

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (SAMPLE)

PHILOSOPHY: 102

Course Instructor: Donovan Muir
Room Location: Storm Hall 241
Scheduled Week: MWF 11-11:50am
Prerequisites: None

Office Hours: Mon 4:30-6:30PM
Office Location: AL 431
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Fall 2009

Course Description

This course introduces the fundamental features of ethical theory. The primary areas of emphasis include particular western, non-western, and contemporary schools of ethical thought. We will discuss and study how these schools developed, what these schools have to teach us about how we think, behave, and participate in our world, and our responsibility to ourselves and others. Through reading, lecture, discussion, and presentations, students will become acquainted with ethical issues in the history of philosophy. For example, students will explore some of the puzzles that philosophers concern themselves with, such as the nature of responsibility and accountability, obligation, ethical egoism, moral authority, and ethical reasoning. Students will also gain a basic understanding contemporary ethical issues concerning the environment, business, medical and biological ethics, and technological ethics. Students will also enhance their critical thinking skills such that their beliefs can be better grounded in a good understanding of the ethical issues at stake and tempered with an appreciation of opposing views.

General Outcomes

- To develop an understanding of ethical theories in diverse disciplines and traditions
- To address basic areas of ethical reasoning by teaching students how to ask critical questions in difficult ethical contexts
- To develop techniques of argumentation and skillful writing
- To acquaint students with many underlying philosophical ideas throughout history
- To help students learn how to collect, organize, and interpret data using various research tools
- To demonstrate how ethical reasoning can help students make informed decisions by applying philosophical knowledge to everyday life experiences and real-life situations
- Most importantly, to encourage critical self-reflection

Course Outcomes

After completion of this course, the student will have the general understanding and application of:

- Creating the capacity and disposition to think ethically in a variety of contexts
- Acquiring information needed to have a reasonable and responsible opinion
- Creating a sense of fairness and respect for individual opinion necessary for cogent and respectful discussion
- Identifying ethical problems and issues and formulating philosophical questions
- Assessing and evaluating competing ethical arguments
- Articulating and defending satisfactory ethical positions of their own
- Distinguishing between matters of pure fact or opinion
- Identifying a hidden assumptions and articulating those assumptions

- Applying critical thinking skills and strategies for clear and precise ethical argumentation, composition, structure, and articulation
- Creating a mutual respect for diverse traditions outside of his or her own

Course Texts and Materials

- **Prof. Muir: *Philosophy 101- Introduction to Ethics***. The course text (packet) has been compiled by the instructor and is available in the campus bookstore
- Other course texts and materials will be provided to the student by the instructor in the form of hand-outs, audio/visual material, and online sources

Course Assignments

3 Assessment Essays (2-3 Page Papers)

(5 points each. 15 points total)

These papers will summarize and evaluate a particular philosopher or an ethical theory covered in class. In these essays, the student is expected to: 1) summarize a philosopher's ethical position or an ethical theory; 2) address specific attributes of that position and; 3) provide a developed and well-reasoned evaluation of that position. In the last part of the essay (3) students should ask themselves if they agree or disagree with that position and provide a detailed explanation of their views.

- Students must use the critical thinking tools and ethical theories covered in class and the course text(s).
- All papers must be typed, double spaced, 12pt font (Times New Roman), with 1" margins.
- All pages must be numbered and must have the student's name, course name and section number, course meeting time, and instructor's name in a header on the top right hand corner of the first page of the paper only.
- All papers must be stapled prior to turning them in.

3 Exams

(20 points each; 60 points total)

Each in-class exam will be in handout format and will be composed of a combination of multiple-choice, true/false, definition, identification, and short-answer essay questions. There will be a short study guide and overview of the text given during class time prior to the day of the exam. Exams will take place at the end of that scheduled week.

1 Final Term Paper

(20 Points) (5-7 pages, 12pt Times New Roman, Double Spaced, 1" Margins)

The final term paper will be the same format as the assessment essays. The term paper topic will be of your choosing. However, the paper must be structured according to **one** of the following three options:

Option #1: A developed, in-depth argument of your own centered on a topic discussed in class.

Option #2: An accurate and formal analysis of an ethical position other than your own.

Option #3: A fully developed and well-reasoned counter-argument *against* a specific philosopher or ethical theory.

