MSFS 600-04  Ethics and Decision-Making
Spring 2017, Georgetown University
Thursday, 3:30-6:00 pm, Reynolds 131
Prof. David Hollenbach, S.J.
Instructor’s office: ICC 807
Office hours: Tuesday, 4:00-5:00; Wednesday, 4:00-5:00; or by appointment
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Aims of the course:
The last several decades have seen a rise in attention to ethical questions in world politics. With the end of the cold war in 1989, the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the acceleration of globalization, issues with an ethical dimension have become more urgent on the national and international agendas. Wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria; the displacement of very large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, immigration into Europe and the United States; conflicts between religious and cultural communities; awareness of economic inequality; the importance of human rights in the United States and around the world – these are a few of the issues where ethics plays a key role alongside economic, political, cultural and geopolitical forces and where ethical issues of an urgent practical nature arise.
The course will explore the intersection of ethics and a number of issues arising today in international affairs. It is designed for students in the MSFS Global Politics and Security Concentration. It will explore some of the practical ethical issues that may arise for those working in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. It will address the normative FRAMEWORKS that can guide responses to these practical matters. At the same time, it will reflect on how one will respond to PRACTICAL ISSUES that require choosing between values, weighing priorities, and responding to tradeoffs. The course examines the relationship among ethical and political values, actors, and issues. Specific challenges addressed will include: the protection of human rights, support for democracy, response to migration and refugees, cultural and religious conflict, war, peace, and norms for the use of force, global distributive justice. These topics will be illustrated by analysis of some specific cases in international affairs where ethical questions arise. Thus the class seeks to balance theory, case studies, and practical training.

We will address these broad questions through a close reading of texts, class discussions and debates, case studies, and the writing of several papers.

Learning Goals
The MSFS is graduate program devoted to preparing students for leadership and service in the world. This course aims to heighten the student’s abilities to undertake the critical normative thinking needed for this leadership and service. Distinct from description, explanation, and prediction as modes of analysis, normative thinking is prescriptive analysis about desirable outcomes and the ways professional decisions can advance or hinder these outcomes. The course will seek to the student’s abilities to make judgments about normative, ethical issues in a way that will endure one’s career in public service.

Through the work of the course you will:

- deepen your knowledge of critical global issues with an ethical dimension
• develop your understanding of several important normative approaches to practical issues that arise in world affairs and how these approaches are shaped by significant traditions of normative thought
• advance your ability to make good judgments about practical matters that have an ethical dimension
• improve your ability to make structured, persuasive arguments about such matters orally and in writing
• sharpen your oral communication skills
• enhance your ability to collaborate effectively in small teams

Requirements
Broad and active participation is expected of all students. Come to class with the assigned readings completed. Participation includes contributions to class discussion and debate, and your presentations of your work. Unexcused absences will affect your grade adversely. More specific requirements are:

1. All students will prepare a 1-page overview of the readings assigned for each week, to be turned in the beginning of class. These overviews (1 page, double-spaced maximum) should state the central thesis or theses of each reading assigned for that day. This overview should contain: the major thesis of each assigned article or the central theses of longer assigned reading. A thesis is a direct statement of a central affirmation being made by the author. It can be one or two sentences. The goal is to state the key point(s) being made by the author of the reading, not your response to or evaluation of what the author is saying. We will discuss our evaluations and critiques orally in class once we have clarified the author’s actual position. 15% of grade.

2. Three framework and practical-issue presentations. Working in teams of two or three assigned by the instructor, students will together make presentations on the framework topics or practical questions being treated in specific classes. Each student will present three times as part of a team. The team presentation should:
   a. highlight the two or three key positions advanced by the authors of the assigned readings on the normative issue(s) being treated in the Framework topic or the Practice Issue assigned, and
   b. suggest a key question or two for class discussion that can help us pursue both a deeper understanding of what the authors maintain and reach a critical assessment of the normative issue.

The team can use either a very brief handout (one-page maximum) or a short PowerPoint outlining the points that will be made in the presentation. The presentation will be for 20 minutes maximum. Its goal is to stimulate well-informed class discussion. Presenters should presume that others in the class have done the readings assigned for the day. Each presentation 10% of grade.

3. Two brief papers, one on a Framework topic and one on a Practical Question on topics other than the ones on which the student has presented. These short papers are due in class two weeks after the date on which the topic was considered. The paper should
present an argument for what the student sees as the appropriate stance toward the issue being treated, and why it is appropriate. The argument should be informed by the assigned reading but can be critical of the positions taken by the authors if the student wishes to present such a critique. These papers should be 5-6 pages, double spaced. **Each paper 15% of grade.**

4. **Final take-home exam.** Students will receive a take-home final on the last day of class. The exam will be due at noon on the date that the exam is scheduled. In the exam students should draw from class readings and discussions in a synthetic way. **Exams should be submitted electronically by 11 am on May 10. 25% of grade.**

No books are required for purchase. All of the readings will be either in books available in the Georgetown bookstore, on reserve in Lauinger Library, or made available on Canvas. Bring the readings to class in hard copy or in electronic form; we will reference them in our discussions.

