

Instructor: Kevin Patton  
Course: PHIL 2030  
Mon / Wed 1300 - 1415 @ ASH 378  
Tue / Thurs 1130 - 1245 @ ASH 384

<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](https://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:** 15%  
**Exam 2:** 15%  
**Ethical Conversations:** 20%  
**Notes:** 20%  
**Final Paper:** 30%

**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.

**Meaningful Conversations:** This is an interview assignment. The interview will be conducted with someone that you choose. Part of the interview will require you to unpack certain philosophical viewpoints that we will have covered in class. The assignment requires both that you summarize the responses of whomever you interview and that you reflect and assess their answers.

**Notes:** You will upload to Canvas pictures of your notes for one of that week's readings. These notes are due every Sunday by 11:50pm. For example, in our first week of class we will have covered only one reading (the introduction of the ethics textbook). Hence, your notes on that are due by January 28th, by 11:59pm. Unless you have a special exemption, these notes must be handwritten (you will upload pictures of your handwritten notes). There is a handout about this available on the website under the "Assignments" tab.

**Final Project:** 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

<b>Day 1</b>	Introduction	<b>Day 22</b>	TBD
<b>Day 2</b>	RSL: Introduction	<b>Day 23</b>	TBD
<b>Day 3</b>	RSL Ch 1	<b>Day 24</b>	TBD
<b>Day 4</b>	RSL: Ch 2	<b>Day 25</b>	TBD
<b>Day 5</b>	RSL: Ch 9	<b>Day 26</b>	TBD
<b>Day 6</b>	RSL: Ch 11	<b>Day 27</b>	TBD
<b>Day 7</b>	RSL: Ch 12		
<b>Day 8</b>	RSL: Ch 17		
<b>Day 9</b>	RSL: Ch 19		
<b>Day 10</b>	Review Day		
<b>Day 11</b>	<b>Exam 1</b> 😊 (Feb 26 / 27)		
<b>Day 12</b>	Nagel - Moral Luck		
<b>Day 13</b>	Williams - Moral Luck		
<b>Day 14</b>	Mackie - Error Theory		
<b>Day 15</b>	Ayer - Emotivism		
<b>Day 16</b>	Review Day		
<b>Day 17</b>	<b>Exam 2</b> 😊 (March 18 / 19)		
<b>Day 18</b>	Singer - Famine		
<b>Day 19</b>	Hardin - Famine		
<b>Day 20</b>	Medical Ethics - 4 Principles		
<b>Day 21</b>	Medical Ethics - Euthanasia / <b>Ethical Convo Assignment</b> <b>due</b> (April 21st)		