

# **PHL 308**

# **ELEMENTARY**

# **ETHICS**

**DR. JEFF JOHNSON**  
**INTRODUCTION TO THE**  
**COURSE**

# What we need to do today

- \* Standard first day of class lecture
- \* Introducing myself
- \* Explaining the class
- \* Selling the class
- \* Grades and workload
- \* Starting the class

# My background

- \* Professor of Philosophy at Eastern Oregon University 1982-2016
- \* Retired June 2016
- \* Teaching interests
  - \* Introduction to philosophy
  - \* Critical thinking
  - \* Ethics
  - \* Philosophy of religion
  - \* Philosophy of law

# My background

- \* Research interests
  - \* Privacy
  - \* Philosophy of Religion
  - \* Philosophy of Law
  - \* Inference to the best explanation
- \* Distance education
  - \* My history
  - \* Old style lecture professor
  - \* Collaborative learning
  - \* My sympathies for distance students

# Explaining the class

- \* What the course is not
  - \* Not a course on the history of ethical thought
  - \* Not a course on ethical theory
  - \* Sort of, but not really, a course on contemporary moral problems
- \* Why not?
  - \* Expense
  - \* Taking advantage of my research
  - \* I hope the course can be of practical value to you

# Explaining the course

- \* What the course is
- \* Ethical reasoning
- \* Moral reasoning and story-telling
- \* Case studies
  - \* Abortion
  - \* Right to die
  - \* Capital punishment
  - \* Justification of law and government

# Structure of the course

- \* Three large modules
  - \* 1st three weeks — **Midterm exam**
    - \* Moral reasoning and story-telling
    - \* Abortion — the status of the fetus
    - \* Abortion — the constitutional right to choose
  - \* 2nd two weeks — **Analytical paper**
    - \* Euthanasia
    - \* Dementia and the right to die
  - \* 3rd five weeks — **Final exam**
    - \* Capital punishment and the Constitution
    - \* Race (and class, and gender) and the Constitution
    - \* Secular natural law and biologically based ethics
    - \* Thanksgiving — relevant streaming lectures
    - \* Normative justification of the state

# Structure of the Course

- \* Three hours reading per week
- \* Three to four hours streaming video-lectures
- \* Two hours preparing for exams and analytical paper
- \* Is this an unreasonable workload?
- \* Worst case scenario
- \* The “Carnegie Formula”

# Means of Assessment

- \* Assessing your work; assessing my work
- \* “Take-home” midterm essay exam (33% of course grade)
  - \* Covers first three weeks
  - \* Four questions — answer any three
- \* Analytical paper — Covers Weeks 4 & 5 (33% of course grade)
- \* “Take-home” final essay exam (33% of course grade)
  - \* Covers last five weeks
  - \* Four questions — answer any three

# Narratives

- \* Stories
- \* Narratology and literary scholarship
- \* Story-telling movement in academic law
- \* What is a narrative
  - \* Story where something takes place
  - \* Beginning - middle - and end
  - \* Closure
  - \* Story versus narrative discourse
    - \* fabula vs. sjuzet
  - \* Good stories make sense of things

# “Homework”

- \* Listen to “It’s My Party”
- \* Listen to “Goodbye Earl”
- \* What stories do these songs tell?