

PHIL 115 02A: Introduction to Ethics

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Office Hours: MWF 9:00 – 10:00; TTH 3:30 – 5 (and by appt.)

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Catalogue Description: Examination of fundamental moral questions, such as the best way of life, the relation between happiness and moral excellence, and the nature of ethical reasoning, as treated by major philosophers.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will understand and be able to articulate the differences between the major schools of ethical thought.
- Students will gain knowledge of the historical development of ethical and moral thinking in the West from ancient Greece to the present.
- Students will be able to apply ethical theory to contemporary problems in ethics.
- Students will gain skill in analyzing and evaluating ethical and moral arguments.
- Students will develop skills in analytical and argumentative writing.

Texts

Marino, Gordon, ed. *Ethics: Essential Writings*. New York: Modern Library, 2010.

Midgley, Mary. *Wickedness*. New York: Routledge, 1984.

Assignments

Reading Quizzes	15%
Midterm	20%
Final	25%
Reflection Papers	15%
Participation	10%
Applied Ethics Paper	15%

Grading Scale

93.0 - 100: A

90.0 - 92.99: A-

87.0 - 89.99: B+

83.0 - 86.99: B

80.0 - 82.99: B-

77.0 - 79.99: C+

73.0 - 76.99: C

70.0 - 72.99: C-

67.0 - 69.99: D+

60.0 - 66.99: D

< 60.0: F

Please note that because of bonus opportunities, I will *never* round scores up.

Assignment Descriptions

Reading Quizzes

You will have assigned readings for each class, which you should complete before coming to class.

Quizzes on these readings will be unannounced, and will typically happen during the first 5 minutes of

class. If you are late to class, you will miss the quiz. Quizzes may also cover material from the previous class, so you will be wise to re-read your notes from the previous day as you prepare for each class. There will be approximately 10 quizzes over the course of the semester. I will drop the lowest quiz grade. Please note that I do not make up missed quizzes except in the case of a documented illness or an official college absence (athletics, debate, etc.). In the case of planned absences, you must provide documentation within the first two weeks of class that such absences are scheduled in order to be eligible to make up quizzes.

Midterm Exam: The midterm in this class will cover all material from the first half of the semester. I will not schedule makeup exams except in the case of documented illness or official college business.

Final Exam: The final in this class is cumulative of all material covered during the semester. I do not reschedule final exams, period. All schedule change requests must be submitted through the office of Academic Affairs. Please note the following Academic Affairs policy: "Leaving early for rides or flights, vacations, relatives' or friends' weddings or graduation, jobs, or having more than one exam on one day, are not considered valid reasons to request an earlier or later exam."

Reflection Papers: You must submit six (6) reflection papers before the end of the semester. I will post questions for reflection on each reading every Sunday. You may submit responses to the questions of your choosing, but note that ***you must submit at least 3 responses before the midterm exam***. You may only submit one response per class period, and you must be in class in order to submit a response for that period. Responses should be 1-2 pages typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins all the way around. Reflection papers will be graded on a scale from 1-10. Note that papers with grammatical, syntax, or spelling errors will *never* be awarded a 10. I will drop the lowest Reflection Paper score from your overall average.

Participation: Philosophy is fundamentally conversational. Thus, regular, engaged participation in our ongoing conversation is a required element of this class. Participation in this class requires, minimally, that you do the following:

- Come to class regularly, and do not miss more than 3 classes for any reason.
- Refrain from using cell phones or other electronic devices in class.
- Regularly contribute to the conversation by:
 - o Asking questions
 - o Making comments informed by the text (and citing it when you can)
 - o LISTENING to your classmates and responding to them
 - o Taking care not to dominate the conversation
- Bring your book/materials to class
- Be on time
- Actively participate in small group activities

Please note that students who never speak up in our large-group discussions will earn, at most, a C for their participation.

Applied Ethics Paper: During the final weeks of the semester, we will be discussing 3 contemporary ethical issues of the class' choosing (topics will be determined within the first 2 weeks of class). In this paper, you will engage one of these topics through the lens of one of the major ethical theorists we have read during the semester. Your goal is to explain 1) how the Philosopher you choose would respond to the particular problem you choose, 2) why you believe they would take this viewpoint, 3) what is the most obvious objection to this viewpoint, and 4) whether/how the Philosopher could respond to that objection. More detailed instructions will be forthcoming. The completed paper should be 3-4 pages typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins all the way around.

Schedule

1/15 – Intro; Am I a Jerk?

