

PHIL 2010 – Introduction to Ethics

3226 Kahrman Hall

Tues. & Thurs., 12:30-1:45

Instructor: james.v.martin@wmich.edu (3011 Moore Hall, by appointment)

TAs: chance.j.lacina@wmich.edu (3035 Moore Hall, Tues. 2:00-4:00)

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Required Texts: All readings can be found online through eLearning.

Course Description: At some time or another, we're all forced to ask ourselves difficult questions about how best to act. We may even occasionally ask ourselves more ambitious questions like, "How ought I live?" Ethics (or moral philosophy) attempts to think systematically about what these kinds of questions mean, how we might go about answering them, and how they should impact each of our lives. This course is an introduction to some of the most important issues, thinkers, and concepts of the subject.

Schedule and Readings:

Theoretical Matters

		FIRST THOUGHTS ABOUT METHOD	
Week 1	Jan. 8	Plato, <i>Meno</i> 70a-77b	
		Plato, <i>Theaetetus</i> 148e-151d	
	Jan. 10	Daniels, Wide Reflective Equilibrium and Theory Acceptance in Ethics (excerpt)	
		CAN GOD PROVIDE A FOUNDATION FOR MORALITY?	
Week 2	Jan. 15	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> 9d-11c	
	Jan. 17	Rachels, Does Morality Depend on Religion?	
		CAN SELF-INTEREST FOUND MORALITY?	
Week 3	Jan. 22	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chs. 13 & 17 (excerpt)	
		(optional) Gauthier, Morality and Advantage, §§I-IV	
	Jan. 24	Feinberg, Psychological Egoism	(PAPER 1 DUE)
		LOOKING FOR FOUNDATIONS IN CONSEQUENCES	
Week 4	Jan. 29	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (excerpts)	
	Jan. 31	Nozick, The Experience Machine (excerpt from <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i>)	
		Williams, A Critique of Utilitarianism, §§3-5	
		KANT'S ATTEMPT TO FOUND MORALITY IN RATIONALITY	
Week 5	Feb. 5	Kant, <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morality</i> (selections)	
	Feb. 7	Korsgaard, The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil	

- ARISTOTLE'S VIRTUE-BASED ETHICS
- Week 6 Feb. 12 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (selections)
Feb. 14 Annas, Being Virtuous and Doing the Right Thing
- RELATIVISM, PLURALISM, AND ERROR THEORIES – SO WHAT IF?
- Week 7 Feb. 19 Harman, Is There A Single True Morality?
(optional) Mackie, The Argument from Queerness
Feb. 21 Ayer, A Critique of Ethics
(optional) Berlin, Pursuit of the Ideal
- NIETZSCHE'S CRITIQUE OF MORALITY
- Week 8 Feb. 26 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, First Essay
Feb. 28 Leiter, The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Recovering Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud
- MARX: IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL ECONOMY
- Week 9 Mar. 12 Marx, *The German Ideology* (excerpt) (PAPER 2 DUE)
(optional) Wood, Marx Against Morality
Mar. 14 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, §§3-4, 11 (excerpt)
- EXISTENTIALISM AND AUTHENTICITY; MORALITY AND MODERNITY
- Week 10 Mar. 19 Sartre, Existentialism is a Humanism (excerpt)
Mar. 21 Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, §§5, 17-19
Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, Lecture 17

Applied Topics

- RIGHTS AND ABORTION
- Week 11 Mar. 26 Appiah, Grounding Human Rights
Mar. 28 Thomson, A Defense of Abortion
(optional) Marquis, An Argument that Abortion is Wrong
- CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
- Week 12 Apr. 2 Hart, Prolegomenon to the Principles of Punishment
Apr. 4 Dumsday, On Cheering Charles Bronson: The Ethics of Vigilantism
- LUCK AND RESPONSIBILITY
- Week 13 Apr. 10 Nagel, Moral Luck (EXAM DISTRIBUTED)
Apr. 11 Singer, Famine, Affluence, and Morality (EXAM DUE)
- TORTURE AND TERRORISM
- Week 14 Apr. 16 Valls, Can Terrorism Be Justified?
Apr. 18 Allhoff, *Terrorism, Ticking Time-bombs, and Torture*, Ch. 6 (FINAL PAPER DUE)

Assignments:

Paper 1	15%	Short expository paper	Due: Jan. 24
Paper 2	20%	Medium length paper evaluating an argument or position	Due: Mar. 12
Paper 3	25%	Final paper for the course	Due: Apr. 18
Take-home Exam	15%	Multiple-choice and short-answer exam	Due: Apr. 9
Discussion Section	10%	Discussion section participation	
Class Participation	10%	Philosophy courses require discussion and participation.	
Reading Quizzes	5%	Weekly quizzes to make sure you're reading.	

Resources: If this is your first philosophy course, you may want to consult the following resources containing suggestions about how to read and write philosophy papers.

jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html

jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html

Accommodations: Any student with a documented disability who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact me and the appropriate Disability Services office at the beginning of the semester. The two disability service offices on campus are: Disabled Student Resources and Services (269) 387-2116 and the Office of Services for Students with Learning Disabilities (269) 387-4411.

Academic Honesty: You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the university's [policies and procedures](#) that pertain to Academic Honesty. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment.

Grading: The grading for this course will be based on the following scale.

A	[92.5, 100]
BA	[87.5, 92.5)
B	[82.5, 87.5)
CB	[77.5, 82.5)
C	[72.5, 77.5)
DC	[67.5, 72.5)
D	[60, 67.5)
E	[0, 60)