

PHIL 002: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (FALL/10)

Class Meetings: **Sec 03:** MWF 10-10:50am, DH 110
 Sec 10: TR 10:30-11:45am, MND 3009

Instructor: **Dr. Christina Bellon, Department of Philosophy**

Office Hours: **M 11-1pm, W 11-noon; additional times by appointment.**

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CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

This course allows students to develop an understanding and appreciation of ethics in a broad sense. GE Area C3. 3 units.

OVERVIEW

Ethics is about living a good life. What does this mean? Generally, we take this to mean that one is able to live as one ought -- according to the values and convictions which give one's life meaning and purpose. Ethics is, ultimately, about doing. We are not merely passive -- the kinds of things to which stuff happens. We make stuff happen -- to ourselves and to others. Ethics proposes to facilitate figuring out what we ought to do or ought not to do, what is permissible, impermissible, or obligatory -- whether this is in our personal life or in our public/social life.

In this course, we will explore some of the basic elements of ethics -- moral reasoning, wickedness, freedom, agency, meaning, happiness, and pleasure -- and we will also learn about some of the important ethical theories -- utilitarian ethics, ethical egoism, deontological ethics, virtue ethics, and social contract ethics. But, we will also be practicing ethics. Much of our in-class time will be devoted to exercises and activities in which we can apply what we learn, practice being ethical, reason through dilemmas and cases, and test the different theories against our lived experience.

NOTE: This course is substantially conducted on-line -- the equivalent of one course meeting will be devoted to work on-line (1-1.5hrs/week) in addition to on-line time needed to complete all required assignments and readings (3-4hrs/week). All lecture notes, exams, and assignments will be made available on, and student work will be submitted through, our SacCT course site. This will require you to have regular and reliable access to computing facilities. It is also recommended that students regularly bring their laptops and textbooks to all class meetings.

GENERAL EDUCATION CRITERIA

This course satisfies General Education Requirements of Area C3: Introduction to the Humanities in the following ways:

1. By (i) exposing students to a variety of ethical theories from both Western/European and Eastern/Asian traditions, and (ii) offering students an opportunity to discuss (intellectually and personally) difficult and life affecting moral issues from a philosophical perspective, this course *fosters in students the development of an understanding of and an appreciation for the diversity*

of the human community and condition.

2. While theoretical ethics often seem removed from matters of social and economic diversity, this course will emphasize the important connection between theory and experience by reflecting on the moral lessons that can be gleaned from analyses of real legal and social policy cases. In this and other ways, this course also *presents the contributions and perspectives of women, persons from various ethnic, socio-economic, and religious groups, gays and lesbians, and persons with disabilities.*

REQUIRED TEXTS

Louis P. Pojman, *The Moral Life*, 4th Edition (Oxford University Press, 2010). You may use the 3rd edition of this text, which is substantially lower cost, but all references are to the 4th edition. You may also rent the 4th edition through the Bookstore's Textbook Rental Program.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

ASPIRATION/OBJECTIVE	PRACTICAL GOALS	ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Develop competence in philosophical and ethical language and literature, especially of ethical theories and modes of practice.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accurately describe and distinguish between a variety of ethical concepts, theories, and positions; 2. Formulate and express own ethical judgement in cogent and clear fashion; 3. Engage in cogent and respectful discussion of difficult and sometimes controversial issues; 4. Analyse specific ethical arguments for consistency and credibility (including one's own). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre and post course open-ended question/assessment. 2. Content in each of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. essays, exams, weekly quizzes b. in-class practical exercises c. on-line discussion d. in class discussion
Develop written and oral communication skills, especially as those are associated with argumentative writing and public speaking.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing competently in concise, precise and well developed logical style; 2. Expression of a point of view through the formulation of a coherent and consistent argument in response to a practical problem or case; 3. Presentation of an ethical argument in a coherent manner to an audience of peers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality of the form (essay structure, logic) and mechanics (syntax, grammar) of each of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. essays b. on-line discussion 2. Substance, structure, and delivery of in-class and on-line discussions 3. Presentation of an argument in defense of an ethical position in class.
Develop an appreciation of the diversity of the human condition, as this is reflected in ethical theories, formulated at different epochs, in diverse historical and social contexts and by a diversity of individuals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accurately describe and distinguish the central elements of each ethical tradition, against its historical and cultural context. 2. Accurately account for the diversity of plausible positions in ethical problems, dilemmas and cases, while arguing in defence of one's own considered position. 	<p>Discussion of similarities and divergences between points of view expressed in different theories and moral judgements, in student</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. essays, exams b. on-line discussion c. in-class practical exercises d. class participation

