

***ETHICS, AUTHENTICITY,
FREEDOM, AND VOCATION
PHIL 116, SYLLABUS
Requirements and Information
WINTER 2009
Professor Nelson
M W F 10:30***

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY--YOUR INTERESTS WILL BEST BE SERVED BY DOING SO!

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION. Lawrence J. Nelson, Ph.D., J.D., Dept. of Philosophy. Office: Kenna Hall Room 205. SCU office telephone: 408-554-5093. SCU Dept. of Philosophy Admin. Asst. x4093. SCU fax 408-551-1839. Cell: 415-260-9281 (please, **only** if urgent). E-mail: lnelson@scu.edu or ljnelson9@comcast.net. His full CV can be found on the Philosophy Department web site.

TO DELIVER PAPERS, BOOKS, ETC. TO DR. NELSON: Students should place anything for delivery to Dr. Nelson in his mail box located in Kenna 200 inside the Philosophy Department office suite (turn left at the corridor and look for it on your left).

TO COLLECT PAPER, BOOKS, ETC. LEFT BY DR. NELSON FOR YOU: Papers and other things the Professor is leaving for you to collect are found in his file folder in the grey filing cabinet to your right when you enter the Philosophy Department offices.

OFFICE HOURS. M W F 9:30 - 10:20 a.m., TH 10:00-10:30 a.m. and by appointment. Other times are hit-or-miss (**no guaranty** he'll be there or be able to see you!). The Professor will always try to inform you in class and/or via email if he has to cancel or postpone office hours. Please be patient if he is a few minutes late for the beginning of office hours. *Please note: regular office hours end on the last day of class; check with the Professor if you wish to see him during exam week.*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

(1) Have a five minute meeting with the Professor during his office hours or by appointment after class (complete the Student Information Form (on Angel) and bring it with you to this meeting) sometime during the first two weeks of the quarter. THE PROFESSOR IS SERIOUS ABOUT THIS REQUIREMENT.

(2) Read assigned texts and regularly attend class. This course is not composed of lectures; it will be a seminar utilizing discussion and Socratic Q & A.

(3) Make contributions to the class discussion (by answering the Professor's questions, asking your own questions, commenting upon the arguments of other students, actively philosophizing about the assigned texts and subjects, reading your written responses to Focus Prompts [see below]). Participation is expressly required in this class.

(4) Make a substantial (and substantive, i.e., write something that matters) entry at least weekly in your Angel journal. Weekly entries are due at noon Sunday. See below for more about this.

(5) **Writing assignment #1.** Write a 5 page paper (circa 1500 words) reflecting on Lindemann's chapter "The Importance of Who We Are." See below for more about this. *All papers must include a word count!!* **Due Monday 2/2 at the beginning of class.**

(6) **Writing assignment #2.** Revisit, revise, reconsider, and reflect on paper #1 in light of the ideas of Taylor and Ricoeur, and produce a 5 page paper (circa 1500 words). See below for more about this, including an alternative to revising paper #1. *All papers must include a word count!!* **Due Friday 2/27 at the beginning of class.**

(7) **Assignment #3.** Complete a final project. See below for more about this. **Due Thursday 3/19 at 4:00 p.m.**

(8) **For the sake of virtue or extra credit:** view a film related to authenticity, the self, freedom and/or vocation. See below for more about this

JOURNAL. Journal entries should reflect the student's *personal engagement* with the ideas, assumptions, arguments, questions, and claims presented in the readings, class discussions, and other class venues (such as film screenings). The journal is the primary place to express what the course's content means to you as an individual, how it is affecting your thinking/being/feeling. If philosophy is a way of living, then the journal is the place to discuss your way as it relates to the main subjects and themes of the course. Besides the individual student, only the Professor will have access to the journals (they are all password protected), and he will keep their contents confidential (unless you give permission for their release and use). He will read journal entries regularly and may make some comments on them or pose some questions. If you want him to make a response to a particular entry or pose a question, inform him via email. He will be looking for the attention you pay to your journal, your loyalty to it, and the quality of the thoughts, questions, and (even tentative) answers to questions or problems you post there. Your journal number corresponds to your class number.

