

Philosophy 160: Introduction to Ethics

Summer II, 2013—M/T/W/Th/F 11.30-1.00, Peabody 216

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1.15-3.15 and by appointment in Caldwell 206A

In our day to day lives, we judge, blame, praise and criticize people in light of their moral behavior. And there seems to be a great deal of consensus about *what* behavior ought to be praised, and what ought to be condemned. Most of us, for instance, would agree that killing babies for fun is morally *impermissible*, while most of us would agree that dedicating one's free time to charity is morally laudatory. But when we press these intuitions, we run up against walls. It seems so *intuitive* that various actions are wrong, and various actions are right, but figuring out why we have those intuitions is incredibly difficult.

In this course, we will try to answer two questions: 1) What makes something moral or immoral? and 2) What actions are moral or immoral? To answer these questions, we need moral philosophy. Assessing these questions philosophically requires that we explore and critically analyze our moral intuitions using reason and argument. The major goal for you in this course is to learn how to make and assess arguments for and against moral judgments. In order to do this, we will be reading some of the most influential historical and contemporary texts on moral philosophy.

Required Course Books

Texts: Shafer-Landau *Fundamentals of Ethics* (ISBN-10: 0199773556), Kant *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (any edition) Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* (ISBN-10: 0872204642), Mill *Utilitarianism* (Hackett: ISBN-10: 087220605X)

Note: throughout the semester, various readings will appear on Sakai. I will give you a heads up when this happens. You are required to bring a *hardcopy* of these readings to class.

There will also be various optional readings included in each unit. These readings will enrich your understanding of the primary texts and promote critical engagement.

Classroom Expectations

- Please do not bring laptops to class. You won't need them (and come on, we all know that they turn classes into an extended Facebook session)
- Please turn off cell phones, tablets, iPhones, iPods, iPads etc. during class
- Be respectful of your peers. This means:
 - Don't interrupt your classmates when they're speaking
 - Don't make derogatory or offensive comments
 - Provide supportive feedback to your classmates

Course Requirements:

Honor Code: All students are expected to abide by the Honor Code at all times. You are responsible for understanding the terms of the Honor Code, and for understanding what constitutes plagiarism.

For more information on the Honor Code, please visit <http://studentconduct.unc.edu>.

Attendance and Participation: Participation is worth 10% of your grade. By 'participation', I do not mean 'being a warm body in the room'. While attendance is essential to this part of your grade, it is not sufficient. Rather, to do well on this portion of the course, you will be expected to regularly participate in class discussion. You'll most likely find that regular participation will help you in other areas of the course, and make class time far more enjoyable.

Reading: Completing the readings before class is an absolute must. You simply won't get much out of these classes without some preparatory work. Also, make sure that you have brought the relevant readings to class. I sometimes call on students to read passages aloud, which is a remarkably difficult thing to do without the book.

Marking: All assignments will be blind graded. Please do not put your name on your papers—just write your student number.

Due dates for assignments are firm. I allow extensions only when arrangements are made in advance. If you think you will need an extension, please email me *at least* 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Please bring a hard copy of your papers to class, and email me an electronic copy by the end of the day on the date they are due. All late assignments, if accepted, will be docked a full letter grade for each 24-hour period overdue. If you have made prior arrangements with me about an extension, this policy does not apply.

Mark Breakdown:

Short Paper (max 1 page) 5%

Take-home midterm 10% (or 20% if mark on paper was lower)

Paper #1 (5-7 pages) 30% (or 20% if mark on midterm was higher)

Active Participation 10%

Paper #2/Take-home portion of final exam (5-7 pages) 30%

Final Exam (In Class) 15%

Schedule of Readings

This schedule is not a contract. I may, depending on how quickly we move through the readings, make changes to it.

Note: FE=Fundamentals of Ethics

Date	Readings	Assignments
June 20	Introduction to “Introduction to Ethics”	
Challenges to Morality		
June 21	Egoism FE Chpt 7 and 8	Short Paper Assigned (max 1 page)
June 24	Relativism James Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism” (Sakai) Supplementary Readings: FE Chpt 19, p. 289-305	Short Paper Due
Utilitarianism		
June 25	Mill <i>Utilitarianism</i> Chapter 1 Supplementary Readings: FE Chpt 9, 117-132 <i>Utilitarianism</i> Editor's Introduction	
June 26	Mill <i>Utilitarianism</i> Chapter 2 Supplementary Readings: FE Chpt 9, 117-132	
June 27	Mill <i>Utilitarianism</i> Chapter 4 Supplementary Readings: FE Chpt 9, 117-132	Take home midterm distributed
June 28	Peter Singer “Famine, Affluence and Morality”	
July 1	Challenge to Utilitarianism: Derek Parfit <i>Overpopulation and the Quality of Life</i> pp. 7-11 “Quality and Quantity” pp. 17-18 “The Quality of Single Lives” Supplementary Reading: Robert Nozick <i>Experience Machine</i> (Sakai)	
July 2	Challenge to Utilitarianism: FE Chapter 10: pp. 144 (bottom of page)-152	

Kantian Ethics		
July 3	Kant <i>Groundwork</i> , 4:393-4:397 <i>Supplementary Readings:</i> FE Chpt 11 & 12	Take home midterm due
July 4	Temporary Respite from Moral Philosophy (NO CLASS)	
July 5	Kant <i>Groundwork</i> , 4:397-4:405 <i>Supplementary Readings:</i> FE Chpt 11 & 12	
July 8	Kant <i>Groundwork</i> 4:406-4:409, 4:413-4:417, 4:421-4:425 <i>Supplementary Readings:</i> FE Chpt 11 & 12	Paper #1 Assigned
July 9	Kant <i>Groundwork Part 2</i> , 4:427-4:432 <i>Supplementary Readings:</i> FE Chpt 11 & 12	
July 10	Challenge to Kant: Thomas Nagel “Moral Luck” (Sakai) FE Chpt 12, p. 176-182	
July 11	Challenge to Kant: Susan Wolf “Moral Saints” (Sakai) pp. 419-423 FE Chpt 12, p. 182-185	
Virtue Ethics		
July 12	Aristotle <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I <i>Supplementary Readings:</i> FE Chpt 17	
July 15	Aristotle <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book II Chapt 1-9 Book VI, Chapter IV, Sect 1-44 <i>Supplementary Readings:</i> FE Chpt 17	Paper #1 Due
July 16	Aristotle <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book 3, Chapter 1-3, 5, Book ViI, Chpt 1-4 <i>Supplementary Readings:</i> FE Chpt 17	
July 17	Shafer-Landau <i>Fundamentals</i> Chapter 17, pp. 262-270	Paper #2/Take Home Portion of Final Assigned
Theory and Practice		
July 18	Practical Ethics Topic #1 TBA	
July 19	Practical Ethics Topic #2 TBA	
July 22	Practical Ethics Topic # 3 TBA	
July 23	Course Review	