

OXFORD COLLEGE  
INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Philosophy 115 WS  
Fall 2003  
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This course will be an introduction to the philosophy of ethics. We will examine in some detail the thought of four extremely influential thinkers – Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and Nietzsche – and consider how their ethical theories might be exemplified in or reflected upon through the use of a number of films. The four 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.

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

Films: This list is subject to change. Films will be shown at designated times in the library. The films are the equivalent of assigned readings and are required.

Paths of Glory  
Crimes and Misdemeanors  
The Ox-Bow Incident  
Fight Club  
A Clockwork Orange

Requirements:

- 1) Brief commentary due every Tuesday. These commentaries will attempt to apply the ideas of the philosophers to concrete ethical matters and the films. There will be conference files in the class conference into which you will submit your commentary by 9:30am on the day it is due: 20%
- 2) Three short essays of 4-5 pages each: 15% each
- 3) Two exams: mid-term and final: 10% each
- 4) Class participation is essential and **will** figure into the final grade: 15%.

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:

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

5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> absences lose 3% from the final grade for each absence

7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> absences lose 4.5% from the final grade for each absence

9<sup>th</sup> -- ? 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.

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.