PAPER #1. Delve into one or some of the main ideas about identity in the Lindemann chapter. Here are some of the Professor's thoughts about the main subjects in this chapter.

For purposes of this course, the characterization question (p. 40) is more important than the reidentification question (although this is important too as it gets into questions about changing identity, altering the self, what is accidental and when is essential to a self, and more). Lindemann is, of course, looking at the question from a feminist point of view and is very interested in gender, but the issues she raises transcend gender and a feminist POV. She says (p. 42) that identities convey a sense of how those who bear them may expect to be treated. How is this expectation conveyed? How can one be sure that the identity one displays will establish the right expectations in others? Calhoun's three categories of identity are worthy of reflection: identity as (1) social category occupied; (2) subjective experience of living a particular identity; (3) a culturally authorized understanding of social difference. It would be interesting to write a paper pushing into Lindemann's 5 aspects of identity, either theoretically or as applied to you: identity as (1) social construction; (2) multiple; (3) relational; (4) often unchosen; and (5) narratively constructed. How are identities damaged? Are there pathological selves, abnormal selves, warped selves? Are there diseases that attack the self? What are necessary identities? Where do they come from? What is the source or sources of this necessity? Do you want or need to construct a counter story for your identity?

PAPER #2. Revise paper #1 in light of the assignments and discussions subsequent to handing it in. Has your thinking changed? Why? Have Taylor and Ricoeur added anything to your understanding of the self/the subject/the Cogito and of freedom? You might add new issues to the paper in addition to modifying old ones. **ALTERNATIVE:** write a 5 page paper on a new subject raised by the readings and discussions. If you choose to do this, **be sure to check in with the Professor** and discuss your topic before you hand the paper in.

FINAL PROJECT. The final project should be a substantial and serious demonstration of your intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and/or personal engagement with the main subjects and themes of the course. What you choose to do and how you choose to do it will be a manifestation of yourself. You may, inter alia, choose to: (1) write a traditional paper; (2) write a story about a self, the self, or about your self that reflects a philosophical understanding of the self; (3) create a video or other work of art that addresses one or more of the main subjects and themes of the course, although the video or other work of art must be accompanied by some kind of substantial paper that helps the viewer understand the philosophical significance of your work; or (4) write an analysis of a film, novel, short story, or set of paintings that addresses one or more of the main subjects and themes of the course. All final projects must show an explicit awareness and grasp of the texts studied in the course and should be personal to one degree or another or reflect your personal understanding of self, freedom, authenticity, responsibility, character, etc.

You must submit a written proposal about the subject and content of your final project to the Professor on or (preferably) before Friday March 6. This proposal must give the Professor an adequate of the nature and scope of the project.

FOCUS PROMPTS. To promote discussion and promote student involvement, each student must bring a single sheet of paper to each class (except 3/6 and 3/13) with a typed response to one Focus Prompt. Only one response is required (but you are encouraged to do more than one as virtuous behavior), and it should not be more than 5 or 6 sentences in length. Indicate which Prompt you are responding to by number and title, but you must choose a different prompt each time you do one within a given week. Three sets of Focus Prompts are provided on Angel; one set is assigned or use each week (see the schedule of classes). The Professor can and will ask students randomly to read their responses. He will collect them at the end of each class—and read them but not return them. Focus Prompt responses are part of your required participation. You may miss two submissions without penalty.

If you miss class or fail to complete the response by class time, you should still try to submit your Focus Prompt response that day (better late than...). A drop box is available on Angel to submit it electronically, but do so no later than 6:00 pm the day it is due (response papers are unacceptable if submitted after this deadline).

