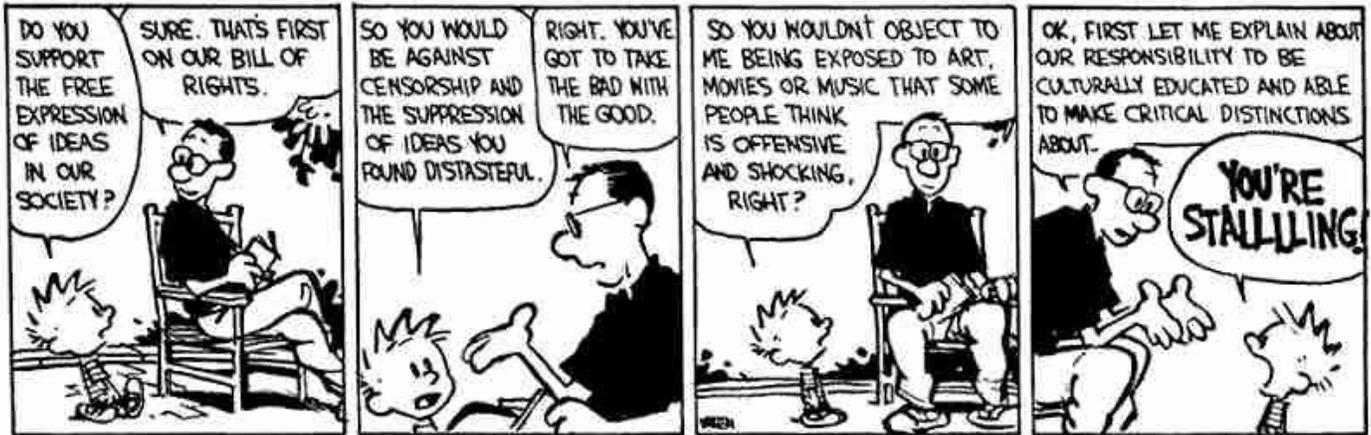# First-Year Seminar
Ethics and Speech
Fall 2017

Description

This course is an introduction to moral and political philosophy with special focus on speech. We will start with a survey of moral and political philosophy. Is morality more a matter of promoting happiness, respecting rights, or cultivating virtue, and is justice more a matter of equality, liberty, or community? We will then consider a variety of practical questions concerning speech including: What is the difference between education, manipulation, and propaganda? How should we morally and politically evaluate offensive speech, and what role if any should identity, privilege, and oppression play in these evaluations? Finally, what limits if any should the state place on free speech and why? Along the way, we will also consider the relevance of slurs, microaggressions, outing, social media, and more.

General Information

- Time: T/R 3:30-4:45
- Place: TBD
- Instructor: Jeff Sebo
- Email: jeffsebo@unc.edu
- Office: Caldwell #207B
- Office hours: T/R 5:00-6:00
- Course website: jeffsebo.net/teaching/

Readings

The required books for this class are:

- Julia Driver, *Ethics: The Fundamentals*
- William Lycan, *Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction*
- Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*
- Seanna Shiffrin, *Speech Matters*

You can find these books at the UNC-Chapel Hill bookstore as well as online. All readings not from the required books will be posted on Sakai and/or distributed by email.

Grading

Your grades will be determined as follows:

- **Papers** (60%): You will write two research papers and submit them by email to jeffsebo@unc.edu. For each paper, you can either create your own prompt (provided that you clear it with me in advance) or select from prompts that I create. Your first paper (30%) will be 8 pages long and due at 4pm on XXX, and your second paper (30%) will be 8 pages long and due at 4pm on XXX.

- **Daily Writing** (15%): Prior to each session, you will send an email to phil163dw@gmail.com with the subject heading Last Name Date (e.g. Smith 1/17) that (a) summarizes one of the main claims made in the reading and (b) presents a question or comment about that claim. Your DW can be brief (4-6 sentences), but it must demonstrate that you did the reading carefully and critically. This assignment is due no later than 2pm on the day of class. DWs will be graded Pass/Fail.