**Grading Procedures**

In this course we will use the standard MSFS grading scale, as follows.

- “A” for superior work and “A-” for excellent work (A = 4.0, A- = 3.67)
- “B+” for very good work, “B” for good work, and “B-” for fair work (B+ = 3.33, B = 3.00, B- = 2.67).
- “C” for passing work (C = 2.00).
- “F” (F = 0.00) for failing work.

**Grade Distribution for MSFS Courses**

The MSFS has agreed upon a general standard for distribution of course grades to establish expectations and fairness, as follows:

- 20% A
- 30% A-
- 30% B+
- 20% B and below

Final grades will approximately reflect this distribution.

**Georgetown University Honor System**

Students are expected to abide by the Georgetown University Honor System. Students should familiarize themselves with the material and information posted on the Honor Council’s website: [https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/policies](https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/policies), and with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences’ policy on Academic Integrity: [http://grad.georgetown.edu/academics/policies/graduate-student-bulletin-2014-15/sec-VI](http://grad.georgetown.edu/academics/policies/graduate-student-bulletin-2014-15/sec-VI)

**Academic Resource Center**

If you believe you have a disability that may affect your participation in this course, contact the Academic Resource Center ([https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/](https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/)) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing such inquiries.

**Cell Phones Policy.** The use cell of phones is not permitted in class. Laptops may be used only to consult the electronic readings assigned for class.
SYLLABUS (subject to revision by the instructor)

Books marked * are available in the Georgetown bookstore and will be on reserve in Lauinger Library. These books are:

*Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*, University of California Press, 2004

Readings marked © on the syllabus are available in the online Canvas site for the course. Some readings are available at the URL marked on the Syllabus. These URLs are linked on the electronic syllabus posted on the course Canvas site.

An electronic version of this syllabus, with links to some readings, is on the course Canvas site. Readings are required unless specified as recommended.

1/12 Introductory: the challenge of ethics in international politics today

Framework: overview of the questions raised in the course

Do ethics matter in international affairs? How? Why?

Recommended background readings:

Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, Santa Clara University, “A Framework for Ethical Decision Making” online at: https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/a-framework-for-ethical-decision-making/

Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, “Making an Ethical Decision,” online at: https://www.scu.edu/media/ethics-center/resources/making.pdf

Practical issue: the case of the Rwanda genocide

Film shown in class: "Frontline: The Triumph of Evil."

Case discussion: response of Tony Lake and of Susan Rice to US failure to intervene in Rwanda, and implications for decision on US/NATO intervention in Libya.

Recommended background readings:


©Alan J. Kuperman, "Rwanda in Retrospect," *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2000, 94-118.


CNBC, “Bill Clinton: We could have saved 300,000 Lives in Rwanda,” 13 Mar 2013, online at: [http://www.cnbc.com/id/100546207](http://www.cnbc.com/id/100546207)


US Secretary of State John Kerry, “Remarks on Daesh and Genocide,” March 17, 2016, online at: [http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/03/254782.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/03/254782.htm)

1/19  **Realist perspectives and the role of norms**

**Practical issue: what can we learn from two historic decisions?**


*Ben Brown, *Three Days in May* (a play enacting the war-cabinet dispute between Churchill, Chamberlain, and Halifax on whether to fight Hitler in the face of the threat at Dunkirk).

**Framework:**


**Recommended reading:**


*Ethics and International Affairs*, see this journal on line at: [http://www.eiajournal.org/](http://www.eiajournal.org/)  (Note: entire recent issue available free online.)


**WED., 1/25, 12:15—1:45 PM. SPECIAL SESSION ON PRACTICAL CASE OF DUTIES TO REFUGEES: THE SYRIA CASE. VISITING SPEAKER: PROF. ELIZABETH FERRIS.**

Prof. Ferris consulted with the UN Secretary General on the drafting of his report to the World Summit on Refugees and Migrants, “In safety and dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants - Report of the Secretary-General.”

Readings for this session:


Recommended:


Documents on President Obama’s Leaders' Summit on Refugees, Sept. 20, 2016, online: [http://www.state.gov/p/io/c71574.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/io/c71574.htm)
Pope Francis, Homily at Lampedusa, July 8, 2013, online at: 

Elizabeth Ferris, The Politics of Protection: The Limits of Humanitarian Action


David Miliband, “From sector to system: reform and renewal in humanitarian aid,” speech at Georgetown University, April 27, 2016, online: 

Alexander Betts, “Our refugee system is failing. Here's how we can fix it,” TED talk, Feb., 2106, online: 
http://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_betts_our_refugee_system_is_failing_here_s_ho w_we_can_fix_it


1/26 Response to refugees, continued (this class will go from 3:30 to 4:45)

Framework: community membership or universal rights?


©Hugo Slim, “Not Philanthropy but Rights: Rights-Based Humanitarianism and the Proper Politicization of Humanitarian Philosophy in War,” 1-30, online at: 

Recommended:


Michael Walzer, Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad.

