

EXDS 2001(04): The Nature and Value of Communities (3 credits)  
Dr. Erica L. Neely  
Fall 2016

Place and Time: Burgett 115, MWF 1-1:50 p.m.  
Email address: e-neely@onu.edu  
Office Hours: MWF 10-11 a.m., 2-3 p.m., and by appointment  
Text: **All readings are available as .pdfs on the course web page**  
Web page: <https://northernonline.onu.edu/>

Aims and Objectives

This course looks at communities from a value-theoretic standpoint, drawing on readings by both classical and contemporary philosophers. We will begin by asking what it takes to be a member of a community in general and, in particular, to be a member of our moral community. Do we extend membership (and thus ethical consideration) to all animals? All humans? All persons (which might not be the same as all humans?) We explore the boundaries of our community through readings about animal rights, and personhood.

In the second section we address first whether communities are necessary – is the human condition such that we cannot avoid forming some kind of communal bonds? We then ask whether communities have intrinsic value; is there value simply in being a member of a community? Furthermore, what happens if an individual's needs conflict with those of the community – which takes precedence? Are there some rights that a society cannot take away from an individual? We also examine how extensive a society's right to regulate individual behavior is, particularly with regard to the question of drug addiction; is this a personal choice or something which a society legitimately can regulate?

In the third section we address a different kind of relation between community and value, namely, to what extent communities are responsible for creating value and the problems which arise from globalization and conflicts in community values. This breaks into several subsections. First, we consider questions concerning national communities and globalization: what benefits and harms arise from an emphasis on national communities? How does this interact with the increasing emphasis on global communities and globalization? Second, we consider relativism: are values simply a matter of community agreement? If so, how do we deal with the multitude of different values around the world? Furthermore, how are a community's value commitments reflected in its practices? For that matter, are a community's values always obvious or are they sometimes are reflected in places we don't expect? In particular, we discuss whether community values sneak into practices we often take to be responsible mainly to objective notions of truth, such as scientific inquiry.

Assignments and Grading

Participation	20%
Short Paper	10%
Half Paper	20%
Outline of Final Paper	10%
Final Paper	40%

*Participation* – This course will involve a fair amount of discussion; you need to read the material before class and come prepared with questions and ideas. Since participation will be a factor in your final grade, if you are shy about speaking in class, you may share your thoughts with me through email or after class. There will be a group project in Unit Two that counts towards participation as well.

Furthermore, **every day you need to bring an index card to class with your name on it, a one-sentence or so summary of the reading for the day, and a discussion question about the reading.** If there are multiple readings for that day, you should have a summary and question for each reading; if a reading stretches over multiple days, a further summary is not required, but an additional discussion question should be provided on subsequent days. These will be collected and count toward your participation grade; **late cards will not be accepted.**

*Short Paper* – This is a 4 page paper on an assigned topic, the purpose of which is to give you an opportunity to receive detailed feedback on how to construct a rigorous philosophical argument prior to tackling the subsequent papers.

**All remaining assignments contribute towards the final paper.**

*Half Paper* – **This paper is roughly 6 pages and will serve as a basis which you will extend into your final paper;** it will address foundational questions about the nature and value of communities. You will receive a handout with more information (and topics) closer to the due date. This may be revised before it is incorporated into your final paper.

*Final Paper Outline* – **This is an outline of your final paper.** It should include which sources you will be using; it should also explain how you will develop the half paper into the full final paper. Note that this may involve a discussion of how you will need to revise or edit your half paper in order to make it fit well with your final topic.

*Final Paper* – **This paper is roughly 12 pages and should include material from your half paper;** you will extend that using topics we have covered in the remainder of the course. You will receive a handout with more information (and topic suggestions) later in the semester.

Your papers must demonstrate an ability for philosophical thought – I am not interested in a book report; I want to read your criticisms, arguments, and ideas. I am willing to read outlines of your half paper and rough drafts of your half paper or final paper.

**Papers are due in class;** if you know that you will be absent on a day something is due, please make arrangements to have a classmate hand it in or leave it in my mailbox. Unless something extraordinary prevents you from turning your assignments in on time, late papers will be dropped one step for each day that they are late. (Hence an A- paper that is one day late will be a B+ paper; if it is two days late it will be a B, etc.)

## Other Information

Although final grades are limited to whole letter grades, individual assignments will use the plus/minus scale; this will enable you to see whether your B is closer to an A or closer to a C.

A day-by-day schedule of readings is included in this syllabus; assignments should be completed prior to class on the date they are listed. You may find it helpful to bring copies of the readings or your notes on them to class so that you may reference them during class discussion.

