

PHIL 306
Ethics
FALL 2018

Instructor: Daniel Skibra

Time and Location: T, Th; 09:40AM - 11:10AM, Old Main, Room 101

Contact: email: daniel.skibra@elmhurst.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:00 - 1:00PM, Hammerschmidt 004

Course Description

From course catalog: An analytical and critical examination of classical and contemporary moral theories, supplemented by an examination of selected moral problems. Topics include the principles and methods of both ethical theory and moral choice.

Instructor's description: Ethics is the branch of philosophy concerned with what is good, bad, right, and wrong and what it is for an act to be any of those things. This course will introduce you to some of the central topics and questions in ethics. We will examine answers to ethical questions like: What makes an act right? What is it for something to be good? What determines the moral rules, and why abide by them? Why have any such rules to begin with? To what extent, if any, are such rules objective or merely subjective? Along the way, you will be introduced to some of the most influential ethical theories like utilitarianism, deontology, contractarianism/ contractualism, virtue ethics, and pluralism. Most importantly, you will be encouraged to develop the critical and theoretical resources to evaluate these theories and the answers proposed to the questions above.

ECIC Area of Knowledge (Inquiry into Ethics and Justice)

This course explores theories and instances of justice and injustice in current and historical human societies. Students will analyze different systems of values that inform how people interact as individuals as well as members of larger societal groups. The course examines ethical reasoning bearing on such principles as liberty, rights, dissent, moral status, equality, and justice.

- Understand several distinct systems of ethical reasoning and theories of value and justice;
- Evaluate in their contexts specific historical and contemporary theories or actions;
- Articulate and evaluate multiple perspectives on ethics and social justice.

Course Requirements

Assignments

Reading Quizzes/ small assignments: 10%

Paper 1 (Due **Oct 16**; Draft due **Oct 5**) (5 pages): 15%

Paper 2 (Due **Nov 27**; Draft due **Nov 20**) (5 pages): 25%

Mid-term Exam (in class **Oct 11**): 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Class discussion/ participation: 10%

Notes on assignments

Resources for writing a philosophy paper:

- <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Course Policies

Attendance

You are required to attend the class meetings; attendance will be taken. However, I understand that emergencies arise, people get sick, and other factors may legitimately prevent you from coming to a particular class. Therefore, I will adopt the following attendance policy. Your grade will not be affected by up to **3** absences. You do not need to provide any kind of written excuse or justification for these absences (although you are welcome to provide them). However, more than three absences will begin to have an effect on your final grade, bringing your average down by a third of a grade for each additional day missed. *If at some point in the term you expect to miss more than this (due to a serious illness, for example), let me know as soon as you can, **before** you accumulate the absences!* It will be your responsibility to distribute your absences however you see fit. My advice: try not to use them. You never know when something comes up.

Importantly, you are responsible for the material covered in class. Any slides presented in class will be made available on Blackboard, but class time will often not be devoted to lecture, and material will not always be on the slides. There is simply no substitute for being in class.

Access and Disability Services

Elmhurst College will make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities based on the presentation of appropriate documentation. If you believe that you have a disability that may impact your work in this course, contact Access and Disability Services at disability.services@elmhurst.edu or 630-617-6448. Access and Disability Services is located in the Frick Center, Room 229.

Learning Center: Academic Support

The Learning Center offers services to support the academic performance of all Elmhurst College students. Sessions are structured to promote principles of self-regulated learning and academic management. Areas of peer tutoring include math, statistics, writing, biology, kinesiology, and psychology. Additionally, assistance with special test preparation (e.g., ACT, SAT, GRE, and TAP) and academic reading/study strategies is available. For more information, contact Emmi McAdams, Tutoring Coordinator, at emmim@elmhurst.edu, 630-617-5376, or Susan Roach, Learning Center Director, at susan.roach@elmhurst.edu, 630-617-3155. The Learning Center is located in the Frick Center, Room 229.

Policy on Academic Integrity

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the College's Academic Integrity Policy. By registering for this class, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Policy, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by it. Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur.

If a faculty member suspects plagiarism or cheating, the faculty member will meet with the student to discuss the allegations. Upon meeting with the student, the faculty member must determine if a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity did occur. If the student is found responsible for dishonest behavior, the faculty member will report incident to the Chair of the philosophy department and will choose one or more of the following procedures:

1. Provide a learning opportunity by having the student re-do the assignment without any other penalty attached;
2. Consider it "poor work" and grade accordingly with a zero or F for the assignment or an F for the course; and/or
3. Refer the student to the College's formal judicial hearing process by sending a letter containing the allegations and evidence to the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Office of Academic Affairs. This sanction is recommended in cases where a violation is serious or the student has committed repeat violations. The Office of Student Affairs will notify the student, in writing, of the allegations and give them the opportunity to review the evidence.

Extension Policy and Incompletes

The due dates for the assignments are as they appear on the syllabus. Late assignments will not be tolerated, and will accumulate deductions of one third of a letter grade for every day the assignment is late. If you think you will need an extension for an assignment, you need to request one at least two days before the due date. Do not ask after the date has passed, or the night before the deadline.

