

Chaminade University

OF HONOLULU

1

PH10520
PH10560

PH105 Introduction to Ethics

Instructor: Dr. Mark Brasher (381-7666 voicemail / markbrasher@hawaii.rr.com)

Available: before and after class, and by appointment.

Saturdays : 4 hours

FE99
PH10520
PH10560
Pm

Course description: This course will introduce the student to the major questions, approaches and ideas in ethics. The selected textbook presents seven chapters on the concepts and ideas involved in ethics and three additional, selected chapters apply these ideas to real world ethical situations. Upon successfully completing the course the student will have an understanding of the nature and practice of ethical decision making and its character as a philosophical discipline.

Textbook: *Ethics. Theory and Practice.* 6th ed. by Jacques Thiroux. Prentice Hall, 1998. (ISBN: 0137542925)

Class format:

- Each week, background information will be presented and the more difficult points arising in the chapter assigned will be explained and clarified by the instructor.
- Important issues will be discussed and debated in the class.
- Students will take weekly short-answer quizzes to assess their grasp of the central ideas.

Class requirements:

- Students will read each chapter and complete the assigned exercises before class.
- Attendance and participation during the entirety of each meeting is required. If an emergency prevents attendance, you must call immediately (381-7666) to receive a make-up essay assignment and schedule a make-up quiz; besides completing the regularly assigned exercises (see the Chaminade Student Handbook about documenting excused absences) otherwise 10% will be dropped from your overall grade (for missing 10% of the class meetings).

Assessment (Grading):

Two grading options are offered to best fit the differences and preferences of the student:

- 1) Exercises, quizzes, participation
- 2) Exercises, quizzes, participation, paper

Options:

Option 1: Grading will be based upon the average of: weekly quizzes, exercises, participation.

Option 2: Grading (with paper): grading will be based on the average of quizzes, exercises, participation and a term paper

Optional Argumentative Paper

Topic: You may choose any of the issues in second half of the text which we do not cover in class (we will cover 8, 11 and 12).

In approximately 8-10 pages you must argue for or against an ethical stance regarding a specific issue within a topic. (So, for example, you could argue against abortion or for abortion.) You may situate your argument on the basis of the material presented in the chapter (your background and framing of the issue may be quoted from the chapter) but you must consult a minimum of two other printed reference works (two books from a library).

DEADLINES: The topic must be selected by November 6. Rough Drafts must be submitted by November 20 (returned November 27). The Final Draft is due on December 11 at the start of class.

Formal requirements: You must follow any accepted college style manual consistently. (Choose MLA, APA Chicago, any accepted college style for papers, but only one.) If you do not have a stylebook you can borrow one from the instructor or from Chaminade library. It will specify format and general principles for college papers (1 inch margins, double-spaced, 10 pt font, proper footnoting or endnotes, a title page and formal bibliography, etc.)

Grading: The paper will be graded according to how well you argue for or against a position on the issue. You must focus on the important, morally significant aspects of the issue and present coherent and persuasive arguments for or against the position you are examining. The rough draft presents an opportunity to check that you are fulfilling the requirements for the paper: if not, this will be indicated to you when the rough draft is returned and you will have a chance to make the necessary changes or additions in a final draft.

Class Schedule

9 October 1999 Class 1: What is Ethics?

- Introduction to the Course. Format, requirements, textbook.
- Introduction to the topic of Ethics
- **Reading and Discussion:** *Chapter 1 What is Morality?*

Objectives

1. Define philosophy and explain the relationship of ethics to it.
 2. Define key terms concerning ethics or morality.
 3. Explain the various approaches to the study of morality.
 4. Understand what morality is and how it differs from aesthetics, nonmoral behavior, and manners.
 5. Understand to whom morality applies.
 6. Have some idea of where morality comes from.
 7. Distinguish between morality and the law.
 8. Distinguish between morality and religion.
 9. Understand why human beings should be moral.
- In-class quiz (practice quiz)
 - For next week: Read Chapter 2 on teleological ethics. Do: *Exercises for Review 51-52.*



16 October 1999 Class 2 Approaching Morality in terms of Consequences

- How does approach effect the description of morality?
- **Discuss:** *Chapter 2 Consequentialist (Teleological) Theories of Morality*

Objectives

1. Define the consequentialist (teleological) and nonconsequentialist (deontological) views of morality.
2. Differentiate psychological egoism from ethical egoism, and explain both theories.
3. Distinguish the three types of ethical egoism.
4. Describe and critically analyze the two main consequentialist theories, ethical egoism and utilitarianism.
5. Distinguish between the two types of utilitarianism.

In the history of ethics, two major viewpoints emerge: the consequentialist (based on or concerned with consequences) and the nonconsequentialist (not based on or concerned

- In-class quiz on Chapter 2
- For next week: Read Chapter 3 on virtue ethics. Do: *Exercises for Review 78-79*



23 October 1999 Class 3 Approaching Morality in terms of Motive and Character

- What kind of ethics does not focus upon the outcome or results?
- *Chapter 3 Nonconsequentialist (Teleological) Theories of Morality and Virtue Ethics*
- *Discussion Questions 79*

Objectives

1. Describe nonconsequentialist and Virtue Ethics theories of morality, showing how they differ from the consequentialist theories.
2. Differentiate between act and rule nonconsequentialism and show how they differ from act and rule utilitarianism.
3. Describe and critically analyze act nonconsequentialism, and the Divine Command theory, Kant's Duty Ethics, and Ross's prima facie duties (the main examples of rule nonconsequentialism) and Virtue Ethics.
4. Define and analyze such important terms and concepts as universalizability, Categorical Imperative, reversibility, human beings as ends rather than means, prima facie duties, virtue, and the virtues.
5. Describe Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics and know what the theory of Virtue Ethics contains and entails.