LEARNING MODULES

Each week, we will cover some particular topic in the field of philosophical and practical ethics. In our SacCT course, you will find a series of learning modules for each week. These contain lecture notes which complement the assigned readings from the text. Designated learning modules will contain a short mandatory quiz on the material.

It is your responsibility to keep up with the learning modules and the assigned readings from the text. Quizzes and discussion topics will be available only for the week in which they have been assigned. Completion of the learning module includes reading the course text, the lecture notes or additional electronic material and satisfactory completion of the quiz and discussion topic.

The material from the learning modules and the text will comprise the bulk of the material on which you will be tested in the mid-term and final-exam. Therefore, it is imperative that you keep up with the weekly modules. **To augment your additional exertions in this regard, we will drop one weekly class meeting each week. However, keep in mind that we may, on occasion require a second meeting to ensure we are adequately covering the course material and to ensure we have adequate time to class presentations.**

GROUPS

Every student in the course will be assigned to a learning group at the beginning of the semester. You will remain with your assigned group for the duration of the semester. Much of the in-class practical activities and exercises will be undertaken in your group, and some assignments will be submitted as group work. It is imperative that you ensure you are in a group at the beginning of the semester to enable you to participate fully in the in-class segment of the course.

Each group will create its own identity and will have a corresponding space in our SacCT discussion area for virtual meeting purposes, where information and resources can be shared in advance of class, and group assignments can be discussed. Only members of the group will have access to this virtual group meeting space.

A Note on Group Work: For those among you who are reluctant to do group work, please bear in mind that much of life is lived in groups – whether these be families, friendships, jobs, sports, worship, community service, or recreation. Many of the groups in which we find ourselves are not groups we would have chosen, nor are all the members of these groups necessarily like us or like-minded. Yet, much of our own success in these activities depends upon the willing help of those with whom we undertake them. For them to help willingly, they have to be able to trust they will not be exploited. Free riding on the efforts of others will not be tolerated, neither by your group, nor by the instructor. Among the worst things to happen to social beings is to be excluded from a group on which they depend. So ensure your group has no reason to boot you out! Yes, group work can be challenging, taxing, and frustrating. However, providing the tools

and opportunity to learn to live well with others is perhaps the single most important contribution any ethics education can make to an individual's life. With this in mind, get into your group, take responsibility for yourself, and realize that others are depending on you!

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated by several means. These will include a series of weekly quizzes, two short essays, a midterm exam, in-class practical assignments, topical discussion board contributions, and a final exam. The course is graded on the basis of 100pts (1pt = 1%).

ALL assignments, quizzes, essays, and exams are administered within SacCT. Print or hand submitted copies will not be accepted. All assignments must be completed in the appropriate assignment or assessment area in SacCT.

Grading Scale

A Outstanding (96pts and above)	A- Very Good (90-95pts)
B Range Satisfactory (75-89pts)	C Range Minimally Satisfactory (60-74pts)
D Range Poor (50-59pts)	F Unacceptable (below 50pts)

This is based upon a 100 pt scale with 1pt = 1%

In-Class Activities (50pts)

The in-class portion of this course will consist primarily of practical activities and exercises whereby the material you learn from the text and on-line lecture notes can be put into practice. The in-class activities, therefore, will comprise an important segment of the course material and of your learning experience.

