

PHILOSOPHY 100 **Ethics and Personal Values**

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CSUS
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Tues. & Thurs. 3:00 – 4:15, Mendocino 3009
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs. 2:00 – 3:00

Description

In this course, we begin with the notion that our ethical principles, ‘personal values,’ and the opinions and actions they generate, can and should be rationally justified. We will then explore and critique several competing systems of thought by which we might do so, particularly as regards conceptions of right and wrong conduct, virtue and vice, the function of emotion and ego in ethics, and the practical application of ethics in our interactions with others. Our discussions will emphasize an analytical and critical discussion of those philosophical theories and competing viewpoints most popular in contemporary American culture.

Requirements

Our work will primarily be lecture and discussion, so both careful attention to the readings and class participation will be crucial for a lively course. Please bring your texts to class.

There will be two examinations--one take-home mid-term paper and one in-class final--as well as several unannounced short answer quizzes on the readings.

Texts

1. M. Cahn, P. Markie, *Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues* (3rd Ed.) Oxford University Press (2005): ISBN: 0195178408
2. Rachels, James, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy with Dictionary of Philosophical Terms* (Paperback) McGraw-Hill, 4 edition (2002): ISBN: 007282574X

Grading

Class participation:	15%	(3 unexcused absences results in 0%)
Quizzes:	25%	(These are written pop quizzes on the reading assignments)
Mid-term exam:	25%	(4-6 page take-home exam/paper)
Final exam:	35%	(In-class final exam)

Lecture Schedule – Summary View

Tues.		Thurs.	
1/24	Introduction	1/26	Rachels: Overview
1/31	Mill: Utilitarianism	2/02	Utilitarianism (cont'd)
2/07	Dewey: Pragmatism / Empirical Naturalism	2/09	Hobbes: Social Contract Theory
2/14	Social Contract Theory (cont'd)	2/16	John Rawls' theory of justice
2/21	Psychological Egoism	2/23	Feinberg: Against Egoism
2/28	Critique of Utilitarianism	3/02	Harman: Critique of Empirical Naturalism
3/07	Sturgeon: Response to Harman	3/09	Religion in ethics
3/14	SPRING RECESS	3/16	SPRING RECESS
3/21	Rachels: Overview of modern theories	3/23	Rachels: Overview (cont'd)
3/28	G.E. Moore	3/30	H.A. Prichard: 'The Good'
4/04	W.D. Ross: 'The Good'	4/06	Subjectivism / emotivism
4/11	Cultural relativism	4/13	Gibbard: Rational, normative ethics
4/18	Virtue-based ethics	4/20	Nussbaum: on Aristotelian virtues
4/25	Kant: Absolute morality	4/27	Absolute morality (cont'd)
5/02	Wolf: Critique of the Kantian ideal	5/04	Rachels: Conceptions of an adequate moral theory
5/09	Wrap up	5/11	Review Day

Lecture Schedule – Detailed View

'EMP'	<i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> by James Rachels
'E' =	<i>Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues</i> by M. Cahn & P. Markie
'D' =	Website download

1/24 General introduction and background

1/26 (EMP) Chapter 1: "What is Morality?" (1-15)

Major Influences in Contemporary American Culture

1/31 (E) J.S. Mill: *Utilitarianism* (317-351)

2/02 (EMP) Chapter 7: "The Utilitarian Approach" (91-102)

2/07 (E) John Dewey: American Pragmatism / Empirical Naturalism, *The Quest for Certainty* (selections, 373-386)

2/09 (E) Hobbes: Social Contract Theory, *Leviathan*, Ch.13-14, (221-225)

2/14 (EMP) Chapter 11: "The Idea of a Social Contract" (141-159)

2/16 (E) John Rawls: "A Theory of Justice" (493-515)

Possible Implications of Utilitarianism and Empirical Naturalism

2/21 (EMP) Chapter 5: "Psychological Egoism" (63-75)

2/23 (E) Joel Feinberg: Critique of Psychological Egoism (527-534)

2/28 (EMP) Chapter 8: "The Debate over Utilitarianism" (102-116)

3/02 (E) Gilbert Harman: Critique of empirical naturalism, "The Nature of Morality" (625-635)

3/07 (E) Nicholas Sturgeon: Defense of empirical naturalism, response to Harman, "Moral Explanations" (636-648)

3/09 (EMP) Chapter 4: "Does Morality Depend on Religion?" (48-62)

3/14 SPRING RECESS

3/16 SPRING RECESS

An Appeal to Metaphysics: The Quest for a First Principle of 'The Good'

3/21 (E) James Rachels: "Modern Ethical Theory" (403-412)

3/23 (E) James Rachels (cont'd): "Modern Ethical Theory" (403-412)

3/28 (E) G.E. Moore: selections from *Principia Ethica* (413-419)

3/30 (E) H.A. Prichard: "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" (419-428)

4/04 (E) W.D. Ross: Selections from *The Right and the Good* (429-438)

An Ancient Critique of Metaphysical Appeals: The Return of Protagoras

4/06 (D) Selections from Plato's *Theaetetus*
(EMP) Chapter 3: "Subjectivism in Ethics" (32-47)

4/11 (EMP) Chapter 2: "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" (16-31)

A Rehabilitation of the Ancient Arguments for Metaphysical Norms

4/13 (E) Allan Gibbard: "Moral Judgment and the Acceptance of Norms" (601-613)

4/18 (EMP) Chapter 13: "The Ethics of Virtue" (173-190)

4/20 (E) Martha Nussbaum: "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach" (659-676)

4/25 (E) Kant: The Categorical Imperative (excerpt from "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals" (270-308)

4/27 (EMP) Chapter 9: "Are There Absolute Moral Rules?" (117-129)

5/02 (E) Susan Wolf: Critique of the Kantian ideal, "Moral Saints" (706-718)

5/04 (EMP) Chapter 14: "What Would a Satisfactory Moral Theory Be Like?" (191-202)

5/09 **Wrap up**

5/11 **Review**

TBA **Final Exam**