

SYLLABUS: PHIL_OX 115 INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

MWF 8:30 - 9:20 am Humanities Hall 201
MWF 11:45 - 12:35 pm

Instructor: Dr. John Kress
Office: Language Hall 106B
Office Phone: 4-8313
Email: john.kress@emory.edu
Office Hours: M W F 9:30 - 11:30 or by appointment

Course Description: This course is an introduction to the philosophy of ethics. Our main focus will be on ethical theory, our study of which will be supplemented by a number of literary texts. We shall study in detail the Virtue Ethics of Aristotle, the Deontological (Duty-based) Ethics of Kant, the Utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill, and the existential interpersonalism of Martin Buber. The purpose of philosophical ethics is to increase our clarity and consistency with respect to such terms as good and bad, right and wrong, better and worse, and to sharpen our reasoning by asking what grounds and principles may underlie questions that necessarily confront all human beings: "What should I do?" "How should I live?" "What kind of person should I be?"

Course Objectives:

1. To gain a preliminary understanding of what the philosophical study of ethics is.
2. To gain experience recognizing and understanding ethical arguments.
3. To gain experience in making serious ethical arguments.
4. To gain some familiarity with some of the most important ethical theories.

Required Texts:

Pojman, Louis, *The Moral Life*
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*
Martin Buber, *I and Thou*

Course Assignments and Requirements:

Reading: Many of the texts we will be reading are fairly difficult. Be sure to allow yourself enough time to do your reading. 15 pages of Aristotle or Kant is equal to 30+ pages of many other writers! By the same token, don't expect to completely understand a difficult philosophical text on a first reading. Take your time, read slowly and carefully, think about (and talk about) the reading, and when you can, re-read.

Position Cards: Every class, you are to turn in a 3 x 5 note card which should have your name, the name of the author and the reading, and a short reflection on the day's reading. This reflection can be an argument, a question or questions, something the reading made you think about, etc. The purpose of this is for you to think a little in writing (one note card) about the readings. I recommend you write your position card at the same time you do your reading (as opposed to right before class). Please write legibly!

Attendance: Regular class attendance is both required and important. Much of our best learning is done in class. Students should attend every class, if possible. Your overall class grade will be adjusted according to the number of unexcused absences you have, as follows: 0 = +4, 1 = +2, 2 = +1, 3 = 0, 4 = -2, 5 = -4, 6 = -7, 7 = -11, 8 = -16, etc. Excused absences will be given for 1. medical or family emergencies, 2. religious observances, and 3. events authorized by the College. For an absence to be excused, **you must provide appropriate documentation**. Note that the student health center CANNOT authorize medical absences.

Class Participation: All students are expected to come to class having done the reading carefully and prepared to listen and take part in class discussion. You will find you get a lot more out of class if you have completed the reading. While it is not required that everyone be equally vocal in class, everyone is expected to participate in discussion to some extent.

Essays (2): 900-1200 words (include word count on title page).

Exams (2): A midterm and a final. They will cover the first half of the course and the second, respectively (i.e. the final is **not** comprehensive).

Grading and Evaluation:

Scale: Grading will be according to the standard scale of A, B, C, D & F with + and -.

Breakdown:	Position Cards / Class Participation	20%
	Papers	20% each
	Exams	20% each

Late Papers: I will accept late papers, but the paper grade will be reduced by **one letter grade per class day** the paper is late.

Honor Code: As with all classes at Oxford, the Student Honor Code will be taken very seriously in this class.

Reading Schedule:

1	wed, aug 27	First class. Go over syllabus.	
2	fri, aug 29	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> 2a-9e	REFLECTION PAPER DUE
3	wed, sept 3	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> 10a-16a	
4	fri, sept 5	Plato, <i>Apology of Socrates</i> 17a-24a	
5	mon, sept 8	Plato, <i>Apology of Socrates</i> 24b-35d	
6	wed, sept 10	Plato, <i>Apology of Socrates</i> 35e-42a	
7	fri, sept 12	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 57a-69e	
8	mon, sept 15	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 70a-88c	
9	wed, sept 17	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 88c-102a	
10	fri, sept 19	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 102b-118a	
11	mon, sept 22	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk I	
12	wed, sept 24	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk I-II	
13	fri, sept 26	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk II	
14	mon, sept 29	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk III chs. 4-12	
15	wed, oct 1	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk IV ch 3, V 1-4	
16	fri, oct 3	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk VI	FIRST PAPER DUE
17	mon, oct 6	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk VIII chs 1-6, IX ch 8	
18	wed, oct 8	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bk IX ch 9, X chs 6-8	
19	fri, oct 10	Descartes, <i>Regulae</i> 1-5; <i>Discourse on the Method</i> 1-3	
20	wed, oct 15	Descartes, <i>Discourse on the Method</i> 4-6	
21	fri, oct 17	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , 1st Meditation	
22	mon, oct 20	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , 2nd Meditation	
23	wed, oct 22	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , 3rd Meditation	
24	fri, oct 24	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , 4th Meditation	
25	mon, oct 27	MIDTERM	
26	wed, oct 29	Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Sections 1-3	
27	fri, oct 31	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> , Sections 4-5	
28	mon, nov 3	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> , Section 8	
29	wed, nov 5	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> , Sections 10	
30	fri, nov 7	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> , Sections 12	SECOND PAPER DUE
31	mon, nov 10	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Preface, Part 1 "On the Prejudices of Philosophers"	
32	wed, nov 12	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 1 cont., Part 2 "The Free Spirit"	
33	fri, nov 14	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 2 cont., Part 3 "What is Religious?"	
34	mon, nov 17	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 5 "Natural History of Morals"	
35	wed, nov 19	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 6 "We Scholars"	
36	fri, nov 21	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 9 "What is Noble"	
37	mon, nov 24	Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism", pp. 217-239	
38	mon, dec 1	Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism", pp. 240-265	
39	wed, dec 3	Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", pp. 311-326	
40	fri, dec 5	Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", pp. 327-241	THIRD PAPER DUE
41	mon, dec 8	Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking"	