A/ In-Class Group Presentation of an Ethical Argument (10pts)

Each group is required to prepare and present an argument in favour or in opposition to an assigned moral issue or public policy question (e.g. permissibility of abortion, when war is justified/required, moral justification of taxation, use of civil disobedience as method of changing law, duties to vote, freedom to speak, etc.). You and your group will use the relevant course material on Moral Reasoning (LM4) to guide your formulation of a coherent argument. Issues will be assigned as we near the relevant point in the course schedule. Groups will have the class period to analyze and formulate arguments. These will be publicly presented in the subsequent class period.

B/ In-Class Presentation of Applied Ethics Issue (10pts)

Each group is required to prepare and present an analysis of one of the applied ethics issues from the textbook. Presentation guides and grading schemes are available in SacCT. These presentations will be conducted at the end of the semester and should demonstrate students' comprehension of the breadth of the course material, as relevant to their topic.

B/ Short Essays (2x10pts = 20pts)

During the semester, we will explore in depth two of the theoretical issues raised in the text in conjunction with two of the corresponding literary pieces. These literary pieces will serve as thought experiments against which we can examine some important theoretical or conceptual matter. Each essay will be the result of individual and group reflection on the issue; however, each individual will write and submit her/his own essay following in-class group discussion of the issue. Students must participate in the in-class discussion and analysis of both essay assignments. Each essay will be due one week following the in-class examination of the material. Essays should be 500 words. Essays require no external research, should be based on the textual material, lecture notes, and in-class discussion. Groups are encouraged to discuss the question further in their group on-line discussion areas.

C/ Exercises (2-3pts each, 10pts)

Students are required to complete four exercises, done in class within your groups, on a variety of topics and themes corresponding to the learning modules. These include an exercise on the State of Nature, Fallacies, Freedom, and Moral Cowardice. These may include role-play exercises, textual analysis, or problem sets.

On-Line Activities (50pts)

As stated in the course overview, there is a substantial amount of work done on-line. This means you must have a regular and reliable internet connection and access. Several computing stations are available around campus from which you can access SacCT. It is your responsibility to ensure you have internet access and that you are able to function in SacCT. *Technical difficulties on your part will not be accepted as an excuse for missing deadlines for on-line work.*

A/ Quizzes (10 @ 2pts/ea = 20pts)

Each learning module will have a corresponding quiz on the content. These quizzes will consist of 8-12 questions (multiple choice, true-false, fill in) which are drawn from the assigned readings and on-line lecture notes. These will be administered on-line, timed and must be completed by the specified deadline. For each quiz, you will have at least 3 days to take it, will be allowed only one attempt, and will have 20 minutes to complete it once it is begun. *Missed quizzes cannot be made up.*

B/ Exams (2x10pts = 20pts)

There will be one midterm exam, approximately mid-way through the semester, and one final exam, at the end of semester during the final exam week. See the Weekly Schedule for dates. These exams will consist of both multiple choice type questions and written short answer questions. A study guide will be provided for each.

C/ On-Line Discussion (10pts)

Every student will be required to contribute at least 10 times to the on-line discussion, at least once to each of the relevant Learning Modules. Discussion sections will remain open for the period during which the topics are discussed in class, and will be closed 7 days following the last date for the relevant LM. Students are expected to read and follow the discussions of their class-mates. Contributions may consist of:

- (i) asking questions which probe the reading and engage in further explication and analysis of the text,
- (ii) responding thoughtfully to someone else's question,
- (iii) suggesting connections between this reading and other course material,
- (iv) bring current events to bear on the reading.

All of this must be conducted in the effort to better understand the texts and to further our appreciation of the material's strengths and weaknesses. Polemics, ideological shortcuts, and other rather thoughtless and unscholarly contributions will not satisfy this requirement and should be resisted. Proper on-line etiquette is expected; violations will not be tolerated. *Each student must have read at least ¼ of the available contributions from their fellows in each topic to qualify for a satisfactory grade of C+ or better (regardless of how many submissions they have made).*

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is expected and encouraged from all class participants. Attendance will be taken each class period. Sleeping, using a cell phone, reading a newspaper, doing assignments for other classes, or otherwise engaging in disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be met with a loss of ½pt (per incidence) from the final course grade. All cellular devices and iPods/music players must be turned off during class.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due at the date and time specified in the assignment. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per calendar day (not merely class period) beginning with the due date. After three late days, acceptance of the assignment is at the instructor's discretion. If you know you will not be able to meet a due date, it is your responsibility to consult with the instructor before the assignment is due. When submitting any assignment in SacCT, ALWAYS check its status to ensure it was submitted. Do not merely hit "submit" and leave. It is your responsibility to ensure your assignment was submitted accurately and timely. Do not wait for the instructor to ask you about it or for a "0" to appear in your grade column!

