

Introduction to Ethics

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Course Number: PHI 2600 Sec U12

Course Time: Spring 2012, MWF 4:00-4:50 pm

Course Location: Charles Perry Bldg 214

Office Hours: Wed. 11:00 am – 1:00 pm and by appointment

Course Description: This course is designed to be a survey of philosophical issues related to contemporary ethical problems. As such, it will cover several topics with only superficial depth. We will dedicate the first half of the course to ethical theory, by asking what we should and should not do and for what reasons. The rest of the course will focus on specific ethical issues related to euthanasia, abortion, sexual morality, affirmative action, the death penalty, animal rights, terrorism and others. The course is likely to challenge deeply held beliefs and presuppositions but that is one important goal of doing philosophy. The objective is to expand your understanding of various moral views, develop critical thinking and writing skills, and learn how to evaluate arguments. By learning how to evaluate philosophical arguments you will also learn how to construct and defend your own arguments—a skill that is broadly applicable outside of philosophy.

Required Text: *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues*, 7th Edition, Barbara MacKinnon, Ed. (6th and 5th editions are also acceptable)

Evaluation Criteria: **Class Participation (10%):**
Participation involves a variety of things, such as listening respectfully, making references to the assigned readings in your comments, engaging with other students, etc. In order to get a passing grade in class participation, you will have to speak up. However, speaking up too much can also hurt your grade (see attached class participation grading rubric).

Exams (30%)

There will be a total of two exams. Note that the second exam is during finals week (see calendar). Each exam is worth 15% of your grade. **NO EARLY OR MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE OFFERED.** Exams will be essay format and will directly cover the material we discuss in class. There will be a review session before each exam. On the day of each exam, you must bring a “blue book” in which to write your answers.

Short Papers (40%):

You will write five short papers. Each paper is worth 8% of your grade. In each paper, you will present your position on an issue and present an argument in support of that position. The topic is up to you, as long as it relates to something we discussed in class or something that you read in the textbook. Assume that the reader understands the problem you are addressing. There is no need to explain it. The first sentence of the paper should state your thesis, which is the position for which you will argue, followed by an argument in support of your thesis. See the attached paper grading rubric to learn how your papers will be evaluated.

Each paper must be no longer than a single page, typed in 12 pt font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. The papers should include a separate cover page with the title of the paper, your name, and the paper number, e.g., Paper 1. In addition to submitting a physical copy of your paper, you will also have to submit an electronic copy of your paper to www.turnitin.com (more details later). Both the physical and the electronic copy must be submitted by each due date (see calendar). The physical copy is due in class, but you have until midnight to submit the electronic copy. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT PAPERS VIA EMAIL. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Final Paper (20%):

For the final paper, you need to find an opinion article in a local or national newspaper on a topic that interests you. Any topic qualifies (e.g., sports, immigration, dating, etc.) as long as someone in the opinion article is arguing that something is either right or wrong. Once you find the article of interest, you need to set up an appointment with me to show me the article and receive topic approval. All topics must be approved by Friday, March 23, 2012, otherwise you will not receive credit for your final paper. The structure of the paper should be as follows. First, you will reconstruct the argument from the opinion article, including any implied premises. Second, you will criticize the argument by either showing that the conclusion does not follow or by criticizing one or more of the premises. Last, you will offer your own argument for the conclusion you believe is right. The paper should be 5 pages long, typed in 12 pt font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. A handout with additional guidelines will be provided in class.

The paper is due on April 20, 2012. Both the physical and the electronic copies must be submitted by the due date. As with the shorter papers, the physical copy is due in class, but you have until midnight to submit the electronic copy to www.turnitin.com (more details later). I WILL NOT ACCEPT PAPERS VIA EMAIL. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

