This is an introductory course in moral and political philosophy. It is a great course to take for those of you who have not yet taken a philosophy course, but who are curious about some of the most controversial questions in contemporary moral debate. I have two simple goals for this course. My first aim is to encourage you to think more deeply and critically about some very tough issues, issues that we often speak about casually and without care or precision. I want you to become better thinkers by the end of the class, to replace simple opinion and assertions with reasoned moral arguments. My second goal is to teach you to appreciate the value of conflicting moral viewpoints, to consider views that may be very different from those views that you hold dear. To reach these goals, I need you to do the readings, think about the issues they raise, come to class with a questioning mind, and participate. I will call on you in class, so it is a very good idea to do the readings before each lecture. I will be testing you on both the readings and my lecture material, so it is a very good idea to come to class, even if you dread being called on. I promise you that you will learn something interesting in each class, and you will often learn it from your classmates. We will sometimes have case discussions and debates in class. At any time, though, I encourage you to come to class with questions for discussion.

**Required Text:** John Arthur, *Morality and Moral Controversies: Readings in Moral, Social, and Political Philosophy.*

**Assignments:**

1. **Readings:** The reading assignments listed below should be done before you come to class. Some of these essays are very difficult. I urge you to read them more than once, preferably once before class, and once after we discuss it in lecture. If you need help, please come to my office hours.

2. **Reading Quizzes and Outside Assignments:** I will randomly give you either a reading quiz or an outside assignment at the beginning of 5 classes. The quizzes are very brief and will ask you to give the main claims or position of one of the assigned authors for that day. The take-home assignments will be announced in class and due at the beginning of the next class. I will drop your lowest quiz/assignment grade, so 4 quizzes/assignments will count toward your final grade, for a total of 20 points.

3. **Exams:** You will take three exams, worth 40 points each. I will drop the lowest exam grade, so exams are worth a total of 80 points toward your final grade. The exams will cover the reading and lecture material in the section prior to the exam. All of my lecture content is fair game, and I do not hand out my lecture notes. If you miss a lecture, you need to get the notes from another student in the class. I will give you a study sheet of possible questions for each exam to help focus your studying. Since I let you drop your lowest exam grade, you can choose not to take one exam and so you should not have any reason to take a make-up exam. Exams will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Note that cheating is grounds for failing the exam.
Grading:

5 pop-quizzes or outside assignments @ 5 points each, lowest score dropped = 20 possible points.
3 exams @ 40 points each, lowest score dropped = 80 points.
Total possible points = 100.

Course grades:

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
60-69 = D
Below 60 = F

Reading and Lecture Schedule:

Section 1: What is Morality?

M 1/6  Introduction to the Course
        William Shaw, “Relativism in Ethics”, pp. 81-84
M 1/20  **No Class: MLK Day**

Section 2: Race, Sex and Discrimination

M 2/3  Film and Discussion: American History X
        Film: Harvey Milk
M 2/24  **Exam #1**

Note: 2/26 is the last day to drop with a ‘W’.

Section 3: Animals and Animal Rights


Section 4: Freedom and its Limits

M 3/24  **Exam #2**
M 3/31  **No Class: Spring Break**
Section 5: Life, Death, and Technology

M 4/7  Cruzan, Removing Life Support, pp. 236-242  
Kevorkian Documentary

M 4/14  Richard Brandt, “Defective Newborns”, pp. 253-259  
Case Discussion: End of Life Decisions with Children

Debate on cloning.

M 4/28  **Exam #3**