No extensions, no exceptions. It is your responsibility to know the due dates and to plan accordingly. Leaving an assignment until the day or two prior is risky and makes you more vulnerable than you already are to factors and events in the universe beyond your control!

PLAGIARISM/CHEATING

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offences which will not be tolerated in this class. Assignments in which plagiarism or other forms of cheating are found will at the least be graded at 0 (not just an F). ALL incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs for possible further administrative sanction. *It is your responsibility to know and comply with the University's Academic Honesty Policy* <http://www.csus.edu/um anual/student/UMA00150.htm>.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

If you have a documented disability (visible or invisible) and require accommodation or assistance with assignments, tests, attendance, note taking, etc., please see the instructor by the **end of the third week of semester** so that arrangements can be made. Failure to notify and consult with the instructor by this date may impede my ability to offer you the necessary accommodation and assistance in a timely fashion. Also be sure to consult with the Services to Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) to see what other campus services and accommodation options are available for you.

PHIL 2 SEC 3 (MWF 10-10:50AM, DH 110) WEEKLY SCHEDULE

NOTE:

All assignments are due on the dates indicated in RED. They are assigned and submitted within SacCT.

In-class activities require completion of the relevant Learning Module IN ADVANCE. These are indicated in BLUE. In-class Activities: material covered in class in groups or as supplement to on-line LMs.

Au 30 Welcome and overview of course requirements.
Se 1-3 Review Learning Module 1: Introduction: What is Ethics?
Read the material in LM1 prior to class.
Demonstration of quizzes and discussion boards.

Se 6 Labour Day – Campus Closed, No Class.

Se 8-10 Learning Module 2: Nature and Purpose of Ethics
Se 13-17 Learning Module 3: Moral Value and Wickedness.
Formation of GROUPS for in-class work (Wed).
Group work on Essay #1: On Wickedness (Fri).

Se 20 (Mon) Essay #1 Due, submit individually on-line – due at 5pm.

Begin MW class meetings – no Friday classes, work on assigned material for Monday's classes in your virtual groups.

Se 20-22 Learning Module 4: Ethical Process – Arguments and Syllogisms
Assign Public Policy Ethical Issues for group presentations (Wed).
Work on Public Policy Argument in virtual groups (Fri).

Se 27-29 Learning Module 4: Ethical Process – Fallacies
Group Activity: Fallacies. **Submit group reports at end of class (Wed 11am).**
Prepare Public Policy Argument in virtual groups (Fri).

Oc 4-6 Presentations of Public Policy Arguments

- Written Public Policy Argument Reports due at 9am Monday. Submit on-line.
Group Presentations: Review guidelines for Public Policy Arguments & Presentations. EVERYONE is expected to be present. Attendance will be taken.
- Oc 11-13 Learning Module 5: Meaning and Freedom
Group Activity: Non-Autonomy Assignment.
Submit on-line at end of Friday class period (11am Friday).
- Oc 18-20 Learning Module 6: Ethical Relativism
Oc 25 Midterm Review
- Oc 27-29 No class – Midterm Exam period, see SacCT for availability. No Make-ups.**
- No 1-3 Learning Module 7: Ethical Theories & Egoism
Group Activity: Moral Cowardice. Read p503-506 (Wed).
Due at noon Friday. Submit on-line.
- No 8-10 Learning Module 8: Utilitarian Ethics
Group Activity: Negative Responsibility, Read: LeGuin, Omelas (Wed).
Due at noon on Friday. Submit on-line.
- No 15 Learning Module 9: Deontological Ethics
- No 17 (Wed) No Class – Fall Ethics Symposium at CRC (Nov 16-17), Bonus Opportunity**
- No 22-24 Group work on Essay #2: On Moral Duty (Wed).
- No 25-26 Thanksgiving – Campus Closed, No Classes.**
- Nov 29 (Mon) Essay #2 Due, submit individually on-line – due at 5pm.**
- No 29-De 1 Group work on Applied Ethics Presentation (Mon, Wed).
Prepare Applied Ethics Presentation in virtual groups (Fri).
- De 6-10 Group Presentations (MWF). EVERYONE is expected to be present. Attendance will be taken.
- Final Exam Period**
Opens: De 13 (Mon) at noon.
Closes: De 16 (Thur) at noon.
No make-ups.