- **Presentation** (15%): Each student will give a 10 minute presentation about a real world example of the topic of discussion for that day of class. You should spend roughly half of your presentation describing the case study and roughly half of your presentation drawing connections with the topic of discussion.

- **Participation** (10%): I expect regular attendance and thoughtful participation from all students. You can participate by speaking in class, attending office hours, posting articles through Sakai, and more. My assessment of the quality of your performance on these items will account for 10% of your grade.

Policies

- Laptops/Cell Phones: Laptops are allowed, but only for taking notes. Cell phones must be on silent.

- Special Accommodations: If you need special accommodations, please let me know so that I can properly assist you.

- Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See the UNC Writing Center Handout on Plagiarism, available online, for more information.

- Late Papers/Extensions/Incompletes: Late papers will lose 1/3 letter grade for each day late. Late DW assignments will be accepted for half credit up until the start of class. Extensions and incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. If you would like to request either, please do so in advance.

Schedule

- **Week 1 - Introduction**
  8/22 - Introduction
  8/24 - Dale Jamieson, "Human morality"

- **Week 2 - Moral and political philosophy 1**
  8/29 - Julia Driver, "Consequentialism"
  8/31 - Julia Driver, "Kantian ethics"

- **Week 3 - Moral and political philosophy 2**
  9/5 - Julia Driver, "Virtue ethics"
  9/7 - Will Kymlicka, "Liberal equality"

- **Week 4 - Moral and political philosophy 3**
  9/12 - Will Kymlicka, "Libertarianism"
  9/14 - Will Kymlicka, "Communitarianism"

- **Week 5 - The nature of speech**
  9/19 - William Lycan, "Speech acts and illocutionary force"
  9/21 - William Lycan, "Implicative relations"

- **Week 6 - The value of speech**
  9/26 - John Stuart Mill, "On liberty"
  9/28 - Elizabeth Anderson, "The epistemology of democracy"

- **Week 7 - Education and manipulation**
  10/3 - Paulo Freire, "Pedagogy of the oppressed"
  10/5 - Iris Marion Young, "Activist challenges to deliberative democracy"

- **Week 8 - Lying, bullshit, and propaganda**
  10/10 - Seanna Shiffrin, "Lies and the murderer next door"
  10/12 - Harry Frankfurt, "On bullshit," Jason Stanley, "Language as a mechanism of control"

- **Week 9 - Dogwhistles**
  10/17 - Jennifer Saul, "Dogwhistles, political manipulation, and the philosophy of language"
  10/19 - Fall break - no class

- **Week 10 - Oppression**
  10/24 - Kristie Dotson, "Tracking epistemic violence, tracking practices of silencing"
  10/26 - Nora Berenstain, "Epistemic exploitation"

- **Week 11 - Marginalization**
  10/31 - Ishani Maitra, "Subordinating speech"
  11/2 - Cassie Herbert & Rebecca Kukla, "The pragmatics of peripheral speech"

- **Week 12 - Slurs**
  11/7 - Elizabeth Camp, "Slurring perspectives"
  11/9 - Kenneth Himma, "On the definition of unconscionable racial and sexual slurs"

- **Week 13 - Microaggressions**
  11/14 - Derald Wing Sue, "The manifestation of racial, gender, and sexual-orientation microaggressions"
  11/16 - Greg Lukianoff and Jon Haidt, "The coddling of the American mind"

- **Week 14 - Outing**
  11/21 - Raja Halwani, "Outing and virtue ethics"
  11/23 - Thanksgiving break - No class

- **Week 15 - Censorship**
  11/28 - Seanna Shiffrin, "Lying and freedom of speech"
  11/30 - David Brink, "Millian principles, freedom of expression, and hate speech"

- **Week 16 - The frontiers of speech**
  12/5 - Karen Frost-Arnold, "The epistemic pitfalls of internet accountability"