FILMS. All students are encouraged to view one film related to authenticity, the self, freedom and/or vocation during the quarter. The Professor has selected a film for screening by the class (*Wit* with Emma Thompson, time & place TBA). The Professor will arrange for other films to be screened if nominated by at least 3 students in the class (who promise to attend the screening and discuss the film for some period of time) with sufficient lead time to secure the film and a screening venue before the end of the quarter. FYI: Professor McCarthy in Religious Studies recently taught the course “Telling Your Story: Discerning Vocation” and included the following

films in his course: *The Graduate* (1967), *L'Enfant* (2005)*, *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), *Tender Mercies* (1983), *The Painted Veil* (2006), *Kolya* (1996)*, *Romero* (1989), *Fight Club* (1999)*, *Dirty Pretty things* (2002), *When Did I See You Hungry?* (2002), *Wings of Desire* (1987), *Blue* (1993), *Water* (2005)*, *Red* (1993). * = recommended by Prof. McCarthy.

GRADE DETERMINATION & WEIGHTING: first paper: 15%; second paper: 25%; journal: 20%; final project: 40%.

Your grade as determined by these 4 measures will be adjusted by the Professor's assessment of the quality and quantity of your class participation, your class attendance (attendance is taken every day), and your overall effort and attitude toward learning the main subjects and themes of this course.

NB! An "F" on the final project **may** result in an "F" for the course regardless of your other grades or any other measure of performance in the course.

PAPER REQUIREMENTS. A page consists of typed, double-spaced copy, using 12 pt. font, on standard size paper (8.5 x 11) with 1.0" margins, excluding footnotes/endnotes (no fewer than about 300 words/page). To document your use of excerpts or ideas from the books, articles, etc. your research uncovered, use **endnotes or footnotes** that indicate author, publication source (book or journal title), year/volume/page # [that is, provide all the information the Professor would need to locate your source]. Include a **list of works cited** at the end of the paper. This list should include all of the books, articles, etc. you consulted, even if you did not quote them in your paper. *You may use any reasonable format* for the endnotes or footnotes, provided that it lists sufficient information that would enable someone to find your references and confirm them. Providing the right information about your sources is important because papers from this class **are subject to review** for citation accuracy. Papers may be submitted to a centralized data base system that assesses plagiarism.¹ Sloppy or dishonest scholarship of any kind is seriously objectionable and subjects the offending student to disciplinary action from the University and the instructor.

All papers must contain a total word count (all words count as 1, except count only 50% of all words within single-spaced quotes). Single space and indent quotes over three lines in length. All papers must have a **title page** containing student's name, class time, and the title of paper. Neither the title page nor the "references" page is to be counted as a "page" for purposes of determining required length. Nothing on the title page or in the references or notes count as "words" for purposes of minimum length. Papers may be submitted via email **only out of dire need** and in Word or WordPerfect format.

Graded papers are distributed in class a reasonable period of time after they are turned in. If you miss that class, they will be available in Prof. Nelson's file folder (described above). The Professor i and other commitments permit. It is very unwise (bordering on the insane) to wait until the last minute to seek comments!!

¹**NB!** By taking this course, you give your permission for your paper to be submitted to and stored in this plagiarism detection system and waive any objections or claims arising out of copyright or common law. Direct any questions about this system to the Professor.

PAPER REWRITES. Rewrites of papers to improve result and/or grade are permitted, but **only** if the grade is a C+ or lower (try hard to do it right the first time). Contact the Professor about your intent to rewrite within 48 hours of receiving your paper after grading; all rewrites are **due no later than 10 days** after the paper was handed back to you (e.g., if a paper is handed back on a Monday, the rewrite must be turned in by 4:00 pm on Wednesday of the next week). The revisions have to truly improve the paper. ***You must hand in the original paper with the revised paper!!*** Reasonable and non-greedy appeals/arguments about grades are accepted, but not favored.

REVIEW THE 2 HANDOUTS ABOUT WRITING PAPERS CAREFULLY! THE CONTENT OF THESE HANDOUTS IS PART OF THIS SYLLABUS. You can find them on Angel under “Key to Professor’s Comments.”

PREFERRED FORMAT FOR PAPERS. The paper should open with an introduction (usually a couple of paragraphs, perhaps several) to the philosophical/ethical issues raised by the subject you have selected including any pertinent facts. Your paper should then state your position on the subject in the form of a thesis statement which (1) precisely states the conclusion you wish to defend and (2) provides a list of the main reasons you will use in your argument to support your conclusion. The paper should then identify and briefly describe the major objections to or problems with (in the range of 1 to 4 in number) your conclusion, and promise to explain why the objections are not persuasive and the problems are not lethal.

