

Integrative Studies 250-04: Philosophy and Human Nature
Autumn 2007 MWF 11-12:20 Roush Hall 330
Course Syllabus

Course Overview and Objectives

The philosophical issues and topics that we will investigate all arise out of the Leopold and Loeb case of 1924—perhaps the first “Crime of the Century” of the last century. We shall become very familiar with the facts of the case as the quarter wears on, but here is an all-too-brief summary. Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb were teenage geniuses who grew up in Chicago; both graduated college by the age of 19. In the spring of 1924 they kidnapped and murdered a 14-year-old boy, Bobby Franks, apparently for no other reason than to see if they could commit the perfect crime. The crime drew national headlines, and an all-out investigation by the Chicago police. Leopold and Loeb were soon caught, confessed, and acclaimed attorney Clarence Darrow was brought in to save them from the gallows. His summation was a landmark courtroom speech, and through his mastery of the law and powers of persuasion, Darrow was able to secure sentences of “life plus 99 years” for the two boys. Loeb was stabbed to death in prison about 10 years later, while Leopold, despite his sentence, was paroled in the late 1950s and lived the last decade of his life in Puerto Rico, where he died in 1971.

Though not apparent from that brief summary, the case is rich with philosophy. Among the topics which the case presents for us to discuss are: free will, moral responsibility, the nature of punishment, the death penalty, the morality of homosexuality, and the views of the great 19th-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. We will examine the case not only through an investigation of philosophical texts, but through one novel and three movies. The novel, Jack London’s *The Sea Wolf*, which is heavily influenced by Nietzsche, allegedly inspired Leopold & Loeb to their crime. There are three movies inspired by the case: *Compulsion*, based on a novelization of the case and starring Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock’s classic *Rope* and Tom Kalin’s *Swoon*, a more recent treatment of the story. Moreover, this course will pursue the theme of human nature—the unifying theme of all of your Integrative Studies courses—in a fair bit of detail.

The primary goal of this course is to gain an appreciation of the ideas and arguments which form the content of the readings. But there are four other goals which fall under the heading of “philosophical skills”. As a result of learning the material in this class, you will be able to

1. identify philosophical problems and questions and be able to distinguish them from other sorts of problems and questions;
2. investigate philosophical problems by deploying the method of argumentation
3. reconstruct a philosophical argument from a passage and critique it; and
4. write a persuasive argumentative essay regarding one of the philosophical issues at play in the Leopold and Loeb case.

This is also an Integrative Studies course, and, as in all IS courses, it will help you to:

1. Understand **human nature** and the many facets of our being more fully.
2. Think critically and creatively.
3. Communicate your thoughts accurately and effectively in writing and speaking.
4. Develop competencies in a broad range of disciplines in the liberal arts and sciences.
5. Make integrative connections across disciplines, helping you to engage complex problems with interdisciplinary knowledge.
6. Identify your beliefs and extend your knowledge of ethical and spiritual issues to create a broader understanding and tolerance.

7. Know how to access and evaluate information, resources, and technology and apply them in the appropriate context.

Instructor Information

Professor Andrew P. Mills

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Texts

There are seven required textbooks for this course:

- Jack London, *The Sea Wolf*. Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1981.
- Derk Pereboom, ed., *Free Will*. Hackett Publishing Co., 1997.
- Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large, eds., *The Nietzsche Reader*. Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- Hugo Bedau and Paul Cassell, eds., *Debating the Death Penalty*. Oxford University Press, 2004.
- John Corvino, ed., *Same Sex: Debating the Ethics, Science, and Culture of Homosexuality*. Rowman and Littlefield, 1999.
- Lewis Vaughn, *Writing Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Andrew Mills and Glenna Jackson, eds. *The Integrative Studies Reader*. McGraw-Hill, 2004.

Additional required readings will be available on the course Blackboard page.

Course Requirements

This is a text-based course, and it is imperative that you do the assigned reading (preferably twice) before coming to class each day. If you don't do the reading, you will not learn the material, and you will find the lectures much more difficult to follow. The readings range from fairly easy to quite difficult. In many cases we are reading actual philosophers in the process of doing philosophy, and they are not necessarily writing for introductory audiences. Each of these texts rewards the effort you put into it.