2/2 Cosmopolitanism and the populist challenge

Framework: Global community and cultural difference


Practical issue: responding to the challenge of nationalist populism today.


Recommended:


Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace," in Perpetual Peace and Other Essays, pp. 107-143. Also available online at: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm


2/9 Human rights and trans-border accountability

Framework: the meaning and enforcement of human rights


Practical issue: the use of torture to prevent terror


**Recommended**


UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, esp. arts 1-5. Online at: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx)


*Torture is a Moral Issue: A Catholic Study Guide*, available online at: [http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/stoptorture](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/stoptorture)


2/16 Special class—lecture by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

Georgetown’s Institute for the Study of Diplomacy will be awarding the "Jit" Trainor Award for Excellence in the Conduct of Diplomacy to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein. He will receive the award on February 16th at 4:30 pm at the United States Institute for Peace (2301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC). USIP will be the co-host of the talk he will give. ISD is arranging a bus for students to go from campus to the event. The bus will leave Main Gate (37th and O) at 3:30 and leave USIP at 6 pm. Since this timing fits with our class, all participants in the class will be expected to attend.

2/23 Gender Equality and Women’s rights

Framework: Equality of women in diverse cultures


Practical issue: responding to female genital mutilation:


Recommended:


Feb. 27: Special Session. Prof. Jeremy Waldron, will speak on campus on a topic related to his work on human dignity in the context of responses to violent extremism and terror. Students in this class are urged to attend.

3/2 Ethics of the use of force--Christian and Western Secular perspectives

Framework: Debates and Stances in the Christian and Western secular traditions


*Michael Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations, which has become a modern class, esp. chaps. 1-5, pp. 3-85.
Practical issue: Does nonviolent resistance to injustice work?


Recommended:

Video: Michael Walzer on Just War Theory, online at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcBovmGZSPU

© Augustine, selections on war in Arthur Holmes, ed., War and Christian Ethics, pp. 61-83.

© Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae, On war, II-II, q. 40, arts. 1-4, On killing, II-II, q. 64, arts. 6 and 7 ("Whether it is ever lawful to kill the innocent?" and "Whether it is lawful to kill a man in self-defense?").

Adam Roberts, Timothy Garton Ash, eds., Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present.


Video: Erica Chenoweth, “The success of nonviolent civil resistance,” TEDxBoulder, online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJSehRlU34w


3/9 No class—Spring Break

3/16 Islamic approaches to ethics, politics, and war

Framework: the pluralism and development of Muslim ethics of warfare

* John Kelsay Arguing the Just War in Islam, excerpts.

Practical issue: Should Islam be seen as religion of war?


Recommended:


Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice*

Reza Aslan, *No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*, esp. Preface and Prologue (pp. xiii-xxviii), and chaps. 1-5, 7, 9-10 (the entire book is valuable reading).


David Cook, *Understanding Jihad*

3/23 Religion in international affairs: faith communities and respect for the other

Visiting speaker: SHAUN CASEY, FORMER SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR RELIGION AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS, US DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

Framework: Religion in public.


Recommended:


**Practical Issue: How should US foreign policy-makers deal with religion?**


Recommended:


Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, Timothy Shah, *God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*.


U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), website, including USCIRF’s Annual Report, at: http://www.uscirf.gov/

US State Department, Office of International Religious Freedom. Website, including reports, at: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/irf/index.htm

US State Department, Office of Religion and Global Affairs. Website: http://www.state.gov/s/rga/index.htm

3/30 Civilians in war: Jus in bello and the responsibility to protect.

**Framework: jus in bello, terrorism and attacks on civilians,**

©Walzer, *Just and Unjust War*, chaps. 9, 11,12, 16-17, pp. 138-159, 176-206, 251-283.


**Practical issue: R2P: is it viable after Libya and Syria?**


Recommended:

- International Committee of the Red Cross, *Discover the ICRC*, online at: https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc-002-0790.pdf


4/6 Global distributive justice in the face of deprivation

**Framework: reflecting on experience and the role of social structures**


**Practical issue: Will aid or/and institutional change help alleviate poverty?**


Recommended:


© Thomas Pogge, “Eight Ways to End Poverty Now.”


© Mathias Risse, “Do We Owe the Global Poor Assistance or Rectification?” *Ethics and International Affairs* 19:1 (Spring 2005): 9-18.


4/13 No class—Easter Break

4/20 Global distributive justice: Jewish and Christian perspectives

**Framework: normative contributions from religious traditions**


**Practical issue: Action by NGOs: the Jubilee 2000 Campaign**


Recommended:


Jubilee Drop the Debt: http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk (See this site for information of the continuing campaign on debt of poor countries).


4/27 Global distributive justice-capabilities and human rights

Framework: Capability theory as an alternative development model.


Practical issue: women’s rights, gender equality and development.

*Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, chap. 8, pp. 189-203.


Recommended:


Martha Nussbaum, Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach.

Martha Nussbaum, Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach.