INTRODUCTION

We hear a great deal of talk today about diversity. This can be a thrilling prospect. Or it can become a hollow drumbeat that only moves us to turn off and tune out. One understanding of diversity that is common today—as grounded in moral relativism—can have the effect of undermining our belief in the goodness of mutual toleration. This view asserts that all views of right and wrong, good and bad, noble and base are simply relative to the culture, or to privately held beliefs, so that they cannot be assessed by reason—“It’s all just your opinion, anyway!” In this course we will take a different approach to considering the value of diversity and the virtue of tolerance. The course is designed to give a direct, rational defense of the ideal of liberal toleration—to argue why toleration ought to become (or remain) one of your beliefs. We will strive to do this by reenacting the history of our culture, revisiting some philosophical arguments, in their historical context, in order to strengthen our sense of the value of a heritage of free and open tolerance, as well as to see more clearly what remains to be done, and to thoughtfully consider whether there are or ought to be limits to tolerance.

A central question in our study will be the relationship between toleration and community. We will begin the semester by considering ancient and modern arguments that toleration and openness are harmful things that tend to undermine community, and that real community—a sense of belonging, and comfortable, natural engagement in common life—requires shared moral views and a closed society. Then, through the core of the course we will rehearse the arguments born in the Enlightenment that community is not undermined, but rather strengthened by toleration of differences among views and people. Finally, at the end of the course we will return to weigh again the question of whether some features of modern society that support diversity, at the same time discourage community and active common life.

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<tr>
<th>Unit Reading Responses</th>
<th>30 minutes before first class of the week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning Proposal</td>
<td>February 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral Imagination Essay</td>
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<td>Global Solutions Proposal</td>
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<td>Experiential Learning In-Class</td>
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TEXTS: All of the texts for the class will be found on or through Blackboard.

(I strongly recommend to all college students that you purchase and read The Elements of Style, by Strunk and White. Longman; 4th edition (1999). It remains the best source I know for learning the art of the simple, clear sentence—the secret of the best writing.)
2 - UF 200: Civic and Ethical Foundations

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

UF200 builds on the following three University Learning Outcomes (ULO) as the base assessment for student success in this course: Written Communication (ULO 1), Ethics (ULO 5), and Diversity & Internationalization (ULO 6). More information about each ULO can be found here [http://academics.boisestate.edu/fsp/foundational-studies-program/rubrics/](http://academics.boisestate.edu/fsp/foundational-studies-program/rubrics/).

**After successful completion of the course, students should be able to:**

- Use an awareness of ethical frameworks to analyze ethical issues and produce reasoned evaluations of competing value systems and ethical claims. (ULO 5 Ethics).
- Analyze and articulate one’s own biases, privileges, and limitations and how these inform one’s preparation for living and learning in a diverse world; consider and take appropriate actions to engage positively in civic and community life as a citizen of local, national, and global communities (ULO 6 Diversity and Internationalization).
- Write candid, clear, well-reasoned, revised and polished compositions relevant to understanding our diverse and complex world, employing a clear voice, and appropriately employing and citing sources (ULO 1 Written Communication).

**GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Reading Responses 100
Moral Imagination Essay 100
Experiential Learning/Civic Engagement 100
Research paper 200

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<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
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**Week’s Reading Response (100 pts, 10 each)**

An important aspect of critical thinking is learning to read difficult texts, and a significant portion of your grade in this class will be based on 10 responses to our readings. Ten times over the course of the semester, by 2:30 p.m. on the Monday (or Wednesday, if Monday is a holiday) of the week we will consider that reading, you must submit a 350-500 word response (under the Assignments tab on our Blackboard Site) to the reading questions that introduce the week’s reading in the schedule below. Your response should include quotations of two or three of the most relevant sentences in the piece. Please also include a statement of how the reading(s) in question relate to other topics in the course or the course as a whole.

**Moral Imagination Essay (100 pts)**

*DUE to Bb March 13*

Socrates famously said that an unexamined life is not worth living. The authors we are reading encourage us in various ways to examine what we believe, and for what reasons. In this paper I am asking you to exercise your moral imagination by considering how an important social matter looks from a perspective different from your own. Please choose an issue of justice involving someone very differently located in society from yourself and write a 1200 word (about five page) essay arguing a position that is different from what you have thought or
still do think. (I will not take this to be your “true” position. That is not the point of this exercise.) Push yourself! Choose a circumstance and view very different from your actual circumstance and view. (For example, if you have lived a “sheltered white life,” write from some particular more socially disadvantaged point of view; if you are not Muslim, try to see a feature of American culture as Sayyid Qutb might, and so on.) From that point of view, what do you require in order for justice to be served regarding the problem you’ve chosen? (Please take care to NOT make this a rant against some policy that you believe you would be against from the point of view you have chosen. This should not be an exercise in practicing any kind of bigotry.)

