

**PHL 115-N3-- Ethical Practice -- Spring 2006 -- MW 1:20 - 3:00 p.m. -- Dr. John G. Sullivan**

Office: **Philosophy House 101**

The Philosophy House is on *corner of E. Haggard Street* (across from the Science Building) and *N. Antioch Street* (across from the tennis courts).

It is two houses east of the Holland House; one house east of Sociology House.

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Office Hours: **Mondays** -----10:30-11:30 am and 3:30 - 4:30 pm  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays** -----10:30-11:30 am and 12:50 - 1:50 pm  
**+ other times by appointment.**

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 I do not use Blackboard. Go to my homepage above, scroll down to courses, click on Ethical Practice.

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**I. A View of Ethics:**

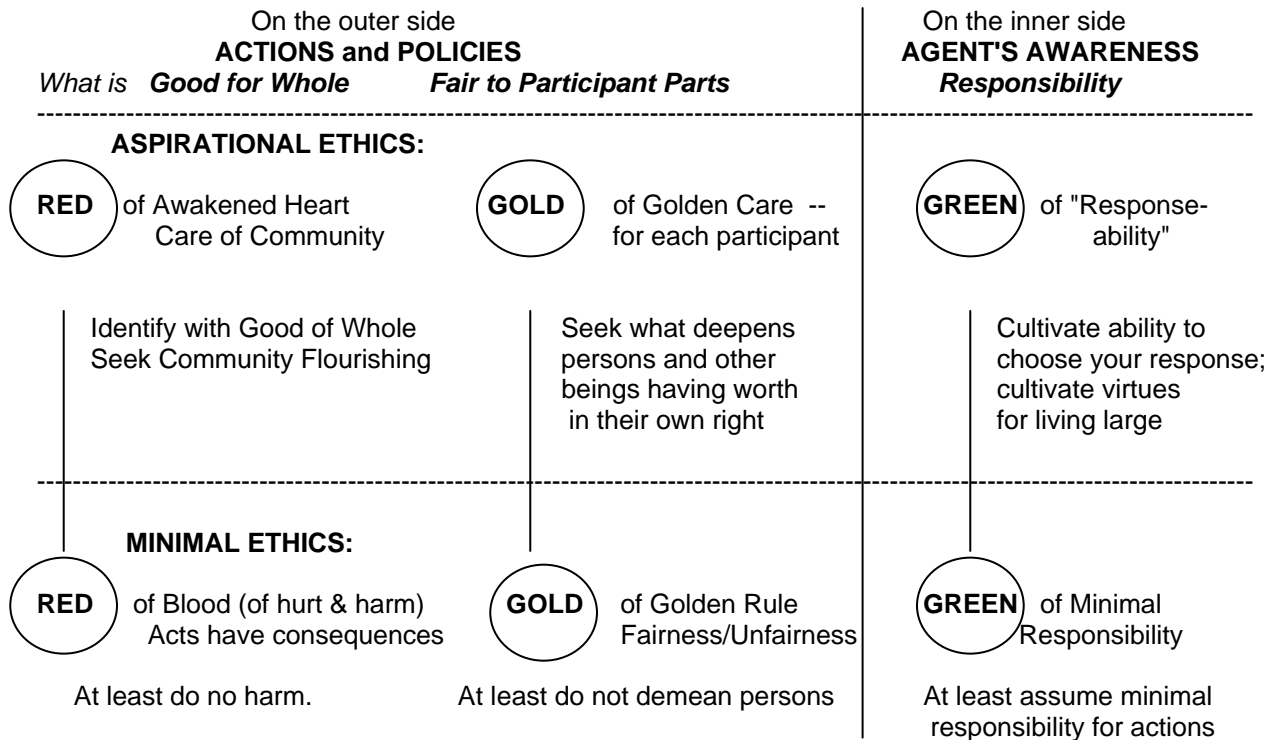
This course has as its mission statement and aim:

**To come to life more fully  
 so as to act more wisely and more effectively  
 to reduce suffering and promote possibility for our common life.**

This accents several key features:

- (a) that ethics has a **positive aim** -- to come to live more fully, to live in large-minded ways;
- (b) that ethics centers on **both attitude and action** -- to act more wisely and more effectively;
- (c) that ethics looks beyond self **to promote our common life**;
- (d) that ethics serves our common life **by reducing unnecessary suffering and promoting creative possibility.**

To think of ethics, consider my model of a **Traffic Light**:



The movement of ethics is from **ego-centered** to **society-centered** to **world-inclusive** -- with a deep understanding of what is good for the whole and fair to the parts.

