

PHILOSOPHY 1300
INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (SPRING 2015)

Course Description:

What is the morally right thing to do? What should I think about vegetarianism, euthanasia, abortion, and whether I should be giving more to charity? Are there general principles that can help guide me through life's moral challenges? Philosophy 1300 introduces students to major ethical traditions by focusing on real-world problems. Students are given the tools to break down moral problems and to articulate their own moral commitments.

GEC Category and Expected Learning Outcomes:

Philosophy 1300 satisfies the Arts and Sciences General Education Requirement under the category of "Cultures & Ideas." Its goals and expected learning outcomes are as follows:

Goals: Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

Expected Learning Outcomes: 1. Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression. 2. Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

In Philosophy 1300, students will read and critically evaluate significant philosophical works that address the foundations of moral judgments, "the norms which guide human behavior". Students will examine and interpret how human values are explored in both classic and contemporary philosophical writings. Through critical engagement with these works, they will develop their capacity for interpretation and evaluation of philosophical theories and arguments.

Texts:

Readings (or links to readings) will be available on the Carmen website for the course.

Schedule of lectures, readings, and assignments:

NOTES:

- (1) Recitation sections will be on Fridays each week. Only T/Th lectures are listed below, but the recitations will address the readings and lectures from earlier in the week.
- (2) Readings marked with triple-asterisks (***) require a brief comment. These will count toward the participation grade. These must be submitted on Carmen before the beginning of the lecture for which the readings are assigned. The format of these comments will be described in class. No late submissions accepted.

Introduction and Overview

Jan 13 Syllabus review and survey of major themes and aims of course

Utilitarianism in Theory

Jan 15 John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* ch. 2

Utilitarianism as a Consequentialist Theory

Jan 20 Philip Pettit, "Introduction to Consequentialism"

Utilitarianism in Practice I

Jan 22 Peter Singer, "Rich and Poor"

Utilitarianism in Practice II

Jan 27 Garrett Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics"

Utilitarianism in Practice III

Jan 29 ***Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal"
R.G. Frey, "A Utilitarian Critique of Animal Rights"

Problems for Utilitarianism I

Feb 3 John Rawls, "Classical Utilitarianism"
Robert Nozick, "Side Constraints"

Problems for Utilitarianism II

Feb 5 ***Bernard Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism"

Deontology in Theory I

Feb 10 Immanuel Kant, "Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals"

Deontology in Practice I

Feb 12 Immanuel Kant, "Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals"

Deontology in Practice I

Feb 17 Onora O'Neill, "A Simplified Version of Kant's Ethics: Perplexities of Famine and World Hunger"

Deontology in Practice II

Feb 19 ***Tom Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights"
Mary Anne Warren, "A Critique of Regan's Animal Rights Theory"

Deontology as Trolley-ology

Feb 24 Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Turning the Trolley"

Problems for Deontology

Feb 26 Peter Singer, "Ethics and Intuitions"

Review Day for Midterm

Mar 3 No reading, but bring questions

MIDTERM

Mar 5 In-class exam

****March 6: NO RECITATIONS******Euthanasia I**

Mar 10 ***James Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”

Euthanasia II

Mar 12 Thomas Sullivan, “Active and Passive Euthanasia: A Reply to Rachels”

NO CLASS MARCH 17, 19, 20 – SPRING BREAK**Abortion I**

Mar 24 Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”

Abortion II

Mar 26 Mary Anne Warren, “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion”

Abortion III

Mar 31 ***Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral”

The Harm Principle I

April 2 John Stuart Mill, excerpt from *On Liberty*

The Harm Principle II

Apr 7 John Stuart Mill, excerpt from *On Liberty*

Legal Moralism

Apr 9 Irving Kristol, “Pornography, Obscenity, and the Case for Censorship”
Joel Feinberg, excerpt from *Harmless Wrongdoing*

Libertarian Paternalism I

Apr 14 Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler, excerpt from *Nudge*

Libertarian Paternalism II

Apr 16 Sarah Conly, *Against Autonomy* excerpt

Resisting Libertarian Paternalism

Apr 21 Jeremy Waldron, “It’s All for Your Own Good”

APRIL 22-FINAL PAPER DUE BY MIDNIGHT**Review Day**

Apr 23 Conclusion of class and review for final

Final Exam

May 4 (Monday), 8:00am-9:45am

Course Requirements:

Assignment	Due date	Weight
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Midterm	March 5, in class	25%
Paper (~1500 words)	Submitted electronically on Carmen by midnight Apr 22; specific format required	25%
Final Exam	May 4, 8-9:45AM	30%
Participation (including attendance, class contributions, and 5 comments)	Ongoing; comments must be submitted electronically on Carmen before class on the day for which the relevant reading was assigned. No late submissions on these.	20%

Grading scheme: A: 93-100, A-: 90-92.9, B+: 87-89.9, B: 83-86.9, B-: 80-82.9, etc...

