

## PHIL 3310 – Moral Philosophy

4035 Brown Hall

Tues. & Thurs., 12:00-1:40

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

**Required Texts:** *After Virtue* (MacIntyre)

All other readings will available through Elearning.

**Course Description:** Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* is one of the most important books on moral philosophy produced during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It offers (among other things) a scathing critique of moral argumentation and theorizing in contemporary society, a reevaluation of the enlightenment of the Enlightenment, and a rethinking of the history of the virtues from early heroic societies up until the present. The project is not wholly negative, however. MacIntyre also offers numerous intriguing suggestions about how to move forward from what he sees as our currently benighted ways of thinking towards a new age where the virtues can again play a significant role. This course will be devoted to a close reading of this difficult, but rewarding text. Along the way, we'll engage with most of the key figures in the history of moral thought as well as many other significant philosophers, authors, playwrights, social scientists, and political theorists.

### Schedule and Readings:

Week 1	INTRODUCTION, METHODS, AND A DISQUIETING SUGGESTION	
Sept. 2	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 1	
Week 2	INTUITIONISM, EMOTIVISM, AND INTERMINABLE MORAL DISAGREEMENT	
Sept. 7	Moore, G. E., <i>Principia Ethica</i> , Preface	
	Ayer, A. J., <i>Language, Truth, and Logic</i> , Ch. 6 (excerpt)	
Sept. 9	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 2	
Week 3	EMOTIVISM AS A MAJOR PART OF MODERN LIFE	
Sept. 14	Weber, Max, <i>Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology</i> (excerpts)	
	James, Henry, <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> , Ch. 22	
Sept. 16	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 3	
Week 4	THE PATH FROM THE ENLIGHTENMENT TO EMOTIVISM	
Sept. 21	Kierkegaard, Søren, <i>Either/Or I</i> , Preface	(PAPER 1 DUE)
	Hume, David, <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> 2.3.3	
Sept. 23	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 4	
Week 5	THE ENLIGHTENMENT PROJECT'S FAULTY FOUNDATIONS	
Sept. 28	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I.7	
	Hume, David, <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> , 3.1.1	
Sept. 30	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 5	

Week 6	LATER ATTEMPTS TO GROUND MORALITY	
	Oct. 5	Mill, John Stuart, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Ch.2.1-10
	Oct. 7	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 6
Week 7	WHY TALK OF ENDS AND FUNCTIONS ARE INELIMINABLE	
	Oct. 12	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 7
	Oct. 14	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 8
Week 8	GROUNDLESS MORALITY WITH NIETZSCHE OR BACK TO ARISTOTLE?	
	Oct. 19	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 9 (PAPER 2 DUE)
	Oct. 21	Fall break: No class
Week 9	TRACING THE PATH OF THE VIRTUES: HEROIC AND ATHENIAN VIRTUES	
	Oct. 26	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 10 (optional) Homer, <i>The Iliad</i> 1.1-260
	Oct. 28	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 11 (optional) Sophocles, <i>Philoctetes</i> (excerpt)
Week 10	TRACING THE PATH OF THE VIRTUES: ARISTOTLE AND THE MEDIEVALS	
	Nov. 2	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 12 (optional) Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> II.1261 <sup>a</sup> 23-1261 <sup>b</sup> 5, III.4
	Nov. 4	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 13 (optional) Dante, <i>Inferno</i> , Cantos I-III
Week 11	THE NATURE OF THE VIRTUES: PRACTICES, TRADITIONS, AND NARRATIVES	
	Nov. 9	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 14
	Nov. 11	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 15
Week 12	IS IT POSSIBLE TO REESTABLISH ROOM FOR THE VIRTUES?	
	Nov. 16	Austen, Jane, <i>Mansfield Park</i> , vol. III.2-3 Schlegel, Friedrich, <i>Lucinde, a novel</i> , An Idyll of Idleness
	Nov. 18	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 16
Week 13	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
	Nov. 23	No class
	Nov. 25	No class
Week 14	CAN THE VIRTUE OF JUSTICE BE REHABILITATED?	
	Apr. 30	Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> §§3-4 (EXAM DISTRIBUTED) Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, Utopia</i> , Ch. 7 (excerpt)
	Dec. 2	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 17 (EXAM DUE)

Week 15	HOW TO PROCEED?	
Dec. 7	<i>After Virtue</i> , Ch. 18	
Dec. 9	MacIntyre, <i>Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity</i> , 4.2,3	(THIRD PAPER DUE)

**Assignments:**

Paper 1	15%	Short expository paper	Due: Sept. 21
Paper 2	25%	Medium length paper evaluating an argument or position	Due: Oct. 19
Paper 3	30%	Final paper for the course	Due: Dec. 9
Take-home Exam	15%	Multiple-choice and short-answer exam	Due: Dec. 2
Participation	15%	Participation is essential for a class of this type.	

**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](http://jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html)

[jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html](http://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)

**University COVID Policies:** Safety requirements are in place to minimize exposure to the Western Michigan University community. These guidelines apply to all in-person and hybrid classes held inside a WMU

building to ensure the safety of all students, faculty, and staff during the pandemic. Noncompliance is a violation of the class requirements and the [Student Code](#).

Facial coverings (masks), over both the nose and mouth, are required for all students while in- class, no matter the size of the space. Following this recommendation can minimize the transmission of the virus, which is spread between people interacting in close proximity through speaking, coughing, or sneezing. During specified classes in which facial coverings (masks) would prevent required class elements, students may remove facial coverings (masks) with instructor permission, in accordance with the exceptions in the [Facial Covering \(mask\) Policy](#) (“such as playing an instrument, acting, singing, etc.”).

Facial coverings (masks) must remain in place throughout the class. Any student who removes the mandatory facial covering (mask) during class will be required to leave the classroom immediately. Students who are unable to wear a facial covering (mask) for medical/disability reasons must contact [Disability Services for Students](#) before they attend class.