Begin with a clear statement of the problem you are going to discuss, and then briefly articulate your usual position. Then make your argument from the point of view you have chosen. Please write this part in the first person from your chosen point of view. After concluding the main part of the paper (in about four pages), add a discussion of whether and how the exercise has affected your views. (It is legitimate to say that it has not changed your views, but in that case you will be all the more at pains to show by the detail of your considerations that you seriously attempted the exercise.)

**Experiential Learning/Civic Engagement (100 pts)**

We embody or incorporate ethical knowledge by carrying out ethical actions. Please generate and execute an activity that allows you to apply the subject matter of this course in two or more hours of some kind of active involvement with a community other than your family or the members of this course. This could happen as a one-time serve to a civic organization, it may be doing active research through taking pictures, doing interviews, or being a participant observer. It may be working at a community garden or it may be designing an experiment or survey that the students implement. *The possibilities are vast.*

The grading for this activity will be on the following basis:

- Proposal 10 pts – Friday, February 19.
- *Description* of process of securing and carrying out activity 30 pts – Friday, April 1.
- In-class, mind-map group activity 30 pts. Wednesday, April 20.
- Essay evaluating the effect of this project and the class on your self-understanding 30 - Wednesday, May 4, 2:30 p.m..

**ePortfolios**

You will find a new template on Digigation called “My Academic Journey at Boise State.” You may have entries there from UF 100, and from English 102, and other classes. During the semester we will curate this site, and you will be required to add to it your *Global Solutions Research Paper* will also be added to that template, and you should evaluate it according to those same standards before turning it.

**Global Solutions Research Paper (200 pts)**

DUE March 18, April 8, April 27

The largest single portion of the grade for this class will be a 1500 – 1700 word research paper + author’s note. In this project you will tackle an ethical issue with global implications from multiple perspectives, framing the understanding of the complexity of the issue within ethical
frameworks and connecting these considerations up with your understanding of yourself and your role in a wider community.

1. Identify an issue that has ethical and global implications.
2. Identify at least two groups with a vested interest in the issue. Analyze their interest in terms of at least two cultural frameworks (economic, historical, political, social, or religious).
3. Identify at least two specific laws, policies, organizations, persons, or other actions that demonstrate an attempt at addressing the global issue.
4. Identify at least one UDHR article which is applicable for the ways that each group is addressing the issue.

*DUE to Bb Friday, March 18 - 20 pts.* Turn in a proposal which includes the information from 1-4.

5. Analyze the examples in terms of in what ways and how effectively they are addressing the issue. Are they practical, workable, and feasible? Are they having an impact?
6. Provide a complex ethical framework for this solution.

*DUE to Bb Friday, April 8 - 30 pts.* Turn in an annotated bibliography for your paper, including at least five reliable sources. For each entry, provide a brief (50-100 word) annotation, including why you believe this source to be reliable, and characterizing the role you expect it to play in supporting your discussion.

**On Monday, March 28 our class will meet with a librarian who will help us to refine our skills for searching for and evaluating documented evidence. This should prove quite useful for building a strong bibliography and well-documented project.**

*DUE Wednesday, April 27 – 150 pts.* - hard copy to class and an electronic version to Digication. Your paper should be done in one coherent style: I recommend MLA, APA, or CMS. You can find help with each here: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/ Please also append a 200 – 300 word reflection/author’s note (20 pts.) that 1) describes the point of view from which you explored this issue. Was it affected by your social identity, your understanding of reason, or of human nature, or any other consideration? And 2) describes how you see this project relating to your self-understanding and your responsibility to your community?

**Policies**

**Attendance and make-up policy**
Attendance will be taken in every class period. Three unexcused absences are allowed. For the fourth and every subsequent unexcused absence, the student’s course grade will be reduced by 10 points. It will be difficult to succeed on examinations without regular attendance and detailed notes. A missed assignment will receive a grade of zero points. Requests for make-ups due to illness or other emergency must be made to the instructor beforehand, whenever possible.
No-Laptop policy
Unless you confirm a special need with an instructor, no laptops, tablets, smartphones, or similar devices will be allowed in this class unless you confirm a special need through the Disabilities Resource Center. Experience has convinced me that their obvious advantages are outweighed by the costs of distraction to the community when they are misused.

Students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC. Please stop by Administration 114 or call 208-426-1583 to make an appointment with a disability specialist. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit our website at http://drc.boisestate.edu.

- Plagiarism, representing someone else’s work as your own, will not be tolerated. See the statement on Academic Honesty in the Boise State University Undergraduate Catalog.

**COURSE AND READING SCHEDULE**
**BE SURE TO BRING THE READINGS TO CLASS WHenever POSSIBLE**

UNIT ONE: The health of a shared world.

Week 1 Jan. 11, 13 – What may be the benefits of living in a closed, ethically homogeneous society, a community of shared religious and moral beliefs? Are there ever good reasons for intolerance?

READ: Plutarch, “The Life of Lycurgus” (Bb)
Aristotle's Politics, Book One, Chs. 1-2 (Bb)

Week 2 Jan 20 (RR due Wed.) – What demands does life in a polis put on individual behavior? How does this affect what is considered to be excellence or virtue?