Late paper: will be marked down one step (e.g. A to A-) per day.

Rough guide to grades: A: truly exceptional work/ A-: excellent work/ B+: very good, clearly above average work/ B: good, above average work / B-: respectable, but not outstanding in any respect/ C+: only fair work/ C: clearly below average/ C-: poor work/ D: barely passable/ F: failing

Class protocols and expectations:

Syllabus: the student is responsible for all information on this syllabus, including the information below about plagiarism. **If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to contact me** or the university writing center for further details.

Come prepared for class: this means, above all else, that you have done the reading assigned for that day. You are responsible for keeping up with this schedule of readings. *I will post all readings on Carmen in a timely manner.* Reading philosophy can take considerable effort, as it is argumentative, not narrative, in nature. Leave enough time to read the articles twice through. Bring readings to class, for reference during class.

Participation: involves active engagement with the course material, attending class, listening attentively to classmates, contributing to class discussion by offering opinions about the readings and responding constructively to the views of others. *I will ensure that all sincere and constructive input is taken seriously and that class discussion remains respectful. Personal attacks will not be tolerated.* **Some questions to ask yourself before every class:** (1) What were the main concepts and arguments in the readings? (2) Against whom or what is the author arguing? (3) What does the author hope to accomplish in this piece? (4) How does this reading connect to other readings so far?

Guide to participation grade: A: the student excels in the foregoing by contributing significantly and substantively to class discussion, engaging respectfully with other students, exhibiting excellent preparation for class, and attending class regularly. B: the student does well in the foregoing by occasionally contributing to class discussion, engaging respectfully with other students, exhibiting good preparation for class, and attending class regularly. C: the student does a fair job in the foregoing by contributing infrequently, listening respectfully but engaging fellow students very little, exhibiting only cursory preparation for class, or attending class less than regularly. D-F: student does poorly in the foregoing, rarely contributing if at all, perhaps disrupting class, exhibiting little or no preparation for class, or attending class infrequently.

Attendance: can affect your participation grade. We reserve the right to take attendance at any class. More than three missed classes will result in loss of a letter grade on your final grade. One cannot expect to master the material while missing classes. If you have to miss a class or exam, it is your responsibility to notify us *before the day of class*, or (in the case of exams) *as far ahead of time as possible*.

Texting and so forth: please turn off cellular phones during class. Those obviously checking email, doing social media, or so forth will have their participation grade affected.

Office hours: are there for your benefit. Please do not leave questions until just before the exams. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are staying up with the class. *We are happy to answer questions and provide further help to those engaging seriously with the work of the class.*

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a very serious issue – and **I am required to report any case of possible misconduct to the University**. I will be vigilant about plagiarism and other forms of cheating. I require electronic submission of papers so that I can run them through different databases for the purposes of catching plagiarism. For all our benefit, please simply do the required readings and make use of the course resources, and your instructor (me), to do well by appropriate means. I am here to help. Following is a useful paragraph from my colleague, Prof. Don Hubin:

The University understands academic misconduct to include “any activity which tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution, or subvert the educational process” (<http://oaa.osu.edu/procedures/1.0.html>). Examples include, but are not limited to, such actions as cheating on exams and submitting a term paper written by another. No one should be unclear about whether *these* are wrong, but students are sometimes not clear about what constitutes plagiarism. ‘Plagiarism’ is defined by the University to be “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrase of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.” There should be no misunderstanding about word for word transcriptions or simple paraphrases—these *must* be acknowledged through proper citations. It is sometimes not clear, though, when simply using the ideas of another requires citation. This is especially true in the context of a course, in which one is, presumably acquiring fundamental ideas of a subject matter from the text or the instructor. Certain ideas are “in the public domain,” so to speak; they are ideas used by everyone working in the field, and do not require citation. Other ideas are such that their origin needs to be acknowledged. It is sometimes difficult for beginning students to distinguish these. It is helpful to remember that what is at issue is whether the failure to acknowledge a source would tend to misrepresent the idea as your own. The failure to acknowledge your source for a distinction between consequentialism and deontology, for example, would not tend to misrepresent the distinction as your own since it is a distinction that most people working in the field will draw in some way or other. To offer a *specific* account of this distinction that is offered by another without citing the source could easily tend to misrepresent the account as your own. It is clearly better to err on the side of over-acknowledgment in cases in which one is in doubt. Electronic copies of papers will be scanned for plagiarism and inappropriate use of web-based materials.

Disability Services:

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated. They should inform me as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>