The final term paper will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- **Mandatory:** *You must consult with me before finalizing your essay option choice, topic, and argument.*
- Spelling, grammar, and organization
- Use of course text, lectures, and materials
- An accurate, honest, and historically responsible account of a philosopher's or tradition's position (i.e. No Straw Men or *Ad Hominems*, etc.)
- Whether or not the student followed the directions provided above and according to the directions of the essay option the student chose
- **Note:** When citing sources in your term paper, be sure to use the most recent *Chicago Manual Style* (CMS) or *Modern Language Association* (MLA) style guides. I will provide a short lesson on citing sources, and I have provided a series of online resources at the end of this syllabus that students can use for directions concerning proper citing.

Participation

(5 points)

Students are expected to participate regularly in class discussions and activities. Participation points will be based upon student involvement, attendance, and extra credit pop-quizzes.

Extra Credit

(2 points each)

Extra credit will consist of spontaneous pop-quizzes given when the instructor sees fit. The pop-quizzes will involve an in-class short-answer essay on the course readings or lectures. Extra credit is not required but may assist in increasing your grade. I strongly suggest that students take advantage of this opportunity by attending class regularly and by being prepared to be quizzed on the course material.

Course Evaluations

# of Assignments	Assignment	Points per/Assign	Point Total
3	2-3 pg. Papers	5pts	15 pts
3	In-Class Exams	20pts	60 pts
1	Final Essay	20pts	20 pts
participation			5pts
TOTAL			100PTS

Grading Scale

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	64-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-63%
C+	77-79%	F	59% -

Course Schedule

Section 1. Introduction to Ethics

Week 1: Introduction to the Introduction to Ethics, the Syllabus, and Course Content

Week 2: Utilitarianism

Readings:

- 1) *Utilitarianism*; *UtilitarianismFAQ*; and *Utilitarianism Primer* at (<http://www.utilitarian.com/>)

Week 3: Deontological Ethics and the Categorical Imperative

Readings:

- 1) *Deontological Theories* at “Online Guide to Ethics and Moral Philosophy” (<http://caae.phil.cmu.edu/cavalier/80130/index.html>)
- 2) *Categorical Imperative* at “Kant and the Categorical Imperative” (<http://members.fortunecity.com/rsrevision/kantandthecatimp.htm>)

Due: Friday – Assignment Paper #1

Week 4: Golden Rule Ethics and Consequentialist Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *Golden Rule* at “Ethics08-Golden Rule” (<http://www.jcu.edu/philosophy/gensler/et/et-08-00.htm>)
- 2) *Consequentialism* at “Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy” (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/c/conseque.htm>)

Review for Exam #1

Section 2. Ethical Relativism

Week 5: Virtue Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *Virtue Ethics* at “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy” (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-virtue/>)
- 2) *Virtue Ethics* at “Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy” (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/v/virtue.htm>)

Exam #1 (Week 1-4)

Week 6: Nietzsche’s “Good and Evil”

Readings:

- 1) *Beyond Good and Evil: Chapter 1* (<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/nietzsche/1886/beyond-good-evil/ch01.htm>)
- 2) *Beyond Good and Evil: Chapter 2* (<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/nietzsche/1886/beyond-good-evil/ch02.htm>)

Week 7: Existentialist Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *Introduction to Existential Ethics* at “Existential Primer”
(http://www.tameri.com/csw/exist/ex_ethics.html)

Due: Assignment Paper #2

Week 8: Buddhist Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *The Four Noble Truths* and *The Eightfold Path* at “TheBigView.com”
(<http://thebigview.com/buddhism/>)
- 2) Handout: *Buddhist Ethics* by Jay Garfield
(www.smith.edu/philosophy/documents/BMT.pdf)

Review for Exam #2

Section 3. Contemporary Ethical Issues

Week 9: Environmental Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *Environmental Ethics* at “Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy”
(<http://www.iep.utm.edu/e/envi-eth.htm>)
- 2) *Topic in Environmental Ethics* at “The Online Gadfly”
(<http://gadfly.igc.org/e-ethics/ee-topic.htm>)

Exam #2 (Week 5-8)

Week 10: Animal Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *Animals and Ethics* at “Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy”
(<http://www.iep.utm.edu/a/anim-eth.htm>)
- 2) *The Moral Status of Animals* at “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy”
(<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-animal/>)