In-class Technology Policy

In this class, we will regularly engage in small group instruction and activities, as well as discussions with the whole class. Technology such as cell phones, tablets, and laptops easily become a distraction and create an obstacle to engagement during class time. For this reason, the policy of the class will be as follows. Do not use these devices during class time. Any lecture slides will be made available on the online course site, and any notes you might need to make should be taken by hand. Of course, exceptions will be made for adaptive devices. If you have a need for such a device, please consult the instructor.

Email/ Communication

The best way to reach me outside class is via email. However, give me 24-48 hours to respond during the week. If you email me after 5pm on Friday, don't expect a response until Monday morning. Most of the time, I will be able to respond to you sooner than this, but please plan your emails accordingly. When there is a paper due, get all of your questions to me 48 hours before the due date.

I will answer *simple, specific* questions over email pertaining to the course material or the logistics of the course. I can also address simple interpretive questions you have with the material, or arguments you are trying out for your papers. To address anything more involved, you'll need to meet with me in office hours. (I highly encourage you to come to office hours in any event.)

Participation

Participation in class discussion constitutes a significant part of your grade. You will be expected to attend class having done the readings and thought about them enough to discuss the arguments they make, to ask informed questions about them, and to engage with the other members of the class on these matters. Two expectations in service of these aims are worth making explicit. First, you'll need to be well-prepared, having read and thought about the assigned readings before class. Secondly, we will all need to foster a respectful, open environment where we can clarify, interpret and critically engage the philosophical issues dealt with in readings. Maintaining a respectful classroom atmosphere is crucial, and part of your responsibility.

Required Texts

- Russ Shafer-Landau - *The Fundamentals of Ethics, Fourth Edition*, Oxford University Press, 2015 (ISBN: 9780190631390)
- Other texts will be posted to the course's Blackboard site.

Reading and Assignment Schedule*

*The readings/ assignments should be completed by the date indicated.

Day	Date	Assignment	Length
TUES	Aug 28	S-L: Introduction	19 PAGES
THURS	Aug 30	S-L: Chapter 5: Morality & Religion	13 PAGES
TUES	Sept 4	Plato: Euthyphro	16 PAGES
THURS	Sept 6	Bentham: <i>Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> , Chapters 1, 3,4, and 5, S-L: Chapter 1: Hedonism: It's Powerful Appeal	29 pages
TUES	Sept 11	Mill: <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapters 1 and 2	29 pages
THURS	Sept 13	Mill: <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapters 3; S-L: Chapter 9: Consequentialism: Its Nature & Attractions	28 pages
TUES	Sept 18	S-L: Chapter 10: Consequentialism: Its Difficulties	21 PAGES
THURS	Sept 20	S-L: Chapter 2: Is Happiness All That Matters?	12 PAGES
TUES	Sept 25	S-L: Chapter 11: the Kantian Perspective: Fairness & Justice	15 PAGES
THURS	Sept 27	S-L: Chapter 12: the Kantian Perspective: Autonomy & Respect	18 PAGES
TUES	Oct 2	Kant: Section I of <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i>	11 PAGES
THURS	Oct 5	O' Neil: A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics (Recommended: Ebels-Duggan: Kantian Ethics); Paper 1 draft due	7 PAGES
TUES	Oct 9	S-L: Chapter 3: Getting What You Want	7 pgs
THURS	Oct 11	Mid Term Exam	
TUES	Oct 16	S-L: Chapter 13: the Social Contract Tradition: the Theory & Its Attractions; Paper 1 due	11 PAGES
THURS	Oct 18	Hobbes: <i>Leviathan</i> , Chapters 13-15	23 PAGES
TUES	Oct 23	S-L: Chapter 14: the Social Contract Tradition: Problems & Prospects (Paper 1 draft due)	13 PAGES
THURS	Oct 25	Catch up day	0 PAGES
TUES	Oct 30	S-L: Chapter 4: Problems for the Desire Theory	10 PAGES
THURS	Nov 1	S-L: Chapter 17: Virtue Ethics	20 PAGES
TUES	Nov 6	Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, Book 2	21 PAGES
THURS	Nov 8	Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, Book 3.1 - 3.2	7 PAGES
TUES	Nov 13	Hursthouse: Virtue Theory and Abortion	24 PAGES
THURS	Nov 15	S-L: Chapter 15: Ethical Pluralism and Absolute Moral Rules	18 PAGES
TUES	Nov 20	S-L: Chapter 16: Ethical Pluralism: Prima Facie Duties and Ethical Particularism Paper 2 draft	17 PAGES
THURS	Nov 22	Thanksgiving; no class	
TUES	Nov 27	Ross: What Makes Right Acts Right? Paper 2 due	31 pages

Day	Date	Assignment	Length
THURS	Nov 29	S-L: Chapter 18: Feminist Ethics (Recommended: Okin: Vulnerability by Marriage)	15 PAGES
TUES	Dec 4	S-L: Chapter 19: Ethical Relativism	17 PAGES
THURS	Dec 6	S-L: Chapter 21: Eleven Arguments Against Moral Objectivity	19 PAGES
THURS	Dec 13	Final Exam: 10:30AM - 12:30PM (in Old Main 101)	