

Instructor: Kevin Patton
Course: PHIL 2030
Mon / Wed 1300 - 1415 @ ASH 384
Tues / Thurs 1000 - 1115 / 1130 -
1245 @ ASH 210

<https://kevinjpatton.com>
UNO Philosophy
Office: ASH 205F
Office Hours: Tues / Thurs 1300-1400
(and by appointment)

Introduction to Ethics

“My desire and wish is that the things I start with should be so obvious that you wonder why I spend my time stating them. This is what I aim at because the point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating, and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it.”

Bertrand Russell from *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* 1918.

Course Overview

A critical study of basic moral concepts and problems contained in ethical theories of important western philosophers: relativism, egoism, happiness, obligation, justice, freedom, conscience, love, religious precepts, moral rules, moral attitudes and moral language.

Required Materials

All course materials are available on my website: kevinjpatton.com

Course Information

Preparation: This course may be very challenging for you if you are not accustomed to reasoning in a rigorous fashion. If this is true of you, then you will only do well in this class if you dedicate much of your outside-of-class-time to practicing and mastering the relevant topics covered. Also, the only dumb questions are the ones you don't ask. If you are confused about something, then there is a high likelihood that someone else is too!

Attendance: Attendance is required. There are no make-ups for exams or quizzes unless your absence is due to a **documented** illness or an emergency.

Website: All course material, including the textbook, will be available exclusively on my website. I do **not** use Canvas except to input grades. The site URL is: <https://kevinjpatton.github.io/>

Distribution: This course helps to satisfy the Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course requirement used by UNO. The Humanities & Fine Arts courses seek to help students understand, analyze, and explore the human condition. Studying Humanities & Fine Arts contributes to personal growth and well-being, as well as to living in, and contributing to various communities. Passing this class means that you will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the theories, methods, and concepts used to comprehend and respond to the human condition; to recognize, articulate, and explore how various humanists/artists have responded to the human condition; to comprehend and evaluate how humanistic/artistic expression contributes to individual and/or socio-cultural understanding, growth, and well-being; and use relevant critical, analytic, creative, speculative and/or reflective methods. More information can be found at:

<https://www.unomaha.edu/general-education/approved-courses/humanities-and-fine-arts.php>

Evaluation

Grading Scale

A+	96.7 - 100%	C+	76.7 - 79.9%
A	93.3 - 96.6%	C	73.3 - 76.6%
A-	90 - 93.2%	C-	70 - 73.2%
B+	86.7 - 89.9	D+	66.7 - 69.9
B	83.3 - 86.6%	D	63.3 - 66.6%
B-	80 - 83.2%	D-	60 - 63.2%

F
Below 60%

Exam 1: 25%
Exam 2: 25%
Participation: 10%
Final Paper: 30%
Something Else: 10%

Exams: The use of books and notes ***will not*** be permitted. However, certain kinds of information will be provided on an exam should you need it, and you will be told ahead of time what you are and what you are not required to memorize. Exams may not be rescheduled unless you have documentation of a serious illness or an emergency. A make-up exam is not guaranteed to be at the same level of difficulty as the original exam.

Participation: There will be a method introduced to document your participation in the class. You are required to ask a question / offer your perspective 15x throughout the semester. As an example, if you had an issue with the reading and came to class with a specific and terrific question about it, that would count as one of your 15. In order to track this, I will jot names down each class for all who participate. You may gain at most two instances of participation per class.

Final Paper: A final paper will be due by the end of the semester. In general, such papers require you to properly explain a position / argument, followed by a sustained critique of the position / argument. There will be a rubric, followed by guidelines for the paper as we get closer to the end of the semester. In addition to the paper, there will be a short but corresponding presentation that you will give the class at the end of the semester.

Policies

- **Academic Integrity:** The penalty for academic dishonesty (e.g., collaborating on problem sets, cheating on exams) will be failure of the course and the case's being forwarded to Student Judicial Affairs for possible disciplinary action. Make yourself familiar with UNO's Student Code of Conduct, available [online](#). **In this course, the normal penalty for any violation of the code is an "F" for the semester.** Violations may have additional consequences including expulsion from the university. Don't plagiarize – it just isn't worth it.
- **University Policies:** I respect and uphold university policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired students; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective university regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor.
- **ADA:** In compliance with University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.
- **Misc.:** Please turn off cell phones, beeping watches, and other gadgets that make noise before entering our classroom. Absolutely no texting is permitted during class. I will subtract up to five points from your participation grade each and every time your phone rings or I see you texting during class.

Further Resources

- **Jargon:** It's important to be on top of the technical terms used by philosophers. Please ask for clarification of terms in class. You can also consult Jim Pryor's online "[Philosophical Terms and Methods](#)." This is less important in this class than in more 'normal' philosophy classes, but it may help.
- **Reference:** The [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) is an excellent online resource, though entries can be lengthy. The [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) has shorter entries, but it is not as scholarly.
- I may post some additional readings on my website if the assigned reading does not explain something with sufficient clarity.

Assignment Calendar

Day 1	Introduction	Day 22	Brennan - Voting
Day 2	RSL: Introduction	Day 23	Davis - Prison Reform
Day 3	RSL Ch 1	Day 24	Cooper - Prostitution
Day 4	RSL: Ch 2	Day 25	Thompson - Abortion
Day 5	RSL: Ch 9	Day 26	Marquis - Abortion
Day 6	RSL: Ch 10	Day 27	Singer - Abortion
Day 7	RSL: Ch 11	Day 28	Topic TBD
Day 8	RSL: Ch 12	Day 29	Topic TBD
Day 9	RSL: Ch 17	Day 30	Topic TBD
Day 10	Review Day	Day 31	Final Paper Workshop
Day 11	Exam 1 😊	Day 32	Flex Day
Day 12	Mackie - Error Theory	Day 33	Flex Day / Paper Due
Day 13	Mackie - Error Theory		
Day 14	Williams - Moral Luck		
Day 15	Williams - Moral Luck		
Day 16	Nagel - Moral Luck		
Day 17	Nagel - Moral Luck		
Day 18	Exposition Paper Workshop		
Day 19	Singer - Famine		
Day 20	Hardin - Famine		
Day 21	Lardy - Voting		