The second imperative is that you have an email account, and regular, reliable access to the internet. Many course materials (including many assigned readings) will be on the Blackboard site, and e-mail is the best and quickest way I know of to communicate with all of you, and for you all to communicate with each other. I will make regular updates to the course website, and you should get in the habit of checking it daily. If you do not have an email account, visit the Information Technology department, and get set up. It is easy to do, and it is free.

Course Assignments

In this course, assignments are handled differently than usual: you select which assignments you wish to complete, with one exception: all students must write a 1500-word argumentative essay on one of the philosophical issues arising out of the Leopold and Loeb case. Other than that, you are free to attempt whichever assignments you wish. As you decide which assignments to attempt, bear the following rules in mind:

1. At least 50% of the total points possible for each individual assignment must be earned, otherwise *no* points will be recorded for the assignment
2. Once the due date for the assignment has passed, that assignment will not be accepted.

Exams

1. First Exam A short answer and essay exam covering material from class and from the readings. (200 points possible) DUE DATE: Friday 5 October.
2. Second Exam A short answer and essay exam covering material from class and from the readings. (200 points possible) DUE DATE: Friday 16 November

Small Group Work

3. Study Groups Form a study group (of at least 3 and no more than 5 members) for one or both of the two exams. Study groups will be eligible to receive bonus points on the exam based on the average score of the members of the study group. Groups must be registered with the instructor by the end of Week 3 (for the First Exam) and by the end of Week 9 (for the Second Exam). (30 points possible)
The study group assignment also includes a 750-word paper about the study group's activities which (a) documents what the group did and (b) analyzes how what the group did contributed to the success or failure of the group. (50 points possible for the paper) DUE DATE: 15 October (for the First Exam) and 21 November (for the Second Exam) NOTE: This paper must be completed if exam bonus points are to be awarded.
4. Movie Discussion Form a group (of between 4-7 people) to watch and discuss one of the three movies based on the Leopold and Loeb case (*Compulsion*, *Rope*, and *Swoon*). Write a 750-1000 word report on your discussion of the film. (75 points possible per film, three films maximum) DUE DATE: On or before 2 November.

Essays

5. Final Essay Write a 1500-word argumentative essay regarding one of the philosophical themes arising out of the Leopold and Loeb case. A list of possible topics will be distributed. (300 points possible) DUE DATE: 21 November at 12:30 p.m. THIS IS A REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT—ALL STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE IT. This essay is considered our take-home exam.
6. Essay Draft Submit a draft of the argumentative essay for peer review and comment. Drafts must be at least 1000 words long. Drafts will not be graded, but any draft submitted will receive comments from a student peer and the full points (50 points possible). DUE DATE: 9 November. NOTE: Draft, with peer comments, must be submitted with the Final Essay to receive the full 50 points.
7. Peer Comment Comment on the essay draft by one of the other students in the class. Fill out a peer review form, and return the essay to its author with comments. (50 points per draft, 2 paper drafts maximum) DUE DATE: 16 November.
8. Book Review There are a number of books (and in one case a CD of a musical show!) connected with this case. Read one of them (a list is available on Blackboard) and write a 1000-word essay in which you make the case for including that book (or CD) as a required reading for this course. Explain to the reader why that book should be included in a philosophy course based on the

Leopold and Loeb case, and what philosophical issues that text would address. (100 points possible). DUE DATE: On or before 12 November.

Logs

9. Question Log Submit three questions about the day's reading. There will be an online question submission form. You may submit questions for up to 10 of the readings (150 points possible: 10 submissions @ 15 points each). DUE DATE: 11 p.m. the night before the reading will be discussed in class.
10. Argument Log Find, reconstruct, and critique an argument in the popular press on any of the philosophical themes discussed in this course (Death Penalty, Same-Sex Marriage, Morality of Homosexuality, Responsibility for Behavior, Punishment, God and Morality, Morality of Killing, Free Will). The argument must appear in a magazine, newspaper, or in the blogosphere. It cannot come from any class-related website or anything like Wikipedia, but it must come from the journalistic world, broadly conceived. Submit the original text along with your reconstruction and critique. The same news item may not be submitted by more than three students—once three students turn in a particular item, no one else will get credit for that item. You may submit up to four of these. (100 points possible: 4 submissions @ 25 points each). DUE DATE: On or before 12 November.