Consequently, the paper should have three sections, and parts II and III must have labeled subsections:

I. Introduction and Thesis.

II. Argument.

A. Supporting reason #1.

B. Supporting reason #2.

C. [etc].

III. Response to Objections.

A. Objection #1.

B. Objection #2.

C. [etc.].

READING QUIZZES.

Reading quizzes will not be given unless the Professor determines that they are needed as an incentive to read the assigned texts. Regardless, this is an upper division course: you are expected to come class each day prepared.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR & ELECTRONICS

Please turn **off** or use vibration mode on all cell phones, wireless electronic devices, and pagers. Cell phones and other electronic communication devices, as well as iPods, MP3 players and all other devices that play audio or video, may **NOT** be used at any time or in any manner during class. Use of a cell phone for yakking, texting, or any other purpose (like ordering a pizza) subjects the user to the wrath of the Professor and eternal punishment if God gets around to it. (The Professor sometimes keeps his cell on at all times so that his family and clients can reach him in an emergency. If you believe you have a similar need to be contacted during class time, secure the Professor’s approval **before** leaving cell phones or other communication devices on during class).

Please refrain from doing work for other classes during this class (class time is for philosophy, not for physics, English, or poli sci) and from conducting personal business (like calling your boss or girlfriend, or piercing your navel).

Students who sleep during class are subject to abrupt, even rude, awakening by the Professor. If you need to sleep or work on something else, do it elsewhere. Please refrain from all rude and distracting (to other students and/or the Professor) behaviors in class, especially talking while someone else has the floor and is trying to contribute to our education. No other student behavior incites the Professor's wrath more than this type of rude, disrespectful behavior.

Laptops or other portable computers may **NOT** be used in class **UNLESS** the student has received prior permission from the Professor and signs a Laptop Use agreement (on Angel).

CLASS PARTICIPATION

A university education should not about students sitting passively in class while some professor feeds them "knowledge." To learn more and to be able to think better, students should be active in class, not passive. Being active in class includes preparing for class by reading the assigned material, participating in class discussions by answering the Professor's questions, asking questions of the Professor and other students, and by contributing comments and criticisms of the concepts, ideas, and arguments offered by the assigned texts, other students, and the instructor. Furthermore, students can and should learn from each other, not just from the Professor or the authors of the texts.

Participation affects your grade. One of the skills this class is expressly trying to develop is the ability to publicly articulate your understanding and analysis of a common text, to make an argument verbally, and to answer questions about your position and arguments.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance in class is required because a very important dimension of education in ethics consists of being part of the dialogue and argumentation we routinely engage in during class. We engage in philosophical and legal analysis and argument in class, not just read about it. Moreover, in class you will hear other students talk about their experiences or point of view; you cannot fully appreciate the articulation of either if you aren't there to hear them firsthand. In addition, the Professor introduces new ideas and material during class that may be important parts of the course.

However, having 1 or 2 unexplained absences does not put you in violation of this requirement. Finally, if you don't like coming to class or think it's not worthwhile, the solution here is simple: take a different class. This course is an upper division elective, and **NO ONE** is required to take this particular class from this particular Professor. (Yes, I know you're not in high school anymore. But if you think you will encounter required attendance nowhere else but high school, you're badly mistaken or psychotic.)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONESTY

The University has approved a protocol to respond to allegations of academic dishonesty; it is available online at <http://www.scu.edu/provost/policies/academicpoliciesprocedures.cfm>. The protocol reflects our belief that academic integrity is an essential value in this community of scholars. Online resources for faculty and students regarding academic honesty and integrity can be found at <http://www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity/index.cfm> and <http://www.scu.edu/provost/facultydevelopment/index.cfm>.