Week 11: Medical Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *Handouts*

Due: Assignment Paper #3

Week 12: Business Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *Frequently Asked Questions* at “The Institute for Business Ethics”
(<http://www.ibe.org.uk/faq.htm#whatbe>)
- 2) *Business Ethics* at “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy”
(<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-business/>)

Review for Exam #3

Section 4. Ethics of the Future

Week 13: Ethics in Cyberspace

Readings:

- 1) *Ethics in Cyberspace* by Dr. Thomas Donaldson
(<http://lgst.wharton.upenn.edu/donaldst/Documents/Business%20and%20Society%20Article2%20Locked.pdf>)
- 2) *Multimedia, Cyberspace & Ethics*
(Handout)

Exam #3 (Week 9-12)

Week 14: Technological Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *Phenomenological Approaches to Ethics and Informational Technology* at “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy”
(<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-it-phenomenology/>)
- 2) *Technological Revolutions: Ethics and Policy in the Dark*
(www.nickbostrom.com/revolutions.pdf)

Week 15: Clone and Robot Ethics

Readings:

- 1) *Double or Nothing* by Robin K. Sterns PhD at “Santa Clara University”
(<http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/submitted/sterns/doublenothing.html>)
- 2) *Scientist Calls For Robot Ethics Guidelines*
(http://www.news.com.au/technology/story/0,25642,24822507-5014239,00.html?from=public_rss)
- 3) *Robot Code of Ethics to Prevent Android Abuse, Protect Humans* at “National Geographic”
(<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/03/070316-robot-ethics.html>)

Week 16: Ethics of the Machine

Readings:

- 1) *Ethics for Machines*
(<http://www.kurzweilai.net/articles/art0218.html?printable=1>)
- 2) *What is Computer Ethics?* by James H. Moor
(http://www.southernct.edu/organizations/rccs/resources/teaching/teaching_mono/moor/moor_invisibility.html)

NOTE: Be sure to read all four topics.

- A Proposed Definition
- The Revolutionary Machine
- Anatomy of the Computer Revolution
- The Invisibility Factor

Due: FINAL TERM PAPER (due no later than 5pm on Friday at my office)

Special Needs Students

Any students with special needs are asked to consult Disabled Student Services for accommodations. I will do my best to make sure that all students are comfortable and are able to attend classes with ease. Any questions, suggestions, or complaints are greatly appreciated and will be addressed promptly.

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted unless the student can provide compelling evidence and reasoning for late work. However, late work will be graded down (10%) corresponding to how many days late the work is turned in from the due date given above. Compelling evidence is a doctor's note or other forms of evidence, either verbal or written.

Make-Up Policy

Students are allowed to make-up one (1) exam only, provided that they supply legitimate reasons why they missed the exam. Since I offer extra credit, students do not have the ability to make-up paper assignments.

Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices

Cell Phones

Cell phones and other electronic devices MUST be turned off prior to the beginning of class. If there is an emergency call, you can leave the classroom to answer or to make a call. **NO PHONE CALLS OR TEXT MESSAGING WILL TAKE PLACE DURING CLASS.** Students who violate this rule will kindly be asked to leave for the remainder of the class meeting. I understand that cell phones can accidentally ring during class time, but please be mindful of the distractions they cause.

Laptops

Laptops are not allowed during the class meeting. They can be noisy and distracting to other students and can be cumbersome in small classrooms.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work. Plagiarism by students is considered academic dishonesty or academic fraud and offenders are subject to academic censure. This includes a failing grade in the class or academic expulsion from the college. Please see the Student Handbook for the college policy on plagiarism and how to avoid it. **BE SURE TO CITE YOUR SOURCES CORRECTLY WHENEVER YOU ARE QUOTING SOMEONE.**

Additional Resources for Writing Philosophy Essays

Ethics Websites

- The Ethics Classroom
<http://www.ethicsclassroom.info/FAQ.ASP?QID=3>
- The Online Guide to Ethics and Moral Philosophy

<http://caae.phil.cmu.edu/Cavalier/80130/>

Writing Philosophy Essays Websites:

- Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
- Writing a Philosophy Paper
<http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/writing.htm>

Essay Writing Style Guide Sites:

- Chicago Manual Style (CMS) Guidelines (Quick Guide)
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
- Modern Language Association (MLA) Guidelines (The OWL at Purdue U.)
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>