Course Description and Goals

Ethics, or moral philosophy, is an attempt to understand moral concepts and justify moral principles. All of us at some point give some thought to ethical issues. What is a right decision? Am I a bad person? What am I ought to do? Is this my responsibility? In this course, we are going to see philosophers’ systematic endeavors to answer these questions. In analyzing and criticizing their works, we will scrutinize the meanings of moral concepts and moral statements, examine the validity of moral principles, and apply our theories to some specific issues.

As in any philosophy courses, we aim to develop our analytical skills and critical thinking. We are going to read, analyze, deconstruct and reconstruct arguments for a wide range of ethical topics from ancient to contemporary times. In each topic, we are going to consider a variety of ethical positions and disputes. We need to engage in disputes, take or create a position, and defend it. In collaborating and discussing with other students, you are going to reinforce and refine your own arguments.

This course meets SAS Core Curriculum Goal ‘AHo’: Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.

Textbook


There are two editions of this book. We are going to use the second edition, which is recently published. This book is available at the following bookstores.

- Rutgers University Bookstore: One Penn Plaza, Ferren Mall, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 (Tel: 732-246-8448);
- Livingston Bookstore: 56 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 (Tel: 732-445-3210);
- New Jersey Books: 37 Easton Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 (Tel: 732-253-7666).

Note: You can also purchase an electronic copy of this book at some e-book stores like Google Books.

Course Website

Any information for the course is available on Sakai@Rutgers. You can find and download this syllabus, handouts, paper topics, and more. Go to [http://sakai.rutgers.edu/](http://sakai.rutgers.edu/) and find the course website for 01:730:107:05 F12. Log in to Sakai with your Rutgers NETID. Then, you will find a tab for this course labeled 01:730:107:05 F12 on your Sakai start page. Please let me know if you are not automatically joined in this course website.
Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation: Attendance is required in this course. In addition, every student is not allowed to be late. You should sign the attendance roll each class. The roll will be taken at the beginning of the class. Every student is allowed a maximum of 2 unexcused absences. A student who has more than 2 unexcused absences will be penalized with one point deduction for each absence from the final attendance grade. Excused absences are only for religious holidays, serious health problems, and serious family problems. To receive an excused absence, students need to provide an appropriate document such as a confirmation letter from a health care provider or from the office of the Dean of the college.

In order to inform me in advance of your absence, please use the university absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

All students are required to read assigned materials and contribute to class discussions. You may meet the participation requirement in several ways: (i) participating in class discussions, (ii) asking questions in class, (iii) posting your thoughts on the discussion forum of this course’s Sakai website, (iv) attending office hours.

2. Exams: There will be two exams. A midterm exam is scheduled on Monday, October 29th during the regular class period, and a final exam is on Thursday, December 20th, from 12:00pm to 3:00pm. The final is cumulative. These exams will consist of three or four essay questions. There is no make-up exam in this course unless you have one of the three excuses in above.

3. Papers: You are required to write two short papers, each about 1000-1500 words in length. The first paper is due on Thursday, October 25th, and the second on Monday, December 10th. Topics will be posted on the course website. It is highly recommended to submit your rough draft at least one week before the paper due date to have my comments for your revision.

Your final grade will be determined by the weighted requirements as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>20% each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Exams, papers, attendance and participation will be graded on the following scale:

- A: 30-28
- B+: 27-25
- B: 24-22
- C+: 21-19
- C: 18-16
- D: 15-13
- F: 12-

Any students who feel s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office of Disability services for Students at 848-445-6800 in 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite A 145, Piscataway, NJ 08854-8045 to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The Full disability policies and procedures are at http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/. The procedure to request accommodations is at http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html.
**Academic Integrity**

Rutgers Interim Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words.

Based on this definition, you are required to acknowledge direct quotations and paraphrases of materials found in any medium, including materials on the Internet. You can have more information about plagiarism on the web at [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf)

Plagiarism or cheating on exams will result in automatic failure of the course.

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**Topics and Readings**

**Meta-Ethics**

*I. Subjectivism and Emotivism*

- Gilbert Harman: Ethics and Observation (# 4)
- G. E. Moore: The Subject-Matter of Ethics (# 7)

*II. Ethical Relativism*

- Gilbert Harman: Moral Relativism Defended (# 5)
- Harry Gensler: Cultural Relativism (# 6)

*III. Egoism and Contractarianism*

- Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan (# 62)
- Joel Feinberg: Psychological Egoism (# 19)
- James Rachel: Ethical Egoism (# 21)
- John Rawls: A Theory of Justice (# 64)
- David Gauthier: Why Contractarianism? (# 63)
- T. M. Scanlon: Contractualism and Utilitarianism (# 65)

**Value**

- John Stuart Mill: Hedonism (# 29)
- Fred Feldman: The Good Life: A Defense of Attitudinal Hedonism (# 31)
- Robert Nozick: The Experience Machine (# 30)
- W. D. Ross: What Things are Good? (# 35)

**Normative Ethics and Applied Ethics**

*I. Utilitarianism*

- John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism (# 48)
- J. J. C. Smart: Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism (# 49)
- Brad Hooker: Rule-Consequentialism (# 50)

- John Harris: The Survival Lottery (# 54)
- Judith Jarvis Thomson: Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem (# 61)
II. Applied Ethics 1: Animal Rights
Peter Singer: All Animals are Equal (# 43)
Kenneth Goodpaster: On Being Morally Considerable (# 45)

III. Deontology
Immanuel Kant: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (# 55)
Christine Korgaard: Kant’s Formula of Universal Law (# 56)

IV. Applied Ethics 2: Abortion
Don Marquis: An Argument that Abortion is Wrong (# 47)
Philippa Foot: The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect (# 60)
Michael Tooley: Abortion and Infanticide (# 46)

Moral Responsibility
I. Free Will and Sanity
Galen Strawson: The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility (# 37)
Thomas Nagel: Moral Luck (# 39)
Susan Wolf: Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility (# 40)

II. Responsibility as a Virtue
Martha Nussbaum: Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach (# 67)
Michael Slote: Agent-Based Virtue Ethics (# 69)

III. Applied Ethics IV: Duty to the Poor
Peter Singer: Famine, Affluence and Morality (# 53)

Note: The number within parentheses indicates the article number of the textbook.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Announcement</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>Subjectivism</td>
<td>4 &amp; 7</td>
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<td>Sept 13</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 17</td>
<td>Relativism</td>
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<td>Sept 27</td>
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<td>Oct 1</td>
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<td>Oct 4</td>
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<td>Value 2</td>
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<td>Oct 15</td>
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<td>Oct 18</td>
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<td>54 &amp; 61</td>
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<td>43 &amp; 45</td>
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<td>Free Will and Responsibility 1</td>
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<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>Virtue</td>
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Note: The reading schedule is subject to change.

The syllabi listed here are from the last term during which the course was taught and are posted only as a guide to some of the typical topics the course may cover. Please note that the readings and materials may change from term to term. An updated syllabus for the course for the coming semester will be posted closer to the start of the semester.