

Introduction to Ethics

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Office Hours: Shatzel Hall 308 or Zoom, by appointment (I'm available almost whenever!)

Course Description

This course covers central issues in moral philosophy. Week 1 introduces some ethical puzzles. Weeks 2-4 are on the three major moral theories. Week 2 is on Utilitarianism, Week 3 is on Deontology, and Week 4 is on Virtue Ethics. Week 5 considers issues in applied ethics. Week 6 looks at issues at the intersection of ethics and politics.

Mode of Instruction

This is (obviously) an *asynchronous* course which means that we will not meet either in-person or on Zoom (though you are welcome to schedule an appointment with me to do either, if you'd like). Hence, the material for a given day of class will come in one of three ways: (1) readings, (2) videos, or (3) readings and videos. See the schedule below for details. On the Canvas page, the course is broken down into 6 "Modules" which correspond to the 6 weeks on the syllabus.

Grading

On the last day of each week there will be an assignment. They will be quizzes/mini-exams. Once you start a quiz, you will have an hour to complete it (though I don't think it will take anywhere close to that long). Together, these six assignments comprise 100% of the grade. While I *strongly encourage* everyone to complete each assignment on the day it is listed on the syllabus, it is not required that you do so. What is required is that all assignments be turned in by **June 23rd**.

There is also an **optional** extra credit assignment due by **June 11th (a Sunday) at 11:59 pm**. You can earn up to **3** points of extra credit for writing a **1-2 page** short essay on which of the three major moral theories you think is best and saying **why** you think that. That is, for what *reasons* is your preferred theory better than the alternatives?

Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

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|---------------|--|
| 1) M/May 15 | Read the Syllabus (feel free to email me with any questions) |
| 2) Tu/May 16 | Plato - <i>Euthyphro</i>
Watch: Euthyphro Dilemma |
| 3) W/May 17 | Rachels – "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" |
| 4) Th/May 18 | Ring of Gyges
Watch: The Ring of Gyges Video |
| 5) Fri/May 19 | <i>Quiz 1</i> |

Week 2: Utilitarianism

- 6) M/May 22 Mill – Selections from *Utilitarianism*
- 7) Tu/May 23 Watch: Utilitarianism & its Critiques
- 8) W/May 24 Thomson – “The Trolley Problem”
Watch: Trolley Problem Video
- 9) Th/May 25 Nozick – “The Experience Machine”
Watch: Utility Monster
- 10) Fri/May 26 *Quiz 2*

Week 3: Deontology

- 11) M/May 29 **NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY**
- 12) Tu/May 30 Kant – Selections from the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
- 13) Wed/May 31 Watch: Sandel – Episode 06 (Part One and Two)
- 14) Th/June 1 Watch: Sandel – Episode 07 (Part One Only)
- 15) F/June 2 *Quiz 3*

Week 4: Virtue Ethics

- 16) M/June 5 Aristotle – Selections from *Nicomachean Ethics*
- 17) Tu/June 6 Hursthouse – Selections from *On Virtue Ethics*
- 18) W/June 7 Watch: Aristotle and Virtue Ethics Crash Course
- 19) Th/June 8 Watch: Sandel – Episode 10
- 20) F/June 9 *Quiz 4*

Week 5: Applied Ethics

- 21) M/June 12 Singer – “Famine, Affluence, and Poverty”
- 22) Tu/June 13 Thomson – “A Defense of Abortion”
Watch: A Defense of Abortion Video
- 23) W/June 14 Singer – “Down on the Factory Farm” from *Animal Liberation*
- 24) Th/June 15 Finish Singer – “Down on the Factory Farm”

25) F/June 16 *Quiz 5*

Week 6: Ethics and Political Philosophy

26) M/June 19 **NO CLASS – JUNETEENTH**

27) Tu/June 20 Watch: Huemer – “Unjust Laws”

28) W/June 21 Rawls – Selections from *A Theory of Justice*

29) Th/June 22 Nozick – Selections from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*

30) F/June 23 *Quiz 6*