



Facilitators: Maxwell Ronci, Katia Johnstone

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Course Description

The class is a forum for informal debate allowing students the chance to wrestle with the varying viewpoints that pervade our diverse academic community. There will be a pre-planned syllabus listing the various topics to be discussed throughout the course. The first day of class will be spent introducing the class to the course and their first homework assignment—which will be to list three other topics they would like to discuss and any comments or concerns about the current syllabus. Each week there will be a half page write-up on the topic to be discussed for that week, the idea here is to familiarize each student with the topic so as to create more in-depth discourse. At the beginning of each class, there will be a brief powerpoint on the topic to be discussed to further familiarize the class. The class then will reconvene to discuss the topic. There will be a two page paper due three weeks before the last week of instruction on one of the previous topics.

Course Learning Objectives

As the world becomes ever more interconnected through elaborate networking and increasing exposure to media, ideologically contrasting viewpoints are brought together. To better understand and therefore work with these perspectives, it is imperative to understand different viewpoints on both global affairs and human understanding. Berkeley's academic community is a diverse one and sure to produce a wide variety of opinions--it is these opinions that students will be exposed to and as a result will expand their own thinking and understanding of the world. It is our hope that by the end of the course, students will develop a diverse understanding of the world, which will better prepare them for interaction in our ever expanding world.

Supplemental or Recommended Texts

There will be weekly required readings of current events relating to the topic to be discussed that week. We will provide the links to the articles via email.

Evaluation Procedures

Students will be evaluated based on the completion of all but three write-ups, class participation and their final paper. Complete write-ups are thought out, at least half a page and explain one or more perspectives on the topic. Students are also encouraged to include their own opinions in the write up. Class participation means being an active, vocal and most importantly respectful participant of the other members of your group.

Additional Policies

Make-up work will be accepted no later than the following week. Students can miss class up to a total of three times after which they will be failed. As with any debate, certain subjects will evoke particularly intense reactions in some people. With this in mind students need to be respectful of other's opinions, hear people out and be mindful of their own comments. Any student found debasing any group, either represented in the class or in general, will be asked to leave class for that day and will have one excuse from class taken--if the student has already missed three classes this will result in a fail.

week	date	topic	reading due	assignments due
1	1/25 - 1/29	Introduction	None	None
2	2/1 - 2/5	Human Nature - Are We Born With it or is it Learned?	TBA	3 Topics
3	2/8 - 2/12	Science and Ethics (Eugenics)	TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
4	2/15 - 2/19	Role of Religion in Governing Societies – Good or Bad	TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
5	2/22 - 2/27	Racism/ Social Divides – Inherent or Socially Constructed	TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
6	3/1 - 3/5	Gender – Are There Inherent Inequalities?	TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
7	3/8 - 3/12	Isolationist vs. Friendly Neighbor*	TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
8	3/15 - 3/19	Abortion – pro choice vs. pro life	TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
9	3/29 - 4/2	The After Live – What Does it Mean?	TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
10	4/5 - 4/9	Death Penalty	TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
11	4/12 - 4/16	Drugs - Prescription vs. Illegal	TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
12	4/19 - 4/23	Human Nature - Good or Evil?	None	2 Page Topic Paper
13	4/26 - 4/30		TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up
14	5/3 - 5/7		TBA	1/2 Page Write-Up