The movement is also from **minimal ethics** to **aspirational ethics**. This involves two shifts:

- (a) from extrinsic motivators to intrinsic guides -- based on the nature of communities and persons, &
- (b) from an outside perspective (how is this effecting ME?) to an inside perspective (a WE perspective -- how is this effecting us).

Ethics demands **commitment**. It looks to **ethical criteria** (class mission; what is good for the whole and fair to the participant parts). It looks to the **facts of the case**. It demands **careful and compassionate thinking** about the criteria and about the facts of the case. Such an ethics is capable of ongoing revision.

In simplified form, philosophical ethics demands 4 C's: (a) **commitment**, (b) ethical **criteria**, (c) **case-specific facts** [or the facts of the case], and (d) **careful thinking** [or careful and compassionate thinking].

**II. Goals of the Course:** To give to students:

- A. a map to appreciate the levels of life --  
**Paradigm Domain:** Collective or shared Meaning-Value-Purpose (MVP) systems that define a common Sense of Reality for a people in an epoch.  
The paradigm cultural script informs the

**Institutional Domain:** Institutional Systems of Rules, Roles, Routines  
The Big Four - governmental -- educational -- economic - religious  
plus one = the family – each with its “corporate” culture or MVP framework

all channel cultural stories to us

**Interpersonal Domain:** my participation in various kinds of one-to-one relationships - friendships, family memberships, colleagueships. Each of these relational fields has its own shared or overlapping MVP frame reflecting assumptions from epochal, corporate, familial stories

- B. a way of moving from ego-centered to society-centered to world-inclusive perspectives -- with a growing orientation to **what is good for the whole** and **fair to the participant parts** in each domain.
- C. an overview of ethical theories: **rule-based, rights-based, and virtue-based**
- D. practical habits of mind and heart such that students can begin
  - ◆ to live a larger life with attention to their own language and emotional filters
  - ◆ to choose more wisely and effectively to reduce unnecessary suffering and promote creative possibility for our common life, and
  - ◆ to reason by appeal to ethical criteria and the facts of the case, thus allowing principled revision and change.

**Objectives:** At the end of this course, students will be able to

- a) articulate the distinctions involved in the domains outlined above,
- b) know how to “unhook from” personal conversations that are too small to live in and know how to critique and revise corporate and cultural conversations that are too small to live in,
- c) at the personal level, begin to have a sense of living large, of choosing more wisely and more effectively, and of reducing suffering and promoting possibility for our common life,

d) at the policy level, utilize ethical criteria (e.g. what is good for the whole and fair to each participant part) plus factual evidence to make better judgments concerning what will serve our common life.

### **Two Ways of Seeing and Being:**

To reduce suffering and promote possibility for our common life requires a sustained practice of attention whereby we notice two ways of relating to life:

**A small-minded, ego-centered, reactive way of relating**

**vs.**

**A large-minded, partnership-centered, proactive way of relating**

The small-minded, ego-centered perspective is small or narrow with regard to **time** and **space**.

1) **Space:** In small mind, I take myself to be the center of the world; I see others only as supporting players in my drama. In large mind, I see BOTH self and others as having worth in their own right and I appreciate what joins us together.

2) **Time:** In small mind, I tend to think in shorter spans of time -- how will this benefit me now or fairly soon. When I am in larger mind, I live in longer rhythms. The Navajos say that, when we act, we should see ourselves standing in the midst of seven generations. Then, we should ask two questions:

**Will this action honor my parents and grandparents and great-grandparents?**

**Will this action benefit my children and grandchildren and great grandchildren?**

Consider what I call the Four Beginnings:

<b>We are partial;</b>	<b>we seek to be whole.</b>
<b>We are asleep;</b>	<b>we seek to be awake.</b>
<b>We are enslaved;</b>	<b>we seek to be free.</b>
<b>We are reactive;</b>	<b>we seek to be “response-able” able to choose our response)</b>

In small mind we are "partial" -- not seeing the whole in either space or time.

In small mind, we are asleep in our life, unaware how we are generating meanings and values.

In small mind, we are enslaved to old habits, old stories and scripts.

In small mind, we are reactive -- with no space between incoming stimulus and outgoing response. Someone or something pushes our buttons. We react.