READ: Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, Book 1.1-7, B.3.6-9; B.4.3; B.6.1-2, 13; B.8.3; B10.7 (Bb)

Week 3 Jan. 25, 27 – What is necessary for the demands of a religion to make sense? What are the advantages of such a point of view? What are the alternatives?

Sayyid Qutb, Signposts Along the Road (Bb)

UNIT TWO: The Enlightenment: the revolution leading to our ideal of tolerance. The modern liberal state ties people together on the basis of external interests, rather than through shared moral and religious beliefs, promising the possibility of an "open society"--a tolerant, heterogeneous, pluralistic, secularized society.

Week 4 Feb. 1, 3 – What problem with human nature points to society? How does society “solve” that problem? How does this function imply limits on state power?
Week 5 Feb. 8, 10 – According to Montesquieu, how does commerce encourage peaceful coexistence? What are the roles of reason, freedom, and good will in Kant’s ethical thought?
READ: Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, B.XX, Chs.1-4, 6-7, 10-13
Summary of Kantian Morals, secs.8&9  http://www.iep.utm.edu/kantmeta/#H8

Week 6 Feb. 17 (RR due Wed.) – What is the standard of moral behavior for utilitarianism? What is the proper unit of analysis—the individual or the group? Why is consent an important standard of moral behavior? What constitutes consent?
READ: Act and Rule Utilitarianism  http://www.iep.utm.edu/util-a-r/
Cost–benefit analysis  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cost%E2%80%93benefit_analysis
“Why Yale Students Don't Understand Date Rape” http://broadrecognition.com/sex-health/why-yale-students-dont-understand-date-rape/

UNIT THREE: America and the World: The United States as the first country to be founded self-consciously upon liberal principles; comparison with revolutionary France; universalization.

Week 7 Feb. 22, 24 – What is the standard of good government in the American and French Revolutions? What are the goals of each revolution? Which is more successful?
READ: The Declaration of Independence
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html
Federalist 10 and 51(first four paragraphs only)
Burke, from Reflections on the Revolution in France (Bb)
WATCH: French Revolution Crash Course
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lTTvKwCylFY

Week 8 Feb. 29, Mar. 2 – What is Lincoln’s primary goal as president? What place does the emancipation of slaves take in his actions? Why? What is at stake? What will determine whether the Civil War has been a success?
READ: Lincoln: Letter to Horace Greeley,
http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/greeley.htm
Emancipation proclamation,
http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/emancipate.htm
Gettysburg Address,
http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm

Week 9 Mar. 7, 9 – For Kant, what is the difference between public right and the morality we saw in the Week 5 readings above? How does the world move toward public right? How might one see the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as part of that process?
UNIT FOUR: Is Liberty and Justice for ALL? Do modern liberal democracies like the United States live up to this ideal? How have we managed the consequences of slavery and racial prejudice? Have we behaved as if we thought of women as completely equal?


Week 11 Spring Break

Week 12 Mar. 28, 30 (RR due Wed.) – How important is an individual’s sense of wholeness, according to this week’s thinkers? How does racism affect this? What is the role of the commercial character of our society? March 28 – LIBRARY READ: MLK 16 August 1967 http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/628.html Cornel West, Race Matters, Introduction and Ch.1 (Bb) WATCH: Malcolm X https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXo0IgcOHhg WATCH: bell hooks on the corporate manipulation of rap music, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xtoanes_L_g

Week 13 Apr. 4, 6 – According to Held, what is the single most influential story or mode of thinking in contemporary society? What are some of the effects of this upon women (and others)? What is an alternative story? Why is that story legitimate? READ: Virginia Held: “Non-Contractual Society: A Feminist View” (Bb). Half the Sky, Introduction (Bb) WATCH: Adichie Chimamanda http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en#t-10387
Week 14 Apr. 11, 13 – According to Nietzsche, what are some effects of the mode of thinking in market society upon the character of individuals? What is the character of the state and how does it treat individuals? How is the modern system destructive of human integrity of many kinds, according to Shiva?

READ: Nietzsche, Daybreak, #s 173-175, 178-9
http://nietzsche.holtof.com/reader/friedrich-nietzsche/daybreak/aphorism-173-quote_ad79385ad.html (click “next” for other assigned sections)
Vandana Shiva, “Women in Nature” (Bb)

UNIT FIVE: Are the goals of modern society achievable? Are there limits to diversity and openness?

Week 15 – Apr. 18, 20 – Is it possible for the state to remain perfectly morally neutral, according to Sandel? What is principle of modern society, according to Grant? What is the problem with the status of freedom and equality?

READ: Sandel, Moral Argument (Bb)
George Grant, from English Speaking Justice (Bb)

Week 16 – Apr. 25, 27 – How does the greater economy colonize a local economy? What is the parallel to this in terms of morality? What is the misunderstanding of the character of human nature that leads to this bad effect?

READ: Wendell Berry, Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community (Bb)

**I understand a syllabus to be a plan and not a contract. It is subject to change according to changing instructional needs.