Other

11. Digital Movie Make a short (5-7 minute) movie about one of the topics discussed in class. Movies will be shown to the class and class evaluation will be a factor in the grade. You may work in groups of up to 4 people. You may only participate in one movie-making group. (150 points possible). DUE DATE: On or before 12 November
12. Attendance On six unannounced days during the quarter (excluding exam days) attendance will be taken. Anyone present on those days will receive 10 points. (60 points possible)
13. Cultural Events Attend on- or off-campus cultural events and submit a one-page response paper for each. Allowable events: Lectures, gallery talks, plays, musical performances, poetry readings, convocations. In general, anything where it would be appropriate to say that there is an "audience" (as opposed to a "crowd"). Athletic events do not count. For other events, get prior approval from the instructor. Maximum of 4 submissions (60 points possible: 4 submissions @ 15 points each). DUE DATE: Response paper is due at the class session immediately after the event.

Developing a Game Plan for the Course

For the purposes of planning, circle the assignments you are planning to attempt and then calculate how many total points you are attempting. Be realistic both in terms of what assignments you will attempt and how well you think you will do on each assignment. It is highly unlikely that you will get all the points possible for each assignment. Check your total with the point totals needed for each grade. Be sure you are planning to attempt enough assignments to get the grade you desire in this course. You can check Blackboard to see how many points you have accumulated as the course

progresses. Remember, if you don't get at least 50 % of the points possible for any one assignment, you will receive zero points for that assignment. For those assignments with multiple submissions (like the logs) you can submit as many as you like, up to the maximum allowed.

1. First Exam	200 points	
2. Second Exam	200 points	
3a. Study Group Bonus (2 @ 30 points each)	60 points	Need to submit 3b also
3b. Study Group Paper (2 @ 50 points each)	100 points	
4. Movie Chat (3 @ 75 points each)	225 points	
5. Final Essay	300 points	REQUIRED
6. Essay Draft	50 points	
7. Peer Comment	50 points	
8. Book Review	100 points	
9. Question Log (10 @ 15 points each)	150 points	
10. Argument Log (4 @ 25 points each)	100 points	
11. Digital Movie	150 points	
12. Attendance Bonus	60 points	
13. Cultural Events (4 @ 15 points each)	<u>60 points</u>	
	1805 points	TOTAL

Grades

Grades for this course will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	1198 & above	C	943-981
A-	1147-1197	C-	892-942
B+	1109-1146	D+	854-891
B	1071-1108	D	816-853
B-	1020-1070	F	0-815
C+	982-1019		

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

I strongly recommend that you review the College policy on plagiarism and cheating. It can be found in the Campus Life Handbook on pp. 61-2. Plagiarized work, or work which is the product of academic dishonesty, will receive an 'F' (0 points), and will be reported to the Academic Dean's office. You should review this statement, as well as the discussion of plagiarism in *The Blair Handbook* and *The Everyday Writer*. If you can't easily locate the college policy, let me know and I will get you a copy of it.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Readings followed by (Bb) are on Blackboard

WEEK ONE

Sep	10	Introduction to Course
	12	Philosophical Basics
		<i>Read:</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lewis Vaughn, "How to Read Philosophy" and "How to Read an Argument" (Chapters 1 & 2 of <i>Writing Philosophy</i>) Peter Facione, Donald Scherer, and Tomas Attig, "The Starting Point", Sections 1 and 3 (Bb)

14 Punishment*Read:*

- Clarence Darrow, “An Address Delivered to the Prisoners in the Chicago County Jail” (Bb)
- Jim Holt, “Decarcerate?” (Bb)

WEEK TWO**17 Punishment***Read:*

- Karl Menninger, “Therapy, Not Punishment” (Bb)
- Richard Wasserstrom, “Punishment v. Rehabilitation” (Bb)

19 Punishment*Read:*

- Walter Berns, “The Morality of Anger” (Bb)
- C.S. Lewis, “The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment” (Bb)

21 Morality*Read:*

- James Rachels, “Some Basic Points about Arguments” (Bb)
- James Rachels, “Morality and Moral Philosophy” (Bb)

WEEK THREE**24 Morality of Killing***Read:*

- Peter Singer, “What’s Wrong with Killing?” (Bb)

26 Homosexuality*Read:*

- John Corvino, “Why Shouldn’t Tommy and Jim Have Sex? A Defense of Homosexuality” (Reading 1 in Corvino)
- David Bradshaw, “A Reply to Corvino” (Reading 2 in Corvino)

