



Philosophy 105-30-2 — Intro to Ethics

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

The study of the concepts of good and bad, right and wrong, has a long history. This course will study the origins and legitimacy of our standards of conduct and character and will discuss modern studies which consider the compelling and unconditional overtones of ethical demands.

Course Objectives:

Students who complete this course should:

- Come away with an appreciation for the history of the study of ethics.
- Attain mastery of various ethical frameworks commonly employed today.
- Improve their ability to work out thoughts clearly in a group discussion.
- Gain competence at directing a group inquiry.
- Sharpen their ability to express their thoughts in writing.
- Become better able to read complex primary and secondary texts.
- Realize the importance of embodying ethical values in their own lives.

Course Texts:

- Shafer-Landau, Russ. *The Ethical Life*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
ISBN: 978-0-19-537769-9
- Shafer-Landau, Russ. *The Fundamentals of Ethics*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
ISBN: 978-0-19-532086-2.

Assessment:

Students will be graded on the basis of their work in the follow areas with the grades weighted by the percentage shown.

Vocabulary Quizzes (5%)

The instructor will periodically give short vocabulary quizzes to test whether students have mastered the terms covered in the readings and lectures.

Reading Response Questions (10%)

Before each class, students will do the reading assigned by the instructor the previous class and write down any question or questions it inspires. These questions will be collected at the beginning of class and given to the class discussion leaders for use as the basis for the next class discussion (see below). Questions that fail to demonstrate a grasp of the reading will be rejected and returned to the student.

Discussion Leading (10%)

Before each class, three students will be selected as discussion leaders. Each discussion leader will be responsible for giving a short (~15 minute) presentation on a reading assignment and leading the class during discussion of that topic. At the end of the class, the other students will anonymously evaluate the performance of the discussion leaders.

Summary (10% each, 20% total)

Students must write two short summary papers during the course. Summaries should be around two pages long (300 to 600 words). Summaries will be given an overall grade on the basis of mastery of content, style, and grammar/usage. Summaries are due in class on **July 25** and **August 8**.

Argumentative Papers (15% each, 30% total)

Students must write three argumentative papers. Papers should be around 4 to 6 pages (1,000 to 2,000 words). Papers will be given an overall grade on the basis of strength of argument/originality, mastery of content, structure/coherence, style, and grammar/usage. Papers are due in class on **August 15** and **August 29**.

Final Paper (25%)

The final paper will be a culminating paper in which students synthesize all of the material in the course. Students are responsible for creating their own topic for the final paper. Topics should be discussed with the instructor beforehand for approval. Final papers should be around 7 pages (1,800 words) in length. Final papers will be due in class on the last day of the course, **September 12**.

Lateness Policy:

Assignments must be turned in by the start of class on the due date. Reading response questions are meant to measure class participation and so will not be accepted after the class in which they are due. (Note that they will be accepted *before* the class in which they are due.) Failure to turn in a summary or paper on time will result in a five percent penalty per day with a maximum penalty of fifteen percent. If you know ahead of time that you will need to miss a class due to work, sports, illness, or some other extracurricular activity, you may email an assignment in order to meet the deadline or be excused from a class discussion. In general, exceptions to the lateness policy are possible only with a doctor's note detailing serious illness. In the event of a serious family emergency, please email your telephone number to the instructor in order to discuss the situation over the phone.

Revisions Policy:

After being graded, the summaries and papers will be returned to students, and students will have one week to revise their papers if they wish to have it re-graded. The score recorded in the gradebook will be the average of the initial and final grade a paper receives.

Disability Statement:

I am happy to accommodate any students with disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to self identify with the Director of Personal Counseling in order to receive accommodations. Only those students with appropriate documentation will receive services. Contact the Director of Personal Counseling at (808) 739-4603 or email: <jyasuhar@chaminade.edu>.

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, will not be tolerated.

The instructor is not hesitant about failing any student suspected of engaging in academic dishonesty. Failure to properly quote and cite sources used in a paper is one of the many forms of academic dishonesty. All materials turned in by students must reflect their own work and not that of any other person.

The simplest guideline is **always cite the sources you read and when you copy-and-paste use quotation marks and indicate your source** (don't paraphrase!).

Course Motto:

"I learned in my college days
that one cannot imagine anything so strange or so little believable
that it had not been said by one of the philosophers."

— René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*

Course Schedule:

The course divides roughly into six segments: Metaethics, Utilitarianism, Kantianism, Virtue Ethics, Natural Law, and Asian Philosophies.

Specific reading assignments are as follows:

July 11

- *First Class*

July 18

- FE Ch. 5: Morality and Religion
- FE Ch. 19: Ethical Relativism
- EL Ch. 29: Jonathan Bennett

July 25

- FE Ch. 1: Hedonism
- FE Ch. 2: Is Happiness All That Matters?
- EL Ch. 2: John Stuart Mill
- **Summary Due**

August 1

- FE Ch. 9: Consequentialism
- FE Ch. 10: Consequentialism II
- EL Ch. 3: Aldous Huxley

August 8

- ※ Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"
- EL Ch. 20: Singer, "The Singer Solution to World Poverty"
- EL Ch. 25: Singer, "Unsanctifying Human Life"
- **Summary Due**

August 15

- FE Ch. 11: The Kantian Perspective
- FE Ch. 12: The Kantian Perspective II
- EL Ch. 8: Immanuel Kant
- **Argumentative Paper Due**

August 22

- EL Ch. 12: Aristotle
- FE Ch. 17: Virtue Ethics
- EL Ch. 32: Martin Luther King, Jr.

August 29

- FE Ch. 18: Feminist Ethics
- EL Ch. 13: Hilde Lindemann
- EL Ch. 27: Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"
- **Argumentative Paper Due**

September 5

- EL Ch. 10: Philippa Foot
- FE Ch. 6: Natural Law
- EL Ch. 22: Ronald Dworkin

September 12

- *Final class*
- **Final Paper Due**