Yet, as humans with training, we can recognize when we are in small mind and shift to larger mind-and-heart. We can wake up and notice how we are languaging life and the emotions that come up when we live in certain stories. We can choose our response, choose to live not by whim but by declaration.

### **REQUIRED READING:**

John G. Sullivan, **Living Large: Transformative Work at the Intersection of Ethics and Spirituality** (Laurel, MD: Tai Sophia Institute for the Healing Arts, 2004)  
ISBN 0-912381-06-X paperback

Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander, **The Art of Possibility** (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2000) paperback edition

James Rachels, **The Elements of Moral Philosophy** (New York: McGraw Hill College, 4th edition, 2001) ISBN 0-07-247690-7  
plus additional enrichment material on the class website.

**GRADING:**

**1) HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ----- a possible 30 points**

DOING HOMEWORK FAITHFULLY IS A DISCIPLINE. Homework questions are the basis for class discussion. The homework assignments will be collected on EACH CLASS DAY. **There are 20 assignments each worth 1 1/2 points each.** The homework adds up to 30 points. Except for cases where a student has missed class with a valid excuse, ASSIGNMENTS HANDED IN LATE WILL GAIN NO CREDIT. ALL HOMEWORK SHOULD BE TYPED. For homework assignments, go to <http://www.elon.edu/sullivan> and scroll down to Ethical Practice. Click on course and a menu page will come up for this semester's Ethical Practice. Syllabus and assignments and enrichment material may be accessed via this menu page.

Please hand in **hard copies** of the homework. Only in BIG emergencies will I accept homework as email attachments. Our department budget does not support printing out large quantities of email attachments.

**2) One Mid-term Exam ----- worth 18 points**

The exams will be given on **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1st**. PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP IF THIS TEST IS MISSED. For very serious reasons, permission will be given for an 8-10 page typed paper to be written in place of the missed test.

**3) Service Learning Component -- ten hours of service -----worth 10 points**

Ethical Practice is meant to move you to live a larger life -- to move you **from a Pre-Copernican stance** (the world revolves around you) to a **Copernican stance** (you are a part of larger units than yourself). And you can make a difference to those larger units! The Elon Office of Service Learning will provide a list of venues and you will be able to choose among them. The purpose of this requirement is (a) to move you outside your own world and (b) to put you in contact with some whom you would not ordinarily interact with -- broadening your horizon. It is also a hands-on testing of the ethical worldview and practices we are learning.

**4) A Reflective Paper on your Service Learning (minimum ten typed page) ----- worth 10 points**

I will give you instructions on the form of this paper. It will ask you to report on the interpersonal experiences you had. Then it will ask you to "pull back the camera" and look at the institutional aspects of this problem-area and the cultural aspects as well. Why in one of the richest nations on the planet do we have these pressing human needs that are often unmet? **The paper is due on Wednesday, April 19th.**

**(3) One Group Presentation ----- worth 8 points**

Group presentations are scheduled as follows: the Red and Orange groups on Mon. April 10th; the Yellow and Green groups on Wed. April 12th; the Blue and Indigo Groups on Mon. April 24th; and the Violet and Ultra-Violet groups on Wed. April 26th. Topics and instructions for the group presentations will be given separately.

**(4) Cumulative Final Examination --- given in exam period as a Take-Home Final --- worth 24 points**

**The Grading System at a Glance**

Homework - 20 assignments @ 1 1/2 points each = a possible	30 points
Mid-term Exam (Wed. Mar. 1st) = a possible	18 points
Service Learning -- ten hours -- worth	10 points
Service Learning Reflective Paper (10 pages) -- due April 19 <sup>th</sup>	10 points
Group Presentation = a possible	8 points
Final Examination in exam period = a possible	<u>24 points</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 POINTS</b>

IV. **Attendance, Preparation, Participation:**

FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE IS ESSENTIAL. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL BE PENALIZED AT THE RATE OF ONE POINT OFF FOR EACH. For absences to be excused, please report them to me within a day on either side of a missed class. Otherwise you will be penalized. You may phone me and leave message on my office phone 278-5697 or contact me via my e-mail address: sullivan@elon.edu This is an elementary courtesy that adults are expected to show to one another when engaged in collaborative work. NOTE: **Absences the day before or the day after a break will be penalized, even if you call in. Elon policy speaks strongly against such absences.**

Be responsible -- both for your presence and absence. **Ethics is collaborative in nature; your presence and participation matter!** Show up, be prepared and deepen your life.

