

# Philosophy 105 Ethics

**Chaminade University of Honolulu Fall 2001**  
Scofield Barracks Bldg 560 Saturday, 12:30pm-16:40pm

Instructor: James (Andy) Stroble  
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**Catalog 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. The course will also discuss the ways in which we talk to children and young people about what is right and wrong. Offered every semester.

**Course Description:** This course will examine the major ethical theories of the Western tradition, with some comparisons with Asian thought. Our major task will be to make some sense of the prime directive of morality, "do the right thing". Throughout we will be considering the relation between philosophy and morality, whether philosophy should critique or justify ethical systems, attempt to discover or define the good, or mind its own business. We will examine three major ethical theories, virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and deontology, and compare the grounds they propose for morality. And finally we will keep an eye on the political implications of morality for current issues, law, social justice, and war.

## Objectives:

- ◆ Familiarity with major ethical theories,
  - ◆ Virtue Ethics
  - ◆ Hedonism
  - ◆ Utilitarianism
  - ◆ Deontology
- Development of ability to think critically on moral issues,  
Acquaintance with key philosophical terms and distinctions.

**Evaluation:** Grades will be based on class attendance and participation (20%), a mid-term examination (40%) and a final essay (40%). There will also be some non-evaluative testing, but since it doesn't count don't worry.

## Advice

Philosophy requires careful reading. Keep a dictionary handy. Most important, however, is understanding the ideas of the author and critically engaging them. Go slow and re-read passages that don't make sense with the idea that they must have made sense to the author. Bring up any difficulties you have with the reading, for you are not alone.

**Text:** *Ethics: The Big Questions*, James P. Sterba, editor.

**Schedule:** (subject to revision)

**Week One**

October 6 Introduction to ethics.

**Week Two**

October 13 What exactly is morality?

Is morality a real category, something that actually exists, or is it just convention or the rule of the majority over what we all would do if no one else was looking.

Readings: Sterba, Part One, pp. 19-62

**Week Three**

October 20 Thinking right and acting right: why fly right?

The origins, sources, and standards of morality. Readings, Part 2.

**Week Four**

October 27 Utilitarianism

We just assign points to everything, and then add them up!

Readings, Part 3, pp. 119-170.

**Week Five**

November 3 Duty Ethics

Mostly about Immanuel Kant

Readings, Part 3, pp.171-244.

**Week Six**

November 10: Virtue Ethics

Back to Aristotle! Readings, Part 3, pp. 245-318.

**\*\*One Hour Mid-term Examination\*\***

**Week Seven**

November 17: Feminism

Maybe we've just been doing it wrong all along?

Readings, Part 4, pp. 319-374

**Week Eight**

November 24 Environmental Ethics

What (not just who) has moral standing?

Readings, Part 4, pp. 375-421.

**Week Nine**

December 1 Political Ethics

Not that! Do collectives have rights that individuals do not, can states do things that individuals should not? Gender, Race, Diet, Humanity, the Death Penalty

Readings: To Be Assigned.

**Week Ten**

December 8: Moral Education, talking to kids.

Readings: To Be Assigned

**\*\*\*Essay Due!\*\*\***