

Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Connections Category

Connections: Understanding Individual and Social Responsibility

Connections courses direct students to apply and integrate discipline-specific knowledge and skills to the significant issues challenging our individual and shared responsibility as global citizens. Students will learn to analyze and evaluate cultural contexts, examine issues on both a local and global scale, and apply system-level approaches to the stewardship of our social and physical environments. Although they may be used with a major or minor program, *Connections* courses are classes at the 200-level or above designed for the general student population, and may be taken *only after* students have earned at least 21 hours in **WKU Colonnade Program** coursework or have achieved junior status. *Connections* courses may not have graduate components or prerequisites other than approved courses within the **WKU Colonnade Program**.

Please complete the following and return electronically to colonnadeplan@wku.edu.

1. What course does the department plan to offer in *Connections*? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Social and Cultural, Local to Global, Systems)

PHIL 211: Why Are Bad People Bad?

Social and Cultural subcategory

2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory? Please address **all** of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.

Social and Cultural (3 hours)

Students will investigate ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures within which they live. Courses will consider the ethical questions and shared cultural values that shape societal norms and behaviors, the independent and collective or collaborative artistic expression of those values, and/or the role of social and cultural institutions in developing and sustaining norms, values, and beliefs.

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
 - Students will consider various theories of vice that examine how one's background (including one's culture) and situational influences contribute to the development of character. For example, students will discuss possible cultural and societal influences of tragedies such as the Holocaust and the Rwandan Genocide as well as the impact of traumatic experiences in childhood on a person's development. Students will consider both how bad individuals come to power as well as how groups interact in the face of evil.

2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
 - Students will study and evaluate various theories of human nature based on distinct ideas of values. For example, students will compare the views of philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, who developed theories of social contract and legitimate government based on radically distinct views of human nature in general, and how humans pursue and express value in particular.
 3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.
 - Students will study and consider various models of rehabilitation of the evil mind. Students will not only consider philosophical approaches to moral and social improvement from thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Marx and Foucault, but also they will survey and evaluate historical and contemporary attempts to improve society. For example, students will consider whether legally sanctioned deterrents such as the death penalty successfully discourage capital offenses, whether the right to free speech positively or negatively affects hate groups such as the KKK, and various attempts to minimize recidivism such as rehabilitation programs and “three strikes” policies on violent crime.
3. In addition to meeting the posted learning outcomes, how does this course contribute uniquely to the *Connections* category (i.e., why should this course be in Colonnade)? Discuss in detail.

This course provides students with a unique experience of evaluating the darker side of human nature while also considering moral implications and normative judgments. Unlike courses in Criminology, for example, this course will go beyond studying the phenomena and causes of criminal behavior by also considering bad behavior that is not criminal. For example, students will consider behavior typically viewed as immoral such as lying, cheating, promise-breaking, being weak-willed, and bullying others. While such behavior can manifest in ways that are illegal, oftentimes, such deplorable behavior is not a crime. In addition, students will learn how to make evaluative judgments of people’s character and moral worth. Students will evaluate moral shortcomings in historical cases (e.g., Nero, Elizabeth Bathory, Adolf Hitler, Adolf Eichmann, Aileen Wournos, Bin Laden, Richie Incognito, Bernie Madoff, Joseph Kony) as well as those found in literature (e.g., Odysseus, Judas Iscariot, Humbert Humbert, Cruella DeVille, Walter White). This course will encourage students to face their own shortcomings and it will challenge students to consider ways to avoid vice and follow a positive and productive path to self-development.

4. Please identify any prerequisites for this course. NOTE: Any prerequisites MUST be *Colonnade Foundations* or *Explorations* courses.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

5. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for the course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section’s syllabus.

Course Objectives:

This course aims to teach students how to:

