

OXFORD COLLEGE  
INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Philosophy 115 WS  
Spring 2002  
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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: Paths of Glory

Crimes and Misdemeanors

American Beauty

Fight Club

In the Company of Men

(this list is subject to change)

Requirements:

- 1) Brief commentary due every Tuesday. These commentaries will attempt to apply the ideas of the philosophers to concrete ethical matters.
- 2) Three short essays of 3-5 pages each.
- 3) One longer essay of 8-10 pages.
- 4) Two exams: mid-term and final.

Class participation is essential and **will** figure into the final grade.

More than two absences **will** negatively affect your grade. See reverse.

Films will be shown at designated times in the library. They are also available at any good video store. The films are the equivalent of assigned readings and are required.

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.