PHI 151 Fall 2016 Syllabus

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| Location | Chapel 002 |
| Instructor | Dan Sheffler |
| Email | daniel\_sheffler@georgetowncollege.edu |
| Web | <http://sage.georgetowncollege.edu/course/view.php?id=2585> |
| Schedule | <http://dansheffler.com/phi151schedule/> |
| Presentations | <http://dansheffler.com/phi151presentations/> |
| Semester | Fall 2016 |
| Credit Hours | 3 |

## Required Texts

* John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. George Sher (Hackett, 2001) ISBN:9780872206052.
* Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James W. Ellington (Hackett, 1993) ISBN: 9780872201668.
* Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Hackett,

1. ISBN: 9780872204645.

## Course Description and Learning Outcomes

*From the Catalog*: Introduction to important texts and authors, including Aristotle, Kant, and Mill, who provide interesting answers to the question, “How should one live?”

*From Me*: In this course we will learn about right and wrong. Is it wrong to kill someone? What if doing so will save ten lives? Do you really have to donate money to charity? Or is it just something nice to do? More importantly, *what makes* murder wrong and giving to charity good? In order to think through these questions for ourselves, we will read the primary sources from the three most influential ethical systems: (i) utilitarianism, (ii) kantianism, and (iii) virtue ethics. We will attempt to understand the very different ways that these systems have conceived of what makes one thing right and another thing wrong. I hope that by exploring the ways that influential thinkers have understood morality you will come to a more mature understanding yourself and that this will impact the way you live your life.

## Learning Outcomes

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| Learning Outcome | Assessment |
| To gain an understanding of the primary questions, terminology, and theories in ethical philosophy | Reading Quizzes |
| To learn to carefully read philosophical texts | Reading Quizzes |
| To gain the capacity to communicate mature ethical thinking in clear, concise prose. | Midterm and Final Papers |

## Grading

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reading Quizzes | 40% |
| Utilitarianism Paper | 20% |
| Kantianism Paper | 20% |
| Virtue Ethics Paper | 20% |

The first portion of your grade will come from regular (short) reading quizzes. These will be completed on Moodle and will typically consist of five multiple-choice questions on the reading for the day. These quizzes are due before class on the day when the corresponding reading assignment is due. There is a time limit on these quizzes and they can only be taken once, so it is advisable that you complete them just as soon as you complete your reading. You will not have enough time to search the reading for the answers if you have not read it, but you may keep the reading assignment open to aid in the completion of the quiz. You will quickly find that you really must do the reading and do it quite carefully to do well on these quizzes.

At the end of each unit, you will submit a short (700–1000 words) paper on Moodle analyzing and reflecting upon an ethical dillema through the lens of the system we discuss in that unit. This paper will consist of one section (at least 350 words) that analyzes the way our author would answer a difficult ethical question and another section (at least 350 words) that presents your own argument on the same topic. I will not accept papers that fail to meet these length requirements. Instead, your paper will simply rack up deductions for lateness until you turn in a paper of sufficient length. See [these instructions](http://www.dansheffler.com/phi151analysispaper/) for specific steps to getting an A and the specific rubric I use while grading.

**Grading Scale:**

(I round all values to the nearest whole percent.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | 100–90% |
| B | 89–80% |
| C | 79–70% |
| D | 69–60% |
| E | 59–0% |

## Attendance

Although attendance does not compose its own segment of the grade, it is mandatory and failure to attend class will adversely impact your grade. Roll will be taken at the beginning of every class period. Perfect attendance will result in an extra credit of +2 percentage points. The first 2 unexcused absences will not count against you, but beginning with the 3rd absence, each absence will subtract 2 percentage points from your final grade. This goes to a **limit of 7 unexcused absences** at which point you can no longer pass the class. For your reference:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Absences | Percentage Change to Final Grade |
| 0 |  |
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |
| 7 |  |

I keep track of absences by calling roll at the beginning of each class. If you do not respond when I call your name (perhaps because you are not there) you will be marked as absent. This means that if you walk in late it is your responsibility to check in with me each and every time. Lateness, especially if egregious or repeated, may be counted as an absence for the day. You are always welcome to look at your record and I encourage you to do so because it is your responsibility to keep track of how many absences I have recorded. This is especially important for students who are in danger of failing the class because of absences. I probably will not notice when you have six absences, so I am unlikely to notify you when you are in danger of failing.

Whenever a student knows in advance that he or she will miss class (as for a scheduled college-sponsored activity), the student should discuss the absence with me prior to the event, and the student’s participation in the event should be confirmed by a communication from the event sponsor. When a student’s participation in college-sponsored activities or other scheduled events will require multiple absences, the student should discuss the potential for those absences with me prior to the end of the first week of classes.

Students missing class or an exam due to an excused absence (e.g. for sickness) bear the responsibility of informing me about their absence within one week following the period of the absence and of providing appropriate documentation for the absence. Excused absences are not taken into account in the above adjustment to the final grade. It is entirely the student’s responsibility to make up missed work. Make up work (including exams) must be submitted within one week of return to class. In general, I do not excuse on-line assignments.

## E-mail and Internet

You are expected to have an active e-mail account that you check regularly. Section related announcements will be made via e-mail (e.g. if I am sick, pointers for home work, change in due dates). Also, e-mail is the best way for contacting me outside of class.

You are expected to have access to a stable internet connection as reading quizzes are carried out through Moodle. I will not reset quizzes because of internet trouble (doing so is simply too easy to abuse and has been in the past). Instead, I will be dropping the lowest reading quiz score for everyone.

## Respectful Behavior

Mature, respectful behavior is expected in class. The primary concern is that all students are able to enjoy a focused, helpful classroom. This means that I expect you will among other things: arrive to class on time, stay awake, refrain from taking cell phone calls, playing games, or doing work for other classes. I will warn you once during a semester if a particular behavior is disruptive. If this behavior happens again, I may ask you to leave resulting in an absence for the day.

Class time is primarily focused on discussion of the material for which I expect you to be fully engaged. For this reason, I prohibit the use of electronic devices in class.

## Academic Integrity

Cheating robs other students of a fair grade. If it is determined that a student has cheated, all students involved will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. If the case is egregious, I will direct the case to the appropriate university dean for official sanction. Please see the Academic Honesty Policy in your Student Handbook.

## Disability Accommodations

If you are registered to receive accommodations for a disability, please discuss them with me during the first week of class. You will need official documentation from Lloyd Clark in the Wellness Center (x7074).

## Schedule

(See [separate document](http://dansheffler.com/phi151schedule/) for our projected schedule of topics and readings.)