1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts, and vocabulary of philosophy, including the concepts and techniques of argumentation, philosophical theories, and core techniques and concepts of the interpretation of philosophical texts.
 2. Analyze and evaluate philosophical arguments, (including a demonstrated ability to distinguish between valid and fallacious reasoning and to identify common logical fallacies); identify reliable sources; and distinguish between different types of philosophical evidence.
 3. Express themselves logically and objectively in both analytic and argumentative writing.
 4. Evaluate themselves and others as moral beings.
 5. Consider their own susceptibility to moral influences as well as potential effects their behavior might have on others.
6. Give a brief description of how the department will assess the course beyond student grades for these learning objectives.
- A. The department will use several questions, added to the final assignment, in order to assess how well the course's learning objectives are being met. The questions will require students to
 1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts, and vocabulary of philosophy, including the concepts and techniques of argumentation, philosophical theories, and core techniques and concepts of the interpretation of philosophical texts.
 2. Analyze and evaluate philosophical arguments, (including a demonstrated ability to distinguish between valid and fallacious reasoning and to identify common logical fallacies); identify reliable sources; and distinguish between different types of philosophical evidence.
 3. Express themselves logically and objectively in both analytic and argumentative writing.
 4. Evaluate themselves and others as moral beings.
 5. Consider their own susceptibility to moral influences as well as potential effects their behavior might have on others.
 - B. At the end of spring semester the answers of 30% of the students in each section of the course will be selected at random for assessment.
 - C. At the beginning of the next semester a faculty member will assess each answer. The names of the students and of the instructors for the sections will be eliminated before the assessment takes place.
 - D. Answers will be given one of four designations:
 - a. Excellent: The student has demonstrated proficiency in all outcomes.
 - b. Good: The student has demonstrated proficiency in most outcomes.
 - c. Fair: The student has demonstrated proficiency in some outcomes.
 - d. Poor: The student has demonstrated proficiency in no outcomes.
 - E. The results will be tabulated and given to the Department Head.
 - F. The Department Head will convene the relevant faculty to review the results and to determine what steps, if any, need to be taken in order to improve the instruction in the course.

7. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.

Students will be able to use cases learned throughout the course as evidence for positions concerning how best to deal with bad people in a society as well as how best to avoid becoming a bad person oneself. In addition to the use of anecdotal evidence, students will become familiar with statistics concerning prevalence of sociopathy in the U.S. (4% of the population), recidivism rates for different violent crimes, and the likelihood of a person repeating a cycle of abuse after being a victim. Students will have a grasp of basic views of human motivation and will be able to employ this knowledge when defending potential solutions to problems of human depravity.

8. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

At least one *per year*.

9. Please attach sample syllabus for the course. **PLEASE BE SURE THE PROPOSAL FORM AND THE SYLLABUS ARE IN THE SAME DOCUMENT.**

PHIL 211: *Why Are Bad People Bad?*

Course Logistics

Instructor:
Classroom:
Meeting times:
Office:
Office hours:
Office phone:
E-mail:

Course Description

In this course, we shall consider the timeless quandary, *why are bad people bad?* It is likely that this question (and many derivatives of it) has been asked in the minds of every human being at one time or another for millennia. People who tend to behave in standard socially acceptable ways are shocked by those who do not. Contemporary scholars examine past societies and present struggling areas and find it difficult to imagine how slavery or genocide ever seemed like a good idea. It is difficult for those of us who typically follow a basic moral code to imagine the motives that could drive someone to behave in such ways. On the other hand, it is likely that those who bully, torture, rape, and kill others—not to mention the more subtle and mundane (but similarly destructive) offenses like defrauding, misleading and betraying—wonder why everyone doesn't want to behave the same way.

Course Objectives

This course aims to teach students how to:

1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts, and vocabulary of philosophy, including the concepts and techniques of argumentation, philosophical theories, and core techniques and concepts of the interpretation of philosophical texts.
2. Analyze and evaluate philosophical arguments, (including a demonstrated ability to distinguish between valid and fallacious reasoning and to identify common logical fallacies); identify reliable sources; and distinguish between different types of philosophical evidence.
3. Express themselves logically and objectively in both analytic and argumentative writing.
4. Evaluate themselves and others as moral beings.
5. Consider their own susceptibility to moral influences as well as potential effects their behavior might have on others.

Texts

Kupperman, J. J. (2010). *Theories of Human Nature*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co.
Stout, M. (2005). *The Sociopath Next Door*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
Taylor, G. (2006). *Deadly Vices*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Various additional short texts provided through library resources.

Evaluation Distribution

Participation	10%
Quizzes and Tests	30%
Papers	40%
Class Activity	20%

Participation

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be active participants in course discussions. Students may participate actively in class, through the course discussion board, or a combination of the two.

Quizzes and Tests

Students will take short quizzes to encourage keeping up with course reading assignments (often administered at the beginning of the class). The instructor may administer quizzes at the end of class to assess student retention of material addressed that day. Students will be permitted to use their own notes when taking these quizzes (no other texts or resources will be permitted). The instructor may ask students to take a quiz or a test via Blackboard outside of class. Quizzes can be unannounced or planned and tests will be announced in advance.

Papers

Students will be assigned several papers throughout the semester of various lengths and types. Some will be 1-2 page response papers. Others will be analysis papers and argumentative papers (typically 4-6 pages). Students will write one final paper (7-10 pages).

Class Activity

The class will conduct a group activity to be determined by the end of the first month of the semester. Examples of class activities might include a research debate, a mock trial, or a group research project of the students' choosing.

Assignment schedule to be determined.