## Special Note on Academic Dishonesty

The University expects its students to conduct themselves in a dignified and honorable manner as mature members of the academic community and assumes that individually and collectively they will discourage acts of academic dishonesty. The University also expects cooperation among administrators, faculty, staff, and students in preventing acts of academic dishonesty, in detecting such acts, reporting them, and identifying those who commit them, and in providing appropriate punishment for offenders. The University Code of Academic Student Conduct is found in Appendix C of the Student Handbook: [http://www.onu.edu/student\\_life/student\\_conduct/student\\_handbook](http://www.onu.edu/student_life/student_conduct/student_handbook)

Committing academic dishonesty in this class will result in an automatic failure in the course; the administration may pursue additional sanctions.

## Note on Accommodation

Students requiring particular accommodations because of physical and/or learning disabilities should contact their Dean's office prior to or during the first week of classes. For additional information, see: [http://www.onu.edu/student\\_life/disability\\_services](http://www.onu.edu/student_life/disability_services)

## Day-by-Day Reading and Assignments

### August

M 8/22 First day of class  
W 8/24 Introduction

### *Section One: Communities and Community Membership: Who and What Are We?*

F 8/26 "Ethics in Community" (Ernest W. Ranly)  
"Two Concepts of Community" (Erica L. Neely)  
M 8/29 "Nasty, brutish, and short" (Angus Taylor)  
W 8/31 "All Animals are Equal" (Peter Singer)

### September

F 9/2 "The Moral Status of Animals" (Roger Scruton)

- M 9/5 **No Class – Labor Day**  
 W 9/7 No new readings  
 F 9/9 “The Land Ethic” (Aldo Leopald)
- M 9/12 “Biomedical Ethics” (K. Danner Clouser)  
 “The Personhood Argument in Favor of Abortion” (Mary Anne Warren)  
 W 9/14 No new readings

*Section Two: Communities – Necessity and Value; Conflict Between Individual and Community*

- F 9/16 Excerpts from *A Treatise of Human Nature* (David Hume)
- M 9/19 Excerpts from *The Social Contract* (Jean-Jacques Rousseau)  
 W 9/21 No new readings  
 F 9/23 **Hume and Rousseau Project Work Day**
- M 9/26 **Hume and Rousseau Project Presentations**  
 W 9/28 “Individual and Community” (James Hudson)  
 F 9/30 No new readings  
**Short Paper Due**

October

- M 10/3 “The Value of Community” (John E. Smith)  
 W 10/5 Excerpts from “The Virtues of Common Pursuit” (Nancy Sherman)  
 F 10/7 “Proletarians and Communists” (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels)  
 “Of the Limits to the Authority of Society over the Individual (John Stuart Mill)
- M 10/10 **No Class – Fall Break**  
 W 10/12 No new readings  
 F 10/14 “Does Privacy Undermine Community?” (Mark Tunick)
- M 10/17 “Paternalism” (Gerald Dworkin)  
 W 10/19 “The Ethics of Addiction” (Thomas Szasz)  
 F 10/21 “Is There a Duty to Die?” (John Hardwig)
- M 10/24 No new readings  
**Half Paper Due**

*Section Three: How Communities Create Value – Globalization and Relativism*

- W 10/26 “In Defense of Nationality” (David Miller)  
 F 10/28 No new readings
- M 10/30 “National Identity and Citizenship” (Ross Poole)

## November

- W 11/2 “On the Making of Transnational Identities in the Age of Globalization: The US Latina/o – ‘Latin’ American Case” (Daniel Mato)
- F 11/4 **No Class – Instructor Absence**
- M 11/7 No new readings
- W 11/9 “Localism, Globalism and Cultural Identity” (Mike Featherstone)
- F 11/11 “The ‘International Community’: Facing the Challenge of Globalization” (Bruno Simma and Andreas L. Paulus)
- M 11/14 “Custom is King” (Herodotus)  
“A Defense of Ethical Relativism” (Ruth Benedict)  
“A Defense of Ethical Objectivism” (Louis P. Pojman)
- W 11/16 No new readings
- F 11/18 “Objectivity, Values, and History” (Eric Matthews)  
**Final Paper Outline Due**
- M 11/21 **No Class – Thanksgiving Break**
- W 11/23 **No Class – Thanksgiving Break**
- F 11/25 **No Class – Thanksgiving Break**
- M 11/28 “Objective Knowledge and Objective Value” (Errol E. Harris)
- W 11/30 Excerpts from *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Thomas Kuhn)

## December

- F 12/2 No new readings
- M 12/5 Selections from *Science as Social Knowledge* (Helen E. Longino)  
Selections from *Reflections on Gender and Science* (Evelyn Fox Keller)
- W 12/7 No new readings
- F 12/9 Closing Class Activity
- W 12/14 Final Paper Due, 11 a.m.**

## Important Dates

- F 9/23 Hume and Rousseau Project Work Day
- M 9/26 Hume and Rousseau Project Presentations
- F 9/30 Short Paper Due
- M 10/24 Half Paper Due
- F 11/4 No Class – Instructor Absence
- F 11/18 Final Paper Outline Due
- W 12/14 Final Paper Due, 11 a.m.