

This syllabus is a replacement for the original.
Although the dates are different, the readings and graded assignments are identical.

OXFORD COLLEGE
INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Philosophy 115 WS
Spring 2009

Dr. Ken Anderson
Seney Hall 401

This course will be an introduction to the philosophy of ethics. We will examine in some detail the thought of four foundational thinkers – Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and Nietzsche – and a more contemporary assessment of the issue – Iris Murdoch. We will also consider how these ethical theories might be exemplified in or reflected upon through the use of a number of films. The five philosophers present very different systems of ethical thought and with respect to these systems we will address the broad issues of what morality means and what constitutes a moral or ethical existence. The films for this class are meant to consider what constitutes the human and how one becomes a member of the moral community.

Texts: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*
Mill, *Utilitarianism*
Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*
Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of the Good*

Films: Required. In library. List of possible films.

Paths of Glory
Sling Blade
Clockers
Falling Down
Frida
Fight Club
Clockwork Orange

Requirements:

- 1) Reading/film commentary (approximately 350 words) due every Tuesday. These commentaries will attempt to apply the ideas of the philosophers to concrete ethical matters and the films: 10% collectively
- 2) Two short essays of 4-5 pages each: 10% each
- 3) One longer essay of 8-10 pages: 20%
- 4) Two exams: mid-term (3/3) and final (5/5 – 2:00-5:00): 20% each
- 5) Class participation is essential and **will** figure into the final grade: 10%.
- 6) +/- grading

You may miss **two** classes for **any reason** without penalty. If you miss **more than two** classes, you will be penalized on the following basis:

3rd-4th absences lose 1.5% from the final grade for each absence

5th – 6th absences lose 3% from the final grade for each absence

7th-8th absences lose 4.5% from the final grade for each absence

9th -- ? you are in real trouble

Three times late for class will be considered an **absence**. If you are exceptionally late, I may consider it half an absence. If you are late, it is **your** responsibility to remind me after class to mark you as late rather than as absent. You **cannot argue later** in the semester that you were not really absent as many times as my records indicate.

These penalties will be in **addition to** and **separate from** the class participation grade.

If your **cell phone** goes off during class you will be marked as absent. If you **leave** the classroom after class has begun you will be marked absent and will not be permitted to return. Of course, exceptions can be made for medical reasons and other situations where you must be in constant communication with someone outside of our room.

The **honor code** is in effect at all times and must be adhered to for each assignment. The code and its application to particular assignments will be discussed in class.