PHIL 2 SEC 10 (TR 10:30-11:45am, MND 3009)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

NOTE:

All assignments are due on the dates indicated in RED. They are assigned and submitted within SacCT.

In-class activities require completion of the relevant Learning Module IN ADVANCE. These are indicated in BLUE. In-class Activities: material covered in class in groups or as supplement to on-line LMs.

- Au 31 Welcome and overview of course requirements.

- Se 2 Review Learning Module 1: Introduction: What is Ethics?
Read the material in LM1 prior to class.
Demonstration of quizzes and discussion boards.
- Se 6 Labour Day – Campus Closed, No Class.**
- Se 7-9 Learning Module 2: Nature and Purpose of Ethics
- Se 14-16 Learning Module 3: Moral Value and Wickedness.
Formation of GROUPS for in-class work (Thurs).
Group work on Essay #1: On Wickedness (Thurs).
- Se 20 (Mon) Essay #1 Due, submit individually on-line – due at 5pm.**
- Se 21-23 Learning Module 4: Ethical Process – Arguments and Syllogisms
Assign Public Policy Ethical Issues for group presentations (Thurs).
Work on Public Policy Argument in groups (Thurs).
- Se 28-30 Learning Module 4: Ethical Process – Fallacies
Group Activity: Fallacies. Submit group reports at end of class (Thurs noon).
Prepare Public Policy Argument in virtual groups (Thurs).
- Oc 5-7 Presentations of Public Policy Arguments**
Written Public Policy Argument Reports due at 9am Tuesday. Submit on-line.
Group Presentations: Review guidelines for Public Policy Arguments & Presentations. EVERYONE is expected to be present. Attendance will be taken.
- Begin Tuesday class meetings – no Thursday classes, work on assigned material for Tuesday's classes in your virtual groups.**
- Oc 12 Learning Module 5: Meaning and Freedom
Group Activity: Non-Autonomy Assignment.
Submit on-line at noon on Thursday.
- Oc 19 Learning Module 6: Ethical Relativism
- Oc 26 Midterm Review
- Oc 27 Midterm Exam period, see SacCT for availability. No Make-ups.**
- No 2 Learning Module 7: Ethical Theories & Egoism
Group Activity: Moral Cowardice. Read p503-506.
Due at noon Thursday. Submit on-line.
- No 9 Learning Module 8: Utilitarian Ethics
Group Activity: Negative Responsibility, Read: LeGuin, Omelas.
Due at noon on Thursday. Submit on-line.
- No 16 (Tuesday) No Class – Fall Ethics Symposium at CRC (Nov 16-17), Bonus Opportunity**
- Nov 18 (Thurs) Learning Module 9: Deontological Ethics
- Nov 23 Group work on Essay #2: On Moral Duty.
- No 25-26 Thanksgiving – Campus Closed, No Classes.**
- Nov 29 (Mon) Essay #2 Due, submit individually on-line – due at 5pm.**
- No 30 Group work on Applied Ethics Presentation (Tues).
Prepare Applied Ethics Presentation in virtual groups (Thurs).
- De 7-9 Group Presentations (TR). EVERYONE is expected to be present. Attendance will be taken.

Final Exam Period

Opens: De 13 (Mon) at noon.

Closes: De 16 (Thur) at noon.

No make-ups.

ORIGINAL