

OXFORD COLLEGE
INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Philosophy 115 WS

Fall 2005

Dr. Ken Anderson

Office: Language Hall 118

Phone: 4-8384

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.

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: 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

Clockers

Fight Club

A Clockwork Orange

Requirements:

- 1) Brief 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: 15%
- 2) Three short essays of 4-5 pages each: 15% each
- 3) Two exams: mid-term (10/18) and final (12/16 – 9-noon): 15% each
- 4) Class participation is essential and **will** figure into the final grade: 10%.

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.