

Ethics & Star Trek – FYS

Time: T/Tr 3:30 pm - 4:45 pm

Location: Meredith 228

Instructor: Jerome Hilscher, PhD

Office: Carnegie Hall 013 (basement)

Phone: 515-271-2415

Cell: 515-554-7148 (text capable, see communication protocols below)

e-mail: Jerome.hilscher@drake.edu **

Office Hours:

- Monday 2:00 – 3:00 PM (online only)
- Thursday 8:00 – 9:00 AM (online only)
- Friday 10:00 – 11:00 AM (LL Carnegie Rm 13)
- Some Saturday's by appointment

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

- **Masks and Social Distancing:** When we do meet in person, **we will all wear masks and maintain social distance to minimize the likelihood of the spread of the novel coronavirus.** Doing so is not only a requirement in my class, but is also a campus-wide policy. I will ask those who choose not to wear a mask to leave the classroom and, following guidance from the Provost's office, I will alert the dean of students' office. As a last resort, if a student without a mask refuses to leave class, I will contact Drake Public Safety.

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 propaganda & 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 [202110-FYS-027-3437: ETHICS AND STAR TREK](#)

Readings & Resources:

Required textbook: The Ethics of Star Trek.

Barad, J. A., & Robertson, E. (2001). *The Ethics of Star Trek*. New York: Perennia

Required ebooks:

Required online textbook (free):

Almossawi, A. (2013). *An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments*. Retrieved from:
<https://bookofbadarguments.com/>

NEW – Required – Netflix Subscription for the duration of the course

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 attempt to 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.

If all else fails please feel free to text my cell phone number. I dislike talking on the phone unless it is absolutely 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.

COVID Accommodations – please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you need/want certain accommodations because of the current pandemic. This course can be handled via online only mode if need be. Also, please do not hesitate to turn your video off on our group gatherings. Also, do not hesitate to ask other professors to allow this as well, “zoom” Fatigue is real, even if we are not using zoom.

MORE COVID:

Instructions for Students who Test Positive: If you test positive for Covid-19 or have been exposed and need to isolate yourself, please send an email to dos@drake.edu from your Drake email account and include your full name and student ID along with information about your situation. College and schools' deans' offices will then contact your professors, who will work with you to provide fully virtual learning opportunities during your quarantine and/or recovery. If possible, however, please also alert me directly that you will begin attending virtually, and I will work with you to help you make the transition to that modality. You do not need to tell me why you need to move to a virtual experience.

Instructions for Students about Self-Monitoring and Experiencing symptoms. Please carefully monitor your own health and wellbeing throughout the semester, including frequently taking your own temperature. If you experience [Covid-19 symptoms](#) or a fever, even if you do not test positive, *please do not come to an in-person class meeting*. In addition to alerting the dean of students' office at dos@drake.edu, please alert me that you will begin attending virtually, and

I will work with you to help you make the transition. You do not need to tell me why you need to move to a virtual experience.

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 Modulely 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 several 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).**

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)
- Creating a representation that synthesizes course goals and course materials to demonstrate understanding of logical fallacies
- Creating or adding writings to 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 Module. 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.

You will be encouraged to attend the writing center within the library to receive help with your work.

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. Mitigating circumstances may be taken into account.

I will be using the new +/- grading scale

<http://www.drake.edu/studentrecords/gradesandgpa/plusminus/#d.en.268423>

Grade	Quality Points	Percentages
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A	4.00	95-100%
A-	3.70	90-94%
B+	3.30	87-89%
B	3.00	83-86%
B-	2.70	80-82%
C+	2.30	77-79%
C	2.00	73-76%
C-	1.70	70-72%
D+	1.30	67-69%
D	1.00	62-66%
D-	1.00	60-61%
F	0.00	Below 60%

NOTE – this is not new to you because everything is new to you! This is new for the university, so if you wish to discuss please let me know.

FINAL NOTE: As this is your first year seminar the class is meant to be an introduction to college. Please know that this makes the FYS course a unique experience. Take advantage of that uniqueness.

NOTE: See below for the current plan of events, and items due.