Ethics & Star Trek – FYS

**Time:** T/TR 3:30 – 4:45  
**Location:** Meredith 237  
**Instructor:** Jerome Hilscher, PhD  
**Office:** Currently – Carnegie Hall Room 1 (this is subject to change)  
**Phone:** 515-271-2415  
**Cell:** 515-554-7148 (text capable, see communication protocols below)  
**Social Media:** Google + Jerome.Hilscher@gmail.com Facebook Jerome.hilscher@drake.edu Twitter @jhilscher  
**e-mail:** Jerome.hilscher@drake.edu **  
**Office Hours:**  
- Tuesday and Thursday 2:00 – 3:15 PM  
- Friday 9:00 – 10:30 AM  
- Some Saturday’s by appointment (In office only)  
- M-F and by appointment - Virtually via http://connect.drake.edu/jh/  

*All aspects of this syllabus are subject to change to better meet student needs or add clarity.*

**Course Description:**  
Students will explore ethical issues using the backdrop of various Star Trek episodes as an impetus for discussion. By using a fictional setting students will be able to engage with difficult ethical situations, employ critical thinking skills, while also addressing highly charged issues in an educated manner. Students will be required to explore logical fallacies, persuasive writing, and research. Students will be required to be discussion leaders, argue both sides of an issue, and defend positions based on fact-based analysis. This course will be writing intensive. Students will gain experience and competencies in the following areas:  
- Understanding of logical fallacies, and their impact on deconstructing persuasive writing.  
- Understanding of how to conduct research  
- Problem solving and critical thinking skills  
- Ability synthesize multiple data into a coherent written work

**Course Objectives:**

**Students who successfully complete this course will:**  
- Identify logical fallacies  
- Integrate research into writing assignments  
- Understand the importance of examining both sides of a position  
- Create and participate in leading classroom discussions  
- Engage in research and collaboration using appropriate technology  
- Critically examine the differing ways in which actions can be analyzed
**Materials/Resources:**

*Learning Management System:*

Most materials, readings, and assignments will be available through Drake University’s blackboard system. The course is entitled **201510-FYS-027-3437: Ethics and Star Trek**

*Readings & Resources:*

Required textbook:  *The Ethics of Star Trek.*

Required ebooks:


Other readings, some videos, and additional resources will be provided during the course and placed within the LMS. Readings may consist of blog entries, book chapters, journal articles, news articles, videos, or web presentations.

**Communication Protocols and Policies**

I will respond to email between the hours of 9 AM and 4 PM. If you email me and do not receive a response by 4 PM, then you most likely will not get a response until the next day. If you do get a response after 4 PM please note that is not the normal course of action.

Feel free to tweet @ me (@jhilscher) but do not expect an instantaneous response. Also, please avoid misleading hashtags (#emergency, #direemergency, #imminentfailure) unless you truly are in dire peril. (Please note: dire peril is a level rarely achieved, and over-sleeping, being ill, or being unable to access technology do not constitute dire emergencies)

(Please note that posting within the Facebook group entitled Hilscher – FYS will most likely get you a response in the quickest fashion, though it may not be from me. I would encourage you to use each other as a resource.)

If all else fails please feel free to text my cell phone number. I dislike talking on the phone unless it is necessary, but I am comfortable with texting. In lieu of phone calls I would prefer if you would just send me a relevant text message. Please text me using the following protocol: Hi this is <NAME> from <COURSE> and <message>.

We are all adults in this course, and I expect communications to be courteous, professional, and useful. I do not save your phone numbers when you text me, I do not purposefully hide from your messages, and I will try to respond quickly (though it just may be a note to state that I will respond in more detail later).
Citation

Please note, I expect you to cite all of your material. Please make sure you have accurate (and working) web links, proper APA citations, and acknowledgement of other’s ideas. I consider lacking citations or acknowledgements to be academically dishonest.

Please utilize: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Student accommodations:
If you have a documented disability that may affect your ability to participate fully in the course or if you require special accommodations, you are encouraged to speak with the instructor so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. You may also contact Disability Services at 271-1835 and they will work with the instructor to meet accommodations.

Academic Dishonesty

Any breach of the academic honesty standards (e.g. plagiarism or cheating) will result, minimally, in failing the assignment. See Drake University’s Policies here: https://www.drake.edu/dos/handbook/academic/

PLEASE NOTE: See me with any questions prior to submitting your work. You will not be given the benefit of doubt after the offense has occurred.

Helpful Tips:
- You will be assigned group work in class, feel free to extend those groups outside of the classroom to help each other.
- Proof read everything before final submission
- Ask questions before submitting an assignment
- Do not fall behind on the weekly assignments

Expectations and Major Assignments:

Below are descriptions of some of the major assignments. I have included some high-level expectations for these assignments as well. These assignments are not the only assignments, there will be additional assignments including, but not limited to, reflective writings, participation (face to face and virtual), locating resources, and reading checks.

*Research Paper

A major research assignment will be completed by each student, which will be conducted in stages, using multiple data sources. Students will be responsible for selecting one of the historical philosophers who has contributed to the field of ethical studies. The research report will focus on the philosopher, their history, and their impact on the modern world.
Students will begin work on the project and be required to turn in materials in a staged manner in order to ensure that students both stay on task, and understand the needs of a college student given a major research assignment.

**Writing Assignments**

You will be assigned 7 other major writing assignments. These assignments will be writings based upon readings and episodes of Star Trek. I will attempt to pick episodes that are easily available via Hulu (or other free sites), **but you will have to watch episodes via Netflix (or another provider). I will schedule times that we can meet as a class to watch them.**

Writing is a process, one that you will have to develop, and your writing will be graded both on the process of writing and the final product. Each of your assignments will be completed in stages. You will be responsible for helping your peers improve their writings, and, conversely, they will help you improve your writing skills. It is imperative you attend course sessions.

**Other Assignments**

–Students will have to complete some of the following projects:

- Reflections on:
  - readings and current issues
  - in-class discussions
- Online Discussion Boards (in the LMS or on Facebook FYS group)
- Creating a multi-media assignment that synthesizes course goals and course materials to demonstrate understanding of logical fallacies
- Creating or adding writings to on the Blackboard course:
  - Links to or pictures/videos of artifacts that are useful to course peers.
  - Rationale for how understanding ethics will impact their future career(s)
  - Discuss the issues logical fallacies and our on-line world
  - Ability to describe the pros and cons of persuasive papers
  - Cite & evaluate research related to the topic of current fiction and how science fiction can be used to help illustrate current events

There will be a writing assignment due every week. It may be a short assignment (journal entry), a response to a discussion board, a paper, re-write, or some other form of written communication.

I will distribute the reading and assignment list separately from the syllabus.

You will be required to attend the writing center within the library to receive help with your work. I will be entering the writing assignment at the writing center as a formal grade. We will discuss this as the assignment approaches.
Grading:

Your grade will be calculated on a total points basis. You will earn your grade and the scoring, points, and assignments will be spelled out so that you are aware of where you stand and how your grade will be impacted by assignments.

You will be allowed two unexcused absences, after those absences you will have your grade reduced one full letter grade.

Your final percentage will be converted into a grade using the following guide*:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>70-79%</td>
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<td>60-69%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>&lt;60%</td>
<td>F</td>
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FINAL NOTE: As this is your first year seminar the class is here as an introduction to college. Please know that this makes the FYS course a unique experience. Take advantage of that uniqueness.

Live long, and prosper.