- Grading Scale:** A = 93-100%, A- = 90-92%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B- = 80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 73-76%, C- = 70-72%, D+ = 67-69%, D = 63-66%, D- = 60-62%, E = 59% and below
- Missed Classes:** If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from another student.
- Class Etiquette:** I expect you not to disrupt me, or other students, during class, which means that if I catch you texting, reading the paper, surfing the internet, or talking to another student you will be asked to leave. I do not allow laptops in class (except when used by me to enhance your learning). I expect you to treat other students (and their opinions) with respect and I expect you to show up on time.
- Grading Policy:** You do not get graded on effort but on the quality of work you produce. If you produce work that is of poor quality, providing me with excuses is a waste of your (and my) time. If you need a good grade in this course (because you're on a scholarship, for example) then get a good grade in this course. Trying to get me to sympathize with your situation is NOT an effective way of raising your grade.
- On the other hand, if you are dissatisfied with your grade because you think my grading was unfair you are welcome to raise your concerns with me. I am willing to look over your work again, but be aware that I will re-evaluate it and provide you with a new grade. This means that there is a chance that your grade may go down because I may decide that I was too generous the first time.
- Academic Misconduct:** Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration with other students on assignments. *Academic dishonesty disadvantages honest students, and is clearly unfair to hardworking students. Instructors have a duty, therefore, to protect honest students, and to insure that they are not disadvantaged by dishonest students.* For more information, see FIU's Academic Misconduct policy (Section 2.44). There are serious consequences for academic misconduct, including suspension and expulsion from the university.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE¹

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week 1 (January 9-13)	Introduction	Ch. 1 Ethics & reading by Plato	Ch 1. Ethics & reading by Plato
Week 2 (January 16-20)	NO SCHOOL	Ch. 2 Ethical Relativism & reading by Midgley	Ch. 2 Ethical Relativism & reading by Midgley
Week 3 (January 23-27)	Ch. 3 Egoism & reading by Plato	Ch. 3 Egoism & reading by Plato Paper 1 Due	Ch. 4 Utilitarianism & reading by Mill
Week 4 (Jan 30-Feb 3)	Ch. 4 Utilitarianism & reading by Mill	Ch. 4 Utilitarianism & reading by Mill	Ch. 5 Kant's Moral Theory & reading by Kant
Week 5 (February 6-10)	Ch. 5 Kant's Moral Theory & reading by Kant	Ch. 7 Morality and Human Nature & reading by Sartre	Ch. 7 Morality and Human Nature & reading by Sartre Paper 2 Due
Week 6 (February 13-17)	Ch. 8 Virtue Ethics & reading by Aristotle	Ch. 8 Virtue Ethics & reading by Aristotle	Review for Exam 1
Week 7 (February 20-24)	Essay Exam 1	Ch. 10 Euthanasia & reading by Rachels	Ch. 10 Euthanasia & reading by Rachels
Week 8 (Feb 27-March 2)	Ch. 11 Abortion & reading by Thomson	Ch. 11 Abortion & readings by Thomson Paper 3 Due	Ch. 12 Sexual Morality & reading by Mohr
Week 9 (March 5-9)	Ch. 13 Equality and Discrimination & reading by Fullinwider	Ch. 13 Equality and Discrimination & reading by Fullinwider	NO CLASS
Week 10 (March 12-16)	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL
Week 11 (March 19-23)	Ch. 14 Economic Justice & reading by Rawls	Ch. 14 Economic Justice & reading by Rawls Paper 4 Due	Ch. 15 Legal Punishment & reading by Van Den Haag Final Paper Topic Approval Deadline
Week 12 (March 26-30)	Ch. 15 Legal Punishment & reading by Van Den Haag	Ch. 17 Animal Rights & reading by Singer	Ch. 17 Animal Rights & reading by Singer
Week 13 (April 2-6)	Ch. 19 Terrorism and War & SEP Handout	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
Week 14 (April 9-13)	Ch. 19 Terrorism and War & SEP Handout Paper 5 Due	Ch. 18 Genethics & Case Studies Handout	Ch. 18 Genethics & Case Studies Handout
Week 15 (April 16-20)	Ch. 20 Global Issues & reading by Singer	Ch. 20 Global Issues & reading by Singer	Review for Exam 2 Final Paper Due
Week 16 (April 23-27)	Essay Exam 2 2:15-4:15 pm		

¹ Schedule is subject to change for pedagogical reasons