

**PHL 445/545 (CRNs: 16115/16156)**  
**Advanced Ethics, Fall 2017**  
MWF: 10:15-11:20  
Cramer Hall 250

Instructor

Alex Sager

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Office hours: TBD<sup>1</sup>

Course Description

This course explores how history, geography, and power have influenced our understanding of ethics through a close reading of the major Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel's *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*. Dussel offers a counter-reading of the philosophical canon from the perspective of people excluded from dominant systems. Through his engagement with dozens of major philosophers, Dussel builds a systematic ethical philosophy aimed at human liberation and emancipation. To engage and assess Dussel's counter-reading, we will also study Kant's *Groundwork*, the introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism*, Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* and *Theses on Feuerbach*, Rawls' seminal essays on justice as fairness, and Nobel Peace Laureate Rigoberta Menchú's autobiography.

Assignments

Undergraduate

- Bi-Weekly Critical Reflections – 5 x 5% (due Fridays at the beginning of class on Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9)
- Take-Home Midterm Exam – 30% (due November 9)
- Take-Home Final Exam – 35% (due December 14)
- Attendance – 10%

Extra Credit: Oregon High School Ethics Bowl – 10%

Graduate

- Bi-Weekly Critical Reflections – 5 x 5% (due Fridays at the beginning of class on Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9)
- Paper Proposal with annotated bibliography – 10%
- Presentation of Final Paper – 10%
- Final Paper – 45%
- Attendance – 10%

Extra Credit: Oregon High School Ethics Bowl – 10%

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that I am usually available to meet during the week by appointment. I am happy to arrange a time that is convenient to discuss anything related to the class. I also answer emails within 24 hours of their receipt during the term.

## **Books**

Dussel, Enrique. 2013. *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*. Translated by Alejandro A. Vallega. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, and Leo Rauch. 1988. *Introduction to the Philosophy of History: With Selections from The Philosophy of Right*. Hackett Classics.

Kant, Immanuel. 1993. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: With On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns, 3rd Edition*. Translated by James W. Ellington. Hackett Classics.

Menchú, Rigoberta. 2010. *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Edited by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. Verso.

## **Grading Scheme**

93-100 = A	86-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	68-70 = D+	0-59 = F
90-92 = A-	83-85 = B	74-76 = C	65-67 = D	
	80-82 = B-	71-73 = C-	60-63 = D-	

## **Disability Resource Center**

Portland State University is committed to accessibility and to accommodation for students with disabilities. Please note, however, that you must obtain approval from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to make arrangements for any necessary accommodations.

According to the DRC:

“Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and the Disability Resource Center. Students with accommodations approved through the DRC are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately at 503-825-4150 or [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu)”

<http://www.pdx.edu/uasc/drc-resources-faculty>

## **Food Pantry**

The PSU Food Pantry offers services to currently enrolled Portland State University students, by providing a free, welcoming, and inclusive environment to acquire supplemental food items on a regular basis. The pantry is **located in SMSU 325**. For more information e-mail [foodhelp@pdx.edu](mailto:foodhelp@pdx.edu)

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious offense and will result in the student failing the assignment. There may also be more severe penalties including academic suspension. (See “Procedures for Complaints of Academic Dishonesty” in the PSU Student Code of Conduct at <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct#AcademicDishonesty/>)

According to The Political Science Student Writer’s Manual, “plagiarism is the use of someone else’s words or ideas without proper credit. Although some plagiarism is deliberate, produced by writers who understand that they are guilty of a kind of academic thievery, much of it is unconscious, committed by writers who are not aware of the varieties of plagiarism or who are careless in recording their borrowings from sources. Plagiarism includes the following:

- Quoting directly without acknowledging the source
- Paraphrasing without acknowledging the source
- Constructing a paraphrase that closely resembles the original in language and syntax

One way to guard against plagiarism is to keep careful notes of when you have directly quoted source material and when you have paraphrased – making sure that the wording of the paraphrases is yours. Make sure that all direct quotes in your final draft are properly set off from your own prose, either with quotation marks or in indented blocks.”

Details on how to avoid plagiarism are available at [http://writingcenter.pdx.edu/resources/library.php?step09\\_detail\\_5.html](http://writingcenter.pdx.edu/resources/library.php?step09_detail_5.html) and at <http://guides.library.pdx.edu/content.php?pid=369846&sid=3030371>

You are also strongly encouraged to discuss your assignments with me.

### **Reading Schedule**

Please complete the readings before class and be prepared to discuss them. Many of these readings are very challenging and I encourage you to bring questions to raise during the lectures. Please note that the schedule is subject to change as the semester progresses.

#### **Week 1**

##### **Monday, September 25**

- Manuel Vargas, [\*If Anglo-American philosophy is so great, where is its Las Casas?\*](#)
- Alex Sager, [\*Review: Ethics of Liberation: in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion\*](#)

##### **Wednesday, September 27**

- Hegel, *Introduction to the History of Philosophy*, 1-18 (One: The Methods of History; Two: Reason in History)

##### **Friday, September 29**

- Hegel, *Introduction to the History of Philosophy*, 19-56 (Three: Freedom, the Individual, and the State)

#### **Week 2**

##### **Monday, October 2**

- Hegel, *Introduction to the History of Philosophy*, 57-end

##### **Wednesday, October 4**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Introduction: *World History of Ethical Systems*, 1-32

##### **Friday, October 6**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Introduction: *World History of Ethical Systems*, 32-52

#### **Week 3**

##### **Monday, October 9**

- John Stuart Mill, [\*Utilitarianism\*](#) (give particular attention to chapters 1-4)

**Wednesday, October 11**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Material moment of Ethics 55-84

**Friday, October 13**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Material moment of Ethics 85-107

**Week 4**

**Monday, October 16**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Formal Morality, 108-15
- Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface, First Section

**Wednesday, October 18**

- Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Second Section

**Friday, October 20**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Formal Morality, 115-120
- Rawls, John. 1951. "Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics." *The Philosophical Review* 60 (2): 177-197.

**Week 5**

**Monday, October 23**

- Rawls, John. 1958. "Justice as Fairness." *The Philosophical Review* 67 (2): 164-194.

**Wednesday, October 25**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Formal Morality, 121-157

**Friday, October 27**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Ethical Feasibility, 158-203

**Week 6**

**Monday, October 30**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Critical Ethics, 205-218

**Wednesday, November 1**

- Marx, [\*Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts\*](#), "Estranged Labor"
- Marx, [\*Theses on Feuerbach\*](#)

**Friday, November 3**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Critical Ethics, 218-233

**Week 7**

**Monday, November 6**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Critical Ethics, 234-268

**Wednesday, November 8**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Critical Ethics, 268-290

**Friday, November 10**

- *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, 1-22 (Chapters 1-3)
- *Ethics of Liberation*, Antihegemonic Validity, 291-302

**Week 8**

**Monday, November 13**

- *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, 23-137 (Chapters 7-15)

**Wednesday, November 15**

- *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, 138-end (Chapters 16-34)

**Friday, November 17**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Antihegemonic Validity, 303-319
- Paulo Freire, [\*Pedagogy of the Oppressed\*](#), Chapters 1-2

**Week 9**

**Monday, November 20**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Antihegemonic Validity, 320-354

**Wednesday, November 22**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Liberation Principle, 355-388

**Friday, November 24**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Liberation Principle, 388-399

**Week 10**

**Monday, November 27**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Liberation Principle, 400-413

**Wednesday, November 29**

- *Ethics of Liberation*, Liberation Principle, 413-431

**Friday, December 1**

- Wrap Up