COURSE OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT

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The goal of this class is to present issues that matter in the everyday life of 21<sup>st</sup>-century global citizens, including imperialism, oppression, racism, social justice, development, hunger, wealth, war, and human rights.

The general framework of the class is that the world is plagued by deep injustice that requires urgent attention. While we may disagree about which actions to take, it will be assumed that injustice and oppression exist and are morally wrong. The opinion that “the world is just fine as it is” is akin to believing that the world is flat, so it will not receive serious scrutiny. Instead, we will focus on what each of us can do, within our means and without unreasonable personal sacrifice, to redress injustice and help out the cause of fairness.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

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- **10%** *First objective exam.* On scholar. Concerning material from the first three weeks of class.
- **20%** *Second objective exam.* On scholar. Concerning material from the first seven weeks of class.
- **25%** *Group lecture.* 8 groups of 5. Integrates movies, books, readings. 15-minute presentations.
- **25%** *Choice of final.* 15-minute oral exam OR in-class final exam. Decide by April 16.
- **20%** *Participation.* Being there is not enough. Speak often. I call on people if nobody's talking.

## MOVIES

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In class we will watch *The Hunger Games*, *Three Kings*, *Lord of War*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Apocalypto*, *Powaqqatsi*, and some documentaries and TV shows. About half of our class meetings will be spent watching movies.

You will watch *Avatar* on your own time before March 17. It can be checked out from Newman Library (48-hour checkout) or rented or viewed online. I also have additional copies in my office: just ask.

## MOVIE ETIQUETTE

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- No electronic devices are allowed! instead, print the movie handouts from Scholar and take notes on those. Laptops and tablets are allowed on discussion days, but any use unrelated to class is forbidden.
- Food and drinks are allowed, but please leave the room clean.
- Please leave the last row empty, as we will have guests sometimes and they will sit there (as will I).

## READINGS

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We will read two novels (*Things Fall Apart* and *Foundation*), one novella (*Heart of Darkness*), and one philosophy essay (*Cosmopolitanism*). A third novel (*Childhood's End*) is recommended but optional. Daily short readings will be summarized on discussion days by someone I pick at random. Books will be presented by groups.

## ACCOMMODATION

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Please inform me by **January 24** of health concerns and documented physical, mental, or learning disabilities. Please also note that most movies are rated R. If language, sex, violence, and drama disturb you, talk to me.

## VIRGINIA TECH HONOR CODE

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I take the Honor Code very seriously. Suspected violations will be reported to the Honor Court and pursued.

# SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

Global Ethics  
Spring 2014



At left: readings on Scholar due by class time. At right: movies to watch in class.

PART ONE: THE PRESENT			
Freedom and Fairness	Course presentation		W 1/22
	D'Amato: "Basics of morality and justice"	<i>The Hunger Games</i>	M 1/27
	Held, Mayo, O'Neill, Pojman	<i>The Hunger Games</i>	W 1/29
	Hospers, Nielsen	discussion	M 2/3
	Rawls: <i>A Theory of Justice</i>	discussion	W 2/5
Test	<b>OBJECTIVE EXAM #1 (ON SCHOLAR) turn in by Friday at midnight</b>		F 2/7
War	Broder: "Unfinished Mideast revolts"	<i>Three Kings</i>	M 2/10
	Ratner: "Geneva Conventions"	<i>Three Kings</i> + discussion	W 2/12
	Shah: " <u>The arms trade is big business</u> " ☐	<i>Lord of War</i>	M 2/17
	Rosenberg: " <u>The fears of fearless white men</u> " ☐	<i>Lord of War</i> + discussion	W 2/19
	McNamee: " <u>Fiction makes history</u> " ☐	<i>Apocalypse Now</i>	M 2/24
	Syn: " <u>The story in history</u> " ☐	<i>Apocalypse Now</i> + discussion	W 2/26
	Levinson: " <u>Mad, bad, sad</u> " ☐	discussion	M 3/3
	" <u>Soldiers at war</u> " ☐ " <u>Fight or flight</u> " ☐	discussion	W 3/5
Test	<b>OBJECTIVE EXAM #2 (ON SCHOLAR) turn in by Friday at midnight</b>		F 3/7

**SPRING BREAK, MARCH 8-16. WATCH — AVATAR (2009)**  
**READ — Newitz: "When will white people stop making movies like Avatar?" ☐**

PART TWO: THE PAST AND THE FUTURE			
Imperialism	Cole: " <u>The white-savior industrial complex</u> " ☐	<i>Apocalypto</i>	M 3/17
	Simons: " <u>Training with map power</u> " ☐	<i>Apocalypto</i> + discussion	W 3/19
	Conrad: <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (finish book by today)	Groups: <i>Heart of Darkness</i> 1 & 2	M 3/24
	Achebe: <i>Things Fall Apart</i> (finish book by today)	Groups: <i>Things Fall Apart</i> 1 & 2	W 3/26
Global Justice	Nagel: "Poverty and food: why charity is not enough"	discussion	M 3/31
	Pogge: "'Assisting' the global poor" sections 2-3-4	<i>The End of Poverty?</i> + discussion	W 4/2
	Rorty: "Who are we?"	discussion	M 4/7
	LeGuin: "The ones who walk away from Omelas"	<i>The Beast Below</i> + discussion	W 4/9
Violence	" <u>Virginia Tech massacre</u> " ☐	<i>Massacre at Virginia Tech</i>	M 4/14
	Wink: "Facing the myth of redemptive violence"	(final assignment decision due)	W 4/16
The Future	Barber: " <u>Jihad vs. McWorld</u> " ☐	discussion	M 4/21
	Stiglitz: " <u>Of the 1% by the 1% for the 1%</u> " ☐		
	Quiggin: " <u>The golden age</u> " ☐	<i>Zeitgeist: Addendum</i>	W 4/23
	Asimov: <i>Foundation</i> (finish book by today)	Groups: <i>Foundation</i> 1 & 2	M 4/28
	Appiah: <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> (finish book by today)	Groups: <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> 1 & 2	W 4/30
Conclusion	The Truth + final exam review. Ask your last questions about anything at all.		M 5/5
	No class. <b>ORAL EXAMS TODAY THROUGH THURSDAY (IF CHOSEN)</b>		W 5/7
	<b>FINAL EXAM @ 7:00 PM bring blue book; write in pen; no books, notes, or devices</b>		F 5/9