University of Manitoba
Department of Political Studies

POLS -4170: Politics and Ethics
Course Outline 2011-2012

Instructor: Dr. Fiona MacDonald- 224 St John's College (474-7368)
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Format: Seminar

Class Hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-5:20

Class Location: 125 St. Johns

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description:

Politics are, by their very nature, fraught with ethical issues. Should states intervene militarily or otherwise in the affairs of other sovereign states? Is terrorism ever justified? Do affluent nations have an obligation to help poorer ones? All of these are ethical questions. None has an easy answer. Some approaches in political studies (particularly international relations) are primarily concerned with empirical rather than normative questions— with how things are rather than how they ought to be. Yet as more critical theoretical perspectives are gaining ground, this separation is being increasingly challenged and there has been a surge of scholarly interest in ethical questions. In this course, we will engage with much of the normative literature, examining the different theoretical approaches to ethical questions and exploring their implications for contemporary ethical issues. The goal is not to identify "correct" answers to these difficult questions, but rather to understand the debates involved and identify key questions to ask.

Required text:

Brown, Chris. International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993

II Assignments and Grading:

Essay evaluation	10%
Essay prospectus	10%
Research essay	30%

Class participation 10%
Final quiz 20%
Class presentations 20%

Student participation is the key to a successful seminar. In addition to general participation in class discussions and a brief presentation of their final paper (**10%**) students will also be expected to participate in class presentations of the reading material (**10%**). Non-presenting students will also be expected to bring **in 3 typed discussion questions** each week to be submitted to the instructor at the end of each seminar.

There will be one research essay assignment. Students may choose a topic of their liking as long as the topic is approved by the instructor. Essays should be approx. 15-18 pages in length. Written essay proposals should be submitted no later than **February 28** (**10%**). These proposals should include a working thesis and outline as well as a provisional bibliography.

In a class prior to the essay due date each member of the seminar will bring in their essay draft which will be exchanged for critique with another seminar member (exchange scheduled **March 13**). The thoughtful evaluation of a fellow participant's paper is worth **10%** of the final grade. Students are then expected to submit their reviewed paper along with their final essay draft to the instructor with the relevant edits based on their exchange**(March 20).**

N.B. Late papers will be subject to a 5% per day penalty.

Grading scale:

A+	= 90-100 %	(4.5)	Exceptional
A	= 80-89 %	(4.0)	Excellent
B+	= 75-79 %	(3.5)	Very Good
B	= 70-74 %	(3.0)	Good
C+	= 65-69 %	(2.5)	Satisfactory
C	= 60-64 %	(2.0)	Adequate
D	= 50-59 %	(1.0)	Marginal
F	= 0-49 %	(0)	Failure

Students are required by the Department to retain a copy of each assignment submitted to their instructors. Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism, academic dishonesty, academic fraud, cheating and examination impersonation in the University of Manitoba General Calendar.

Topics and Reading List:

N.B. All students in the class are expected to complete *all* of the readings for each week regardless or the presentation schedule.

Jan 10
Course expectations/presentation schedule

Jan 17
Topic 1: Ethics and Political Studies: An introduction

Readings from *Political Theory* , Vol. 30, No. 4, What Is Political Theory? Special Issue: Thirtieth Anniversary, August 2002:

Brown, Wendy. "At the Edge".

Shapiro, Ian. "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do about It".

Grant, Ruth W. "Political Theory, Political Science, and Politics".

Tully, James. "Political Philosophy As a Critical Activity".

Jan 24
Topic 2: Ethics and International Relations, State Sovereignty and Self Determination

Brown, Chris. International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches. Columbia University Press, 1993, Chs. 2-3, 5

Robinson, Fiona. "Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory and International Relations," Alternatives 22:1 (1997): 113-133.

Jan 31
Topic 3: Ethics of Food And Water
Film: TBA (Discussion questions required)

Feb 7
Topic 4: Citizenship and Refugees

Humphrey, Michael. "Refugees: An Endangered Species?" Journal of Sociology 39.1 (2003): 31-43.
Hindess, Barry. "Responsibility for Others in the Modern System of States." Journal of Sociology 39.1 (2003): 23-30.

Feb 14
Topic 5: Humanitarian Intervention I

Film: Shake Hands with the Devil

Feb 21 (READING BREAK)

Feb 28
Topic 6: Humanitarian Intervention II

Smith, Michael J. "Humanitarian Intervention: An Overview of the Ethical Issues." Ethics & International Affairs : A Reader. Ed. Joel H. Rosenthal. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1999. 271-95.

Pasic, Amir, and Thomas G. Weiss. "The Politics of Rescue: Yugoslavia's Wars and the Humanitarian Impulse." Ethics & International Affairs: A Reader. Ed. Joel H. Rosenthal. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1999. 296-333.

*****Essay proposal due*******

March 6
Topic 7: Ethics of War and Torture

Brown, Chris. International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches. Columbia University Press, 1993, Ch. 6.

Seymour M. Hersch, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," The New Yorker. May 10, 2004. Mar. 13: The aftermath of war

Robert E. Williams, Jr. and Dan Caldwell, "Jus Post Bellum: Just War Theory and the Principles of Just Peace," International Studies Perspectives 7 (2006): 309-320.

March 13
Topic 8: Poverty and distributive justice

Brown, Chris. International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches. Columbia University Press, 1993, Ch. 7.

Moore, Mick, and Mark Robinson. "Can Foreign Aid Be Used to Promote Good Government in Developing Countries?" Ethics and International Affairs: A Reader. Ed. Joel H. Rosenthal. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1995. 285-303.

******Second half of this class is designated for essay exchange******

March 20
Topic 9: Corruption and Corporate Ethics

Bukovansky, Mlada. "Corruption is Bad: Normative Dimensions of the Anti-Corruption Movement." ANU Department of International Relations Working Papers WP 2002.5 (2002).

Donaldson, Thomas. "Moral Minimums for Multinationals." Ethics & International Affairs: A Reader. Ed. Joel H. Rosenthal. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University

******Essays due*******

March 27
Topic 10: Ethics after 9/11

Burke, Anthony. "Against the New Internationalism." Ethics and International Affairs 19.2 (2005): 73-89.
Elshtain, Jean Bethke. "Against the New Utopianism." Ethics and International Affairs 19.2 (2005): 91-95.
Burke, Anthony. "For a Cautious Utopianism." Ethics and International Affairs 19.2 (2005): 97-98.

April 3
Final Quiz

*****Potential Essay Topics***:**

Does Quebec have a moral right to statehood?

Should Canada work to abolish certain practices like female genital mutilation and suttee in other countries?

Was the war in Iraq just?

Is it morally acceptable for a government like the US to limit its own people's civil rights in order to combat terrorism?

Who is morally responsible for the torture of Mahar Arar?

Do Canadians have a moral obligation to share their wealth with the world's poor?

Should Canada provide aid to undemocratic states?

Should we buy goods from companies that engage in sweatshop labour practices?