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**Ethical Practice-- Homework Assignments #1 --- Spring 2006**

(A) Homework answers should be **brief essays** -- no less than 1/2 page single-spaced/ no more than one page for each question. If you double-space, think of each answer to be about a page.

[Thus, writing three essays will require more than one page!]

ALL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS **MUST BE TYPED AND THE PAGES STAPLED TOGETHER.** Please invest in a small stapler.

You are free to do constructive critique, comparisons, applications to your own experience, creative extensions of the ideas, etc. You may write in 3<sup>rd</sup> person or 1<sup>st</sup> person. Extend yourself; write beyond your first stopping point. Use all that you know and more. Be creative and insightful and interesting!

(B) The homework answers will be **collected at the end of each class.** Each day's homework is worth 1 1/2 points; the 2 assignments for a week are worth THREE points. Over the course of the semester you can earn 30 points -- a full three letter grades! -- just by faithfully doing your daily work. **ASSIGNMENTS HANDED IN LATE WILL GAIN NO CREDIT, unless you have called within 24 hours on either side of missing a class to report that you will be or were absent.** Please hand in **hard copies** of the homework. Only in BIG emergencies will I accept homework as email attachments.

(C) If something is bubbling up in your life that has relevance to our work, you may substitute a "Wild Card" for **one only** of the three questions on a particular homework. Some of the best learning results from such reflection on what you are facing in the moment.

(D) Please title each set of homework questions as below: Assignment 1 (for Mon. Feb. 6th).

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**Assignment 1:** Given Wed. Feb. 1st, 2006 for Mon. Feb. 6th: Read The Art of Possibility, Intro and Chapter 1, "It's all Invented" (pp. 1-15); read Living Large, Introduction, pp. 1-24. Reflect on the material and answer the three questions below:

1. On Z&Z, what assumptions are you making that structure the way you see your life? The assumptions are often uncovered in the stories you tell yourself and others that are only one possible way to look at things. What alternate stories might you invent to give you more choices?
2. On LL, Write a personal essay on the Frederick Buechner quote at the beginning of the introductory chapter (p.13). How might that threshold involve ethics and spirituality? Answer creatively.
3. On LL, in the Introduction I suggest a renewed ethics along the horizontal axis of time unfolding through epochs and an expanded spirituality along a vertical axis of contact with the timeless source. What is your view of ethics? How would you explain it to a friend? How might your view of ethics be challenged and renewed by the view presented here? What is your view of spirituality? How is this like and unlike the view presented here? Discuss.

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**Assignment 2:** Given Mon. Feb. 6th for Wed. Feb. 8th. Read The Art of Possibility, Chapter 2 "Stepping into a Universe of Possibility" (pp. 17-23) and read Living Large, chapters 1-3, pp. 27-64. Answer the three questions below:

1. On Z&Z: Z&Z contrast a world of measurement with a world of possibility. They also contrast survival-thinking and scarcity thinking with possibility-thinking. Use examples to show where these distinctions show up in your life and your world.
2. On LL (Living Large), explain the fundamental distinction and the four steps that aid us to move from small mind-and-heart to larger mind-and-heart. Give an example of your own to illustrate.
3. On LL, answer either 3a or 3b: (3a) Explain how each domain (and the conversation or MVP aspect of that domain) can be approach in small mind or in large mind. Give concrete examples for each domain. **OR** (3b) Suppose each domain is thought of as a lake. Show how the analogy of the lake might apply to that domain – from surface to midpoint to depth and back up again.

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FOR CONTINUATION OF THE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS, see <http://www.elon.edu/sullivan> and scroll down to Ethical Practice. Clicking on the course will take you to the Ethics Menu Page and from there to Assignments.  
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**Quotations:**

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I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
**Tell me, what it is you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?** "The Summer Day," Mary Oliver

**To find your calling is to find the intersection between your own deep gladness  
and the world's deep hunger.** Frederick Buechner

**The prime responsibility of persons is  
to define and live a life of one's own --  
a life worthy of one** (in the sense of being able to pass rational scrutiny )  
**as a human being and  
as the particular individual one is.**

**E.M. Adams, A Society Fit for Human Beings**

The Rotary Clubs have the following **FOUR-WAY TEST** of the Things We Think, Say or Do.

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build good will and better friendship?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

**May Our Time Together Enlighten Our Minds and Enkindle Our Hearts  
For The Good Of All Beings.**