

PHIL 111: Ethics

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Office Hours: T/Th 1:30-2:30pm or by appt.

Lectures: T/Th 12:30-1:20pm,
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Course Description

This course will introduce students to three major traditions in ethics: virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism. We will learn about these traditions through careful study and application of primary texts, working through Aristotle's account of virtue ethics in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Immanuel Kant's deontology in the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*, and John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism in his aptly-named work, *Utilitarianism*. Throughout the course, students will learn to read complex philosophical texts, to discuss philosophy in classroom discussions and debates, and to write clearly and convincingly about philosophy.

Course Objectives

1. Students will learn the ethical theories of three major ethicists: Aristotle, Kant, and John Stuart Mill.
2. Students will learn to read complex philosophical texts.
3. Students will learn to discuss philosophy in recitations, classroom discussions, and office hours.
4. Students will learn to write clearly and convincingly about philosophy.

Required Texts

1. Steven M. Cahn and Peter Markie, *Ethics: History, Theory and Contemporary Issues*, 6th ed., Oxford, ISBN 9780190209803 – available at university bookstore.
2. Readings on Blackboard – marked “BB” on the Schedule.

Evaluation

Assignments will be graded on a numerical scale. Your final grade will be calculated according to the following letter grades:

A+ 99-100
A 94-98.9
A- 90-93.9
B+ 88-89.9
B 83-87.9
B- 80-82.9
C+ 78-79.9

C 73-77.9
C- 70-72.9
D+ 68-69.9
D 63-67.9
D- 60-62.9
F 59.9 and below

Breakdown of Final Grade

25% First Paper: Aristotelian Ethics

25% Kant Exam

25% Second Paper: Utilitarian Ethics

15% Final Exam

10% Attendance and Participation

Papers

You are required to write two papers that are 500-700 words long. You must upload your paper by the due date through SafeAssign on Blackboard.¹ Late papers may be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late.

Kant Exam

The exam will be administered during class. It will test familiarity with reading and comprehension of the material from the Kant unit, including both multiple choice questions and short essay questions. Make-ups will be allowed without penalty only with prior approval of the instructor, or in case of unexpected, documented emergencies. All other make-ups may receive a deduction of 25 points from the exam/quiz score.

Participation

You are expected to be an alert, engaged, and prepared participant in this course. You will be graded both on the amount and quality of your participation in recitation sessions, where high quality participation substantively responds to the assigned readings. Your recitation grade can be supplemented by participating in class discussions during lecture and attending office hours with Dr. Lambeth or your RA. Electronic devices are prohibited; using them will negatively affect your participation grade, as will lateness and inattention.

Attendance

Attendance will be recorded by the RA at each lecture/recitation beginning in Week 2. You are allowed a total of six absences. You need not provide documentation relating to these absences. On your seventh absence and for each absence thereafter, your participation grade will be deducted by 20%. The only exceptions to this policy are in cases of university-approved absences, such as those due to bereavement, sports, or religious holidays. You must provide documentation for such exceptions and notify your RA in advance of the absence.

Final Exam

The final exam will be multiple choice. It will focus on new material from the Existentialism unit, as well as review basic definitions and examples from the units on Aristotle, Kant, and Mill.

¹ Students ought to familiarize themselves with Purdue's standards of academic integrity (<https://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html>), and the Purdue Honors Pledge (<https://www.purdue.edu/provost/teachinglearning/honor-pledge.html>). All papers are submitted through SafeAssign, a software program that checks papers for originality. Violations of academic integrity are grounds for failing the course and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Accessibility and Accommodations

“Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247.”

CAPS

“Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765)494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.”

Schedule

This schedule reflects required readings (to be completed before class), as well as due dates for major assignments. The schedule of readings may be subject to change, in which case students will be notified via email. Check your email regularly.

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| January 14 | Introduction: What is Ethics? |
| January 16 | Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism” (BB) |
| January 17 | Recitation |
| January 21 | Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I, Cahn pp.128-134 (section 7 to Book II) |
| January 23 | Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> II, Cahn pp.134-140 (Book II to Book III) |
| January 24 | Recitation |
| January 28 | Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> III pp.140-146 (Book III to “Courage”) |
| January 30 | Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> III-IV pp.146-148 (“Courage” to Book V) |
| January 31 | Recitation |
| February 4 | Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VIII-IX pp.161-163 (Book VIII to “Relation of Reciprocity”), pp.164-165 (Book IX to “The pleasure of beneficence”), pp.167-169 “The Need of Friendship” to Book X) |
| February 6 | Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> IX, “Dissolution of Friendships” (BB) |
| February 7 | Recitation |
| February 11 | Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> X, pp.172-175 |
| February 13 | Nussbaum, excerpts from “Human Functioning and Social Justice” (BB) |
| February 14 | Recitation: Draft workshop. TWO-PAGE DRAFT DUE (PRINTED). |
| | MONDAY, February 17: First Paper Due at 5pm on BB |
| February 18 | Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> I, Cahn pp.317-319 (from beginning of chapter to “...even if this fulfillment damages the ends of inclination.”) |

- February 20 Kant, *Groundwork* I, Cahn pp.319-323 (from “We must thus develop...” to end of chapter)
- February 21 Recitation
- February 25 Kant, *Groundwork* II, Cahn pp.323-327 (from beginning of chapter to “...not necessarily obedient.”)
- February 27 **NO CLASS**
- February 28 Recitation
- March 3 Kant, *Groundwork* II, Cahn pp.327-332 (from “The idea of an objective principle...” to “...unimportant and apparently forced upon us.”)
- March 5 Kant, *Groundwork* II, Cahn pp.332-336 (from “We have thus at least shown this much...” to end of chapter)
- March 6 Recitation
- March 10 Korsgaard, “The Right to Lie,” pp.325-334 (BB)
- March 12 Korsgaard, “The Right to Lie,” pp.334-349 (BB)
- March 13 Recitation
- Mar 16-20 **SPRING BREAK**
- March 24 O’Neill, “Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems” (BB)
- March 26 **IN-CLASS KANT EXAM**
- March 27 Recitation
- March 31 Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 1, Cahn pp.363-366; and Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Chapter 1, 1-3, Cahn pp.354-355
- April 2 Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2, Cahn pp.366-376
- April 3 Recitation
- April 7 Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 4, Cahn pp.381-384
- April 9 Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality,” Cahn, pp.870-877
- April 10 Recitation
- April 14 Rawls, “Classical Utilitarianism” (BB)
- April 16 Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (BB)
- April 17 Recitation: Draft workshop. **TWO-PAGE DRAFT DUE (PRINTED).**
- MONDAY, April 20 Second Paper due at 5pm on BB**
- April 21 Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism,” Cahn, pp.474-480
- April 23 Beauvoir, “Existentialism and Popular Wisdom” (BB)
- April 24 Recitation
- April 28 Beauvoir, “Introduction to *Ethics of Ambiguity*” (BB)
- April 30 Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* excerpts (BB)

May 1

Recitation

FINAL EXAM (TIME AND LOCATION TBD)