- In-class quiz on Chapter 3

For next week: Read Chapter 4 on absolutism/relativism. Do: *Exercises for Review 98*



30 October 1999 Class 4 Are right and wrong relative? Are they absolute?

- What is absolutism and relativism? Do they come in degrees and variations?
- Chapter 4 *Absolutism versus Relativism*

Objectives

1. Define the following terms: *absolutism, relativism, proposition, truth, falsity, and states of affairs.*
2. Know the so-called anthropological "facts" about absolutism and relativism, and understand the criticism of these "facts."
3. Describe different types of propositions and show how truth and knowledge relate to them.
4. Understand that absolutes exist and show how human beings can relate them to their moral lives.
5. Understand how basic principles, as "near" absolutes, are important to morality.

- Discussion Questions 98

- In-class quiz on Chapter 4

For next week: Read Chapter 5 on determinism and freedom. Do: *Exercises for Review 118*



6 November 1999 Class 5 Are we determined? Are we Free?

(Topic Due for any student who is opting to do a term paper)

- What does determination and freedom have to do with ethics?
- Chapter 5 *Freedom Versus Determinism*

Objectives

1. Define the following terms: *freedom, determinism, universal causation, fatalism, predestination, and indeterminism.*
2. Understand the differences between hard and soft determinism, fatalism, and indeterminism.
3. Understand the various arguments for and against determinism presented by natural and physical scientists, historians, economists, psychologists, and theologians.
4. Understand the arguments for freedom and free will.
5. Come to some conclusions concerning the freedom-versus-determinism controversy, and apply those conclusions to moral responsibility.

- Discussion Questions 118

- In-class quiz on Chapter 5

For next week: Read Chapter 6 on reward/punishment. Do: *Exercises for Review 150.*



13 November 1999 Class 6 What role do reward and punishment play?

- What do justice, reward and punishment have to do with ethics?
- Chapter 6 *Reward and Punishment*

Objectives

1. Understand the relationship between reward and punishment and justice.
2. Understand the meanings and differences among the three theories of reward and punishment: retribution, utilitarianism, and restitution.
3. Identify and understand the many criteria for rewarding and punishing.
4. Identify and understand the arguments for and against all three theories.

- Discussion Questions 150

- In-class quiz on Chapter 6

For next week: Read Chapter 7 on systematic ethics. Do: *Exercises for Review 179*

20 November 1999 Class 7 Putting it all together: How does morality form a coherent system?

(Rough Draft of optional term paper DUE for any student opting to submit a term paper)

- How does it all fit together? Is ethics a plate lunch or a balanced diet?
- Chapter 7 *Setting up a Moral System: basic assumptions and basic Principles*

Objectives

1. Identify, define, and explain the major conflicting general moral issues in setting up a moral system.



2. Present, describe, and discuss basic assumptions about what characteristics or attributes any meaningful, livable, and workable moral system or theory should contain.
3. Try to resolve the central problem areas of morality—which are how to attain stability, unity, and order without eliminating individual freedom by the establishment of basic ethical principles.
4. Establish and justify the priority in which the five basic principles should be applied.
 - Discussion Questions 179
 - In-class quiz on Chapter 7

This ends the theoretical introduction to ethics. In the next three meetings we will apply ethical judgments in controversial areas of human importance. We will examine "Taking Human Life" (Chapter 8) "Lying, Cheating and Stealing" (Chapter 11) and "Human Sexuality" (Chapter 12)

For next week: Read Chapter 8 on taking human life; and read Appendix 1. Do: *Exercises for Review 201-202*

27 November 1999 Class 8: The Taking of Human Life (Chapter 8)

(Rough drafts of optional papers returned to any student doing an optional term paper)

- What are the basic arguments about the taking of human life: is it ever moral?
 - Chapter 8: *The Taking of Human life*
 - Objectives
 1. Understand further the importance of having basic principles, rules, or guidelines on which to base an approach to dealing with moral issues.
 2. Show how basic principles can be applied to the general and significant problem of the taking of human life.
 3. Show how basic principles are used to deal with the specific moral problems of suicide, defense of the innocent, war, terrorism, and capital punishment, and know the arguments for and against these issues.
 - In-class quiz on Chapter 8
- For next week: Read Chapter 11 on lying, cheating and stealing; and read Appendix 4.

Do: *Exercises for Review 320*

4 December 1999 Class 9: Is it ever okay to lie, cheat or steal? (Chapter 11)

- Are lying, cheating or stealing ever called for?
- Chapter 11 *Lying, Cheating, Breaking Promises and Stealing*
- Objectives
 1. Define lying, cheating, breaking promises, and stealing.
 2. Understand why these moral issues are significant.
 3. Explain the arguments for and against lying, cheating, breaking promises, stealing.
 4. Analyze and critically evaluate specific cases involving all of the above moral issues.
- In-class quiz on Chapter 11

For next week: Read Chapter 12 on Morality, Marriage and Human Sexuality; and read appendix 7. Do: *Exercises for Review 352*

11 December 1999 Class 10: Morality, Marriage and Human Sexuality (Chapter 12. Human Sexuality)

(Final Optional Papers due for any student submitting a paper.) All work (make-up) for the course due.

- What moral questions arise concerning human sexuality?
 - Chapter 12: *Morality, Marriage and Human Sexuality*
 - Objectives
 1. Distinguish between the public, or societal, and private aspects of human sexuality.
 2. Discuss the purposes of human sexual activity.
 3. Discuss the following moral issues in sexuality: premarital sex; sex in marriage type relationships (including the issues of homosexuality and adultery); prostitution; masturbation; pornography; and perversion, or unnatural sexual relations.
 - In-class quiz on Chapter 12
- This completes the course.