1/17 - What is Philosophy? What is Ethics? Midgley, Preface, pp. vii-xii

1/20: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY: NO CLASS

1/22: Midgley, Chapter 1

1/24 Midgley, Chapter 3, pp. 49-56, 60-66, 71-73

1/27: Midgley, Chapter 5

1/29: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I, pp. 43-56

1/31: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I, pp. 56-65

2/3: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book II, pp. 66-77

2/5: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book III, pp. 80-87

2/7: DR. TARVER OUT OF TOWN: NO CLASS

2/10: Augustine, *City of God*, pp. 107-118

2/12: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* [The Natural Law], Marino pp. 119-133

2/14: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* [Of Human Law], **Handout on Blackboard**

2/17: Aquinas, Double-Effect, and the Trolley Problem, **Handout on Blackboard**

2/19: Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, **Handout on Blackboard**

2/21: Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Marino pp. 188-200

2/24: Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Marino pp. 203-212

2/26: Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Marino pp. 213-224

2/28: Review Day

3/3: MIDTERM EXAM

3/5: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Marino pp. 225-238

3/7: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Marino pp. 238-248

3/10 – 3/14: SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

3/17: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Marino pp. 249-255

3/19: Utilitarianism and the Trolley Problem, **Handout on Blackboard**

3/21 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Marino pp. 277-285

3/24: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Marino pp. 285-298

3/26: Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotion*, Marino pp. 328-332, **Handout on Blackboard**

3/28: King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, Marino pp. 356-377

3/31: Noddings, *Caring*, Marino pp. 424-435

4/2: Noddings, *Caring*, Marino pp. 435-444

4/4: Applied Ethics Topic 1, Reading TBD

4/7: Applied Ethics Topic 1, Reading TBD

4/9: Applied Ethics Topic 1, Reading TBD

4/11: Applied Ethics Topic 2, Reading TBD

4/14: Applied Ethics Topic 2, Reading TBD

4/16: Applied Ethics Topic 2, Reading TBD

4/18: Applied Ethics Topic 3, Reading TBD

4/21: Applied Ethics Topic 3, Reading TBD

4/23: Applied Ethics Topic 3, Reading TBD

4/25: Am I a Jerk, Redux: **APPLIED ETHICS PAPERS DUE**

4/28: Exam Review

FINAL EXAM: 5/7, 9 AM

Classroom Conduct

We're going to talk quite a bit about arguments in this class—and we'll definitely have a few of our own!—but that doesn't mean that we don't have ground rules. In fact, being respectful of one another, even when we disagree, is absolutely crucial to making this an environment in which everyone can learn. There are several ways we can show one another respect; the following are the ones I insist upon:

- We may attack ideas, but never people.
- Listen to others when they're talking.
- Don't use cell phones or computers in the classroom. Note that I will give ONE warning to put your cell phone or other electronic device away. After this warning, your individual grade for participation will be lowered by FIVE points each time I have to ask you to put your device away.
- Work on in-class assignments when provided time to do so. Philosophy is hard. This is not time-filler; I have specifically set aside time for you to practice working collaboratively on the exercises I assign, and to do so with my assistance. Make wise use of this time. DO NOT take it as an invitation to leave early, pack up your things, chat, etc.
- No sleeping in class. Sleepers will be marked absent.

Persistent violations of the classroom conduct guidelines will result in penalties to your participation grade.

Email Policy

I strive to stay in touch with you outside of class hours, and will generally attempt to answer messages within 24 hours. Please note, however, that I will not answer messages sent after 9 PM until the following day. Additionally, I will not respond to questions sent the evening before a scheduled test or exam. Finally, I *do not discuss grades via email*. Please make an appointment to see me if you would like to discuss any course grades.

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty is extremely important, and so violations of the Oxford College Honor Code will not be tolerated. I will not hesitate to report any such violations to the Honor Council. Infractions of the Honor Code include plagiarism, cheating, seeking or giving unauthorized assistance, and lying related to academic matters. Further information on Honor Code infractions and procedures are available in the Oxford College Student Handbook, and online: http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code/index.dot

Disability Access

I encourage any students with disabilities that may impact their access to or performance in any component of this course to register with Oxford College's Office of Disability Services, and to let me know about necessary accommodations as soon as possible. The ODS is located in the Student Health/Counseling Center.

Additionally, please be aware that my office is located on the second floor of a building without disability access. I will, accordingly, be happy to make arrangements to meet with any student on the first floor of Humanities Hall, should this be necessary.