

RELG 205: Morality, Ethics, and Religion

Summer Session

Dr. Stephanie Mitchem

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*Please note:* The offices of the Department of Religious Studies are in transition and will not be open for, at minimum, the first two weeks of this class. If you need an appointment, please contact me by e mail or phone and we will make arrangements to meet.

### **Bulletin Description**

Values and ethics as developed, contested, and transmitted through a variety of religious practices.

### **Course Overview**

This course offers a critical, praxis-oriented approach to the convergence of religion, values, ethics, and social responsibility. We will examine the social dimensions of moral/ethical practice and consider ways that religion can function to authorize and legitimate certain ethical norms. We will consider ethics and values within our own lives and our decision-making processes in order to identify larger issues. We will consider the application of different religions' theologies on a societal necessity: water.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Discuss values and ethics in society and in various religious configurations;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the different ways that ethical belief and religious practice shapes human attitudes toward values and social responsibility;
- Explain how religious values impact personal decision-making, self-identity, and individual well-being;
- Analyze the influence of religious values upon community ethics and decision-making in contemporary society.

### **Texts: (Required, available in bookstore)**

Christiana Peppard, *Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis*

Peter Singer, *The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas about Living Ethically*

**Starting Norms for the class: (initial list; more may be added the first day)**

- We will fully listen to and respect the experiences and feelings of others.
- We will work together as co-learners.
- We will take care not to impose our views on each other.
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- All students are encouraged to follow the Carolinian Creed (<http://www.sa.sc.edu/CREED/>). This is an honor code. For example “I will practice personal and academic integrity.”
- Finally, also according to the USC Academic Bulletin, “absence from more than 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, is excessive and the instructor may choose to exact a grade penalty for such absences.” (<http://www.sc.edu/bulletin/ugrad/acadregs.html>).

**Assignments and points:**

**20 points:** Group presentation on assigned chapters of Singer. This presentation gives information on the assigned readings: key points, challenging thoughts, questions raised. The presentation should involve each member of the group as you receive individual, not group grades. Presented May 12<sup>th</sup>.

**25 points:** Test on Singer, May 13<sup>th</sup>.

**15 points:** On line research assignments: While Peppard presents a thoroughly Catholic view of water, it is the aim of this class to consider multiple religious traditions. Therefore, each student will look on line for the theological/ethical perspectives on water in one other tradition. Then, bring a single sheet from that page with your name written on the page to turn in on May 20<sup>th</sup>. These multiple traditions will become the focus of our class discussion that day.

**40 points:** Final, May 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Total possible points: 100**

**The grading scale is as follows:**

- 91-100 points A
- 88-90 points B+
- 79-87 points B
- 75-78 points C+
- 65-74 points C
- 61-64 points D+
- 51-60 points D
- 0-50 points F

**Class outline and due dates:**

- 1 Introduction to course; small group assignments; completing My Values (attached)
- 2 Lecture and discussion: ethics and values plus Singer chapters 1 - 2
- 3 Singer chapters 3-6
- 4 Singer chapters 7-9 plus small groups present chapter 10-15
- 5 Test 1
- 6 Lecture and discussion, religions, theology, morality, and ethics; Peppard, chapters 2-3
- 7 Peppard, chapter 5
- 8 Peppard, chapter 7
- 9 Peppard, chapter 8
- 10 On line research assignments due; discussion of world religions and water
- 11 Peppard, chapter 9 and Coda
- 12 Re-thinking ethics
- 13 Final preparation day
- 14 Final