28 Homosexuality*Read:*

- John Finnis, “Law, Morality, and ‘Sexual Orientation’” (Reading 3 in Corvino)
- Andrew Koppleman, “Homosexual Conduct: A Reply to the New Natural Lawyers” (Reading 4 in Corvino)

WEEK FOUR

Oct

1 Homosexuality*Read:*

- The Ramsey Colloquium, “The Homosexual Movement” (Reading 5 in Corvino)
- Thomas Williams, “A Reply to the Ramsey Colloquium” (Reading 6 in Corvino)

3 Homosexuality*Read:*

- Robert H. Knight, “How Domestic Partnerships and ‘Gay Marriage’ Threaten the Family” (Reading 24 in Corvino)
- Jonathan Rauch, “Who Needs Marriage?” (Reading 25 in Corvino)
- Claudia Card, “Against Marriage” (Reading 26 in Corvino)

5 First Exam

WEEK FIVE

- 8 **No Class Today—Columbus Day**
- 10 **Nietzsche**
Read:
- *The Gay Science* §125 (p. 224 in Pearson and Large)
 - Gary Pavela, “A Reflection on the Columbine Report” (Bb)
- 12 **Nietzsche**
Read:
- *Beyond Good and Evil* §260 (pp. 356-8 in Pearson and Large)
 - *On the Genealogy of Morality* §§10-11 (pp. 400-03 in Pearson and Large)
 - Jesus of Nazareth, “The Sermon on the Mount” (Bb)

WEEK SIX

- 15 **Nietzsche**
Read:
- *Twilight of the Idols*: “Morality as Anti-Nature”, “The Four Great Errors”, and “The Improvers of Humanity” (pp. 465-473 in Pearson and Large)
 - *Beyond Good and Evil* §§257, 259, 287 (pp. 354-6, 358-9 in Pearson and Large)
- 17 **Nietzsche**
- *The Gay Science* §§ 4, 283, 290, 341 (pp. 209-10, 229-30, 236 in Pearson and Large)
 - *The Anti-Christ* §§2-7 (pp. 486-89 in Pearson and Large)
- 19 **The Sea-Wolf**
Read:
- Jack London, *The Sea-Wolf*

WEEK SEVEN

- 22 **Free Will & Responsibility**
Read:
- Derk Pereboom, “Introduction” (pp. vii-x in Pereboom)
 - David Hume, from *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Reading 7 in Pereboom)
 - A.J. Ayer, “Freedom and Necessity” (Reading 10 in Pereboom)
- 24 **Free Will & Responsibility**
Read:
- Harry Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person” (Reading 14 in Pereboom)
- 26 **Free Will & Responsibility**
Read:
- P.F. Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment” (Reading 11 in Pereboom)

WEEK EIGHT

- 29 **Free Will & Responsibility**
Read:
- Harry Frankfurt, “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility” (Reading 13 in Pereboom)

31 **Free Will & Responsibility***Read:*

- Roderick Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self” (Reading 12 in Pereboom)

Nov

2 **Free Will & Responsibility***Read:*

- Richard Taylor, “A Contemporary Defense of Free Will” (Bb)

WEEK NINE5 **The Death Penalty***Read:*

- Clarence Darrow, “Is Capital Punishment a Wise Policy?” (Bb)
- Clarence Darrow, “The Futility of the Death Penalty” (Bb)

7 **The Death Penalty***Read:*

- Hugo Bedau, “Capital Punishment” (Bb)
- David Hoekema, “Capital Punishment: The Question of Justification” (Chapter 6, Reading 10 in *Integrative Studies Reader*)

9 **The Death Penalty***Read:*

- Hugo Bedau, “An Abolitionist’s Survey of the Death Penalty in America Today” (in Bedau and Cassell)
- Garry Wills, “The Dramaturgy of Death” (on Blackboard)

WEEK TEN12 **The Death Penalty***Read:*

- Bryan Stevenson, “Close to Death: Reflections on Race and Capital Punishment in America” (in Bedau and Cassell)
- George Ryan, “I Must Act” (in Bedau and Cassell)

14 **The Death Penalty***Read:*

- Louis Pojman, “Why the Death Penalty is Morally Permissible” (in Bedau and Cassell)
- Paul Cassell, “In Defense of the Death Penalty” (in Bedau and Cassell)

16 **Second Exam****EXAM WEEK**21 **Argumentative Essay Due by 12:30 today**