The Professor takes an *extremely* dim view of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, cheating on exams, buying papers, or otherwise not doing your own work.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in The Drahmman Center in Benson, room 216, (408) 554-4118; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must provide documentation of a disability to Disability Resources prior to receiving accommodations. Only students with disabilities documented by Disability Resources are (1) given an extended period for the final exam, (3) given any other form of accommodation from the usual requirements of this class, or (2) excused from absences in this class due to physical or mental health, provided that these are not beyond a reasonable number as determined by the Professor to be compatible with attendance and participation meriting credit for the course.

If your Confidential Memo to Instructor from Disabilities Resources indicates that you are entitled to receive an attendance accommodation, you must meet with the Professor within one week of submitting this Memo to him to discuss the meaning of missing class “on occasion” in your particular case. In addition, you must inform him by email or in person of when your absences are due to your documented disability.

EXAM SCHEDULE. There is NO final exam. The final project is due Thursday, 3/19, by 4:00 pm in the Professor’s hand or mail box.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE AND ANGEL PIN

It is a violation of copyright law for a student to make any kind of copy of any document on Angel for any purpose other than her or his personal, academic, not-for-profit use. The Professor offers the copyrighted documents on Angel exclusively as a form of electronic reserve for the convenience of students in the pursuit of their academic efforts and with the express intent that they be used pursuant to the fair use doctrine. Students are strictly forbidden to give the course’s PIN/password to anyone other than a student currently registered for this course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

G = Charles Guignon, *On Being Authentic*

T = Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*

R = Paul Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*

Articles and materials found in ANGEL (<http://angel.scu.edu>) PIN/Password = 116206.

Schedule of Classes

WINTER 2008, MWF 10:30-11:35

- M 1/5 Introduction to course
- W 1/7 **I. Historical introduction to authenticity.** G Preface, 1-25. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- F 1/9 G 26-48. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- M 1/12 G 49-77. **Focus Prompt 2.**
- W 1/14 G 78-106. **Focus Prompt 2.**
- F 1/16 G 107-145. **Focus Prompt 2.**
- M 1/19 *Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday: no class.* RECOMMENDED: start reading Palmer
- W 1/21 G 146-167. **Focus Prompt 3.**
- F 1/23 **A brief feminist interlude.** ANG Lindemann, 39-58. **Focus Prompt 3.**
- M 1/26 **II. Connecting the self and moral vision, identity and the good.** ANG Taylor 3-24. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- W 1/28 ANG Taylor 25-52. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- F 1/30 T 1-23. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- M 2/2 T 25-53. **Focus Prompt 2. First paper due at the beginning of class.**
- W 2/4 T 55-80. **Focus Prompt 2.**
- F 2/6 T 81-121. **Focus Prompt 2.**
- M 2/9 **III. Freedom, choice and the self.** R 3-34. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- W 2/11 R 37-41, 46-77. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- F 2/13 R 77-99, 116-129. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- M 2/16 *President's Day holiday: no class.* RECOMMENDED: read Palmer
- W 2/18 R 137-156, 163-175 [end at last full ¶]. **Focus Prompt 2.**
- F 2/20 R 201-2-5, 341-357, 364-366, 373-381 [end at last full ¶]. **Focus Prompt 2.**
- M 2/23 R 409-415, 417-423, 444-466. **Focus Prompt 2.**

- W 2/25 R 482-486. **Focus Prompt 3.**
- F 2/27 ANG Marsh 92-122. **Focus Prompt 3. Second paper due at the beginning of class.**
- M 3/2 **IV. The other, vocation, and the self.** ANG Spohn 89-112. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- W 3/4 ANG Marsh 123-157. **Focus Prompt 1.**
- F 3/6 Marsh continued. ***Last day to submit Final Project proposal.***
- M 3/9 ANG Palmer. **Focus Prompt 1, 2 or 3.**
- W 3/11 ANG Palmer. **Focus Prompt 1, 2 or 3.**
- F 3/13 **Narrative class evaluations distributed.** More Palmer & final thoughts.
- M 3/16 ***1:30 am - 4:30 pm Scheduled time for the final exam***
- TH 3/19 Final project due by 4:00 pm**

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ANG = ANGEL online course management system