

WE '00

PM

## Introduction to Ethics

(PH 105-50)

Chaminade University of Honolulu  
Winter Evening Semester, 2000  
Instructor: Robert Buss (phone: 528-4067, home)

January 10-March 22, 2000  
Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.  
Barbers Point / Building 55

**"Introduction to Ethics"** -- An examination of ethical values in general and the forums in which such discourse finds critical expression. The course will introduce students to the language of moral concepts and their relation to forms of social life and human conduct. It will also examine ethics in the history of ideas, particularly the Western philosophical tradition. What are the intellectual origins of looking at a particular ethical dilemma or problem? How do the conditions of the modern, urban, technological world affect how we consider ethical issues? How do classical philosophical, religious and cultural values affect our ethical judgments? The two most difficult tasks of this class will be to clarify our own thinking about moral issues and to demonstrate an ability to see alternative ways of considering such issues.

**Course Objectives** -- Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Gain an overview of moral philosophy or philosophical thinking about morality, moral problems and moral judgments.
2. Distinguish between using reason to lay out ethical arguments and using such non-philosophical methods as opinion, faith, authority and technological solutions.
3. Demonstrate an ability to provide a balanced review of alternative positions on ethical "hard cases."
4. Express through discussion and writing an understanding of contemporary moral dilemmas and issues.
5. Improve his or her own philosophical thinking skills.

**Text:** -- *Ethics: Theory and Practice (Sixth Edition, 1998)* by Jacques Thiroux.

-- There will also be occasional handouts and study aids.

### Organization of Course and Basis for Grading

- **ETHICS OF THE WEEK Writing Assignments** -- Write a brief one-two page summary and reaction/response to a news story or event you have heard or experienced during the week that triggers a moral discussion. Express your own opinions in the writing, but also try to indicate the main moral issue or question(s) that are involved and any key terms for further philosophical study or definition. You should do one for each class period (10 total). (30% of grade)
- **PHILOSOPHICAL POSITIONS IN ETHICS** -- A mid-term exam on the content of the readings for the first half of the class. (30% of grade)
- **PROBLEMS IN ETHICS Term Paper** -- Write a seven-ten page essay on a topic from one of the chapters in the second half of the text. Present the essay in class during one of the periods designated for such reports. (30% of grade)
- **CLASS PARTICIPATION AND IN-CLASS EXERCISES** -- Activities, writings and discussion in-class. Attendance and active class participation. (10% of grade)

## **GENERAL OUTLINE OF TOPICS -- With Reading Assignments**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Assignments</b>
January 15	What is Morality? Philosophy and Ethics: Philosophical Reasoning and Critical Thinking Morality and Religion, Morality and the Law (Responsibility)	Chapter 1
January 22	Cosequentialist and Teleological ("ends") Theories of Morality Utilitarianism: The Good as Utility or Social Use	Chapter 2
January 29	Deontological Theories of Morality: The Good as Duty / Rights Virtue Ethics: Morality as Self-Realization and Good Character	Chapter 3
February 5	Absolutism and Relativism in Ethics Cultural Relativism and Cultural Absolutism Freedom and Determinism	Chapter 4 Chapter 5
February 12	The Question of Justice: Reward and Punishment Setting Up a Moral System: Priority of Moral Principles Conflicting Moral Issues ("hard cases")	Chapter 6 Chapter 7
February 19	Mid Term Exam (in class) Discussion of Student Term Papers and Assigning Dates for In-Class Presentation (next four class period)	
February 26	Practical Issues in Ethics: The Taking of Human Life Alternative Interpretation of Morality Questions Related to: Suicide, Capital Punishment, War and Terrorism, Abortion, and Euthanasia ("mercy killing")	Chapter 8 Chapter 9 Chapter 10
March 4	Practical Issues in Ethics: Being Dishonest and Untrustworthy Morality and Human Sexuality	Chapter 11 Chapter 12
March 11	Practical Issues in Ethics: Ethical Issues and Health Care Bioethics: Patients Rights, Quality of Life, Informed Consent	Chapter 13
March 18	Practical Issues in Ethics: Business Ethics Practical Issues in Ethics: Environmental Ethics, Animal Rights	Chapter 14

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