



## Course Syllabus

### Examining Social Issues in the Light of Reason, Part 2

#### Course Summary:

This course is the second of a two course series which will examine the most controversial social and ethical issues in Western culture – with the goal of clarifying rational positions on several issues so a person can understand the issues clearly and perhaps come to a sound, reasonable basis for holding a position.

#### Course Experience:

Western culture is experiencing significant change and conflict in regard to social issues. Issues like free speech, gun control, identity politics, increasing racial tensions, a new sexual revolution, abortion, capital punishment, and whether capitalism or socialism are better socio-economic systems - are all discussed regularly and are dividing more and more people. Many on either side of an each issue seem to no longer be able to speak to one another in a civil manner. This animosity and conflict should be a concern to all who live in Western nations, and solutions should be sought to reduce the hostility and encourage **thoughtful dialogue**. That will start with a personal commitment to understand one's positions on any of these issues and have **sound reasons for defending one's views**.

Part two of this class will continue from things learned in Part 1, and continue to examine the most controversial social issues currently tearing many U.S. citizens apart.

The goal of the course will be to encourage reason over emotionalism, and thus to bring clarity to the issues so the learner can understand why they have a position on an issue; whether a certain position has more merit than another (passes the test of logic better or has fewer contradicting ethical tenants); and thus be able to understand and defend their position using well-reasoned arguments.

In summary, the following issues will be covered in the following order:

- **LGBTQ and Transgenderism:** Shielded from Any Criticism?
- **Pro-Choice versus Pro-Life:** Which Choices and Which Lives?
- **Immigration:** Open Borders or Vetting?
- **Is Islam** a Religion of Peace?
- **Capitalism Versus Socialism:** Which is Better?
- **The U.S. Medical System:** Greed Driven or Compassion Driven?



## **Prerequisites & Age & Ability Recommendations:**

It is highly recommended that the student have taken Part 1 of this course series, OR **The Art of Arguing: Reason Matters in Everyday Life!**; and **An Intro to Ethics: Evaluating Ethical Frameworks and Popular Ethical Concepts** prior to this class. This Part 1 course will offer a summary or primer on those two classes built into the first two classes, however, that summary will not be as 'discussion oriented' as the full classes since the student should have taken the prior two courses. This course is appropriate for advanced 8<sup>th</sup> graders to adults.

## **Content Review by Week:**

### **LGBTQ and Transgenderism: Shielded from Any Criticism?: (Week 1)**

- While reasonable people can agree that harming or persecuting people who are not harming others is morally wrong, are their aspects to the sexual revolution that are troubling?
- If a person simply disagrees that homosexuality is morally right or healthy, why is that person accused of hatred when they don't hate homosexuals?
- Why are those with views which don't uncritically support homosexual rights being demonized, shut out of a conversation and even persecuted?
- What is the relationship between sex and gender, and is gender fluidity supported by facts, reason and experience?

### **Pro-Choice versus Pro-Life: Which Choices and Which Lives (Week 2)**

- We will determine if the argument can reasonably be framed as only a women's choice, thus ignoring some other choices as well as the consequence of one particular choice.
- Is this issue a litmus test for the moral soundness of a culture?
- Money and abortion.
- Why is this issue in particular so charged with emotion?

### **Immigration: Open Borders or Vetting? (Week 3)**

- Most can agree that immigration is both necessary and potentially beneficial for all nations. The critical issue is should any group of people – including those making up a democratic nation state – be able to choose or vet those people wanting to join the group through immigration?
- Can a nation implement immigration policies if they have borders that are open?
- What would be an ideal immigration policy?
- Compassion versus cost. Where is the line drawn?



### **Is Islam a Religion of Peace? (Week 4)**

- Is Islam is wrongly singled out among the other major religions as having more significant problems, or does Islam itself has some disturbing components which seem to contradict the claim that it is a “peaceful religion”.
- Is the confusion one of ideology versus religion, or is it more fundamental than that?
- How should relatively free, democratic nations handle devout Muslims?

### **Capitalism Versus Socialism: Which is Better? (Week 5)**

- A great mistake is often made when examining these issues if key concepts are not defined at the beginning of the discussion. This is a classic example of this error. If we start properly defining what capitalism and socialism are, we can have a much more fruitful discussion. If we just throw incorrect concepts at each other, we will go nowhere.
- Does the U.S. have significant socialistic components to its society?
- How does individual greed affect capitalism and free market places?

### **The U.S. Medical System: Greed Driven or Compassion Driven (Week 6)**

- Finally, we will consider some aspects of the U.S. medical system and determine how some of its practices stand up to a clear moral ethic. The basic question is, if a group of people or a nation state is able, should health care or medical services be available to all people without money playing a significant role in any given individual’s ability to receive those services?
- How accountable are physicians for their actions?
- What role do insurance companies have and is their role being executed beneficially for average citizens?
- How could the U.S. medical services industry be fixed if it is broken?

### **What Items or materials are provided with the course?**

- This syllabus.
- A student version of each class’s content will be made available prior to the class on the Materials page for the class on the web site, so students don’t have to take notes (creating a logic account on the web site is required to access these documents).
- Homework is not required but will be provided upon student’s request. If a student requests homework, the answers will also be available in documents on the Materials page for the class on the web site, so students don’t have to take notes (creating a logic account on the web site is required to access these documents).