

# Ethics Throughout History

01:730:307-001

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## Syllabus (v1)

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## Basic Info

### DETAILS

- **Course Format:** In person
  - Monday/Wednesday, 3:00-4:20PM
  - Room: Lucy Stone Hall, Rm. A143 (Livingston)
- **Office Hours:** virtual, Tuesday, 2:00-3:00
  - URL: <https://rutgers.webex.com/meet/rjf164>
    - *If you plan to come to Tuesday office hours, you must email me at [richard.fry@rutgers.edu](mailto:richard.fry@rutgers.edu) beforehand to coordinate a particular time*
  - Also available in person and virtually by appointment
    - In Person: College Ave, Miller 107
- **Course Website:** <https://canvas.rutgers.edu>

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Over the centuries, different human groups have thought about their obligations in different ways. Different thinkers have understood our moral and social obligations to each other through various, extraordinarily different lenses. This course takes up those different perspectives and seeks to understand the underlying moral thinking behind each of them, probing their similarities and their differences. This course examines thinkers in both Western and Eastern traditions, from ancient times through the 19th century. This course is reading-intensive and centers philosophical writing, so you will be expected to write regularly and well.

## **LEARNING GOALS**

This course has several goals:

- Departmental learning goals met by this course:
  - Develop the ability to accurately and fairly present others' views.
  - Improve your analytical reading and writing skills.
  - Improve your ability to analyze, evaluate, and construct arguments.
- Other learning goals for this course:
  - Introduce you to classic texts and questions in the history of philosophy
  - Cultivate your own thinking about central problems in philosophy, especially as those issues bear on your own life.
  - Develop essential life skills such as time management, communication when encountering difficulties, and thoughtful engagement with others.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- All course readings will be made available through Canvas.
  - You are required to bring these readings to class.

# **Policies**

## **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND PLAGIARISM**

- You are expected and required to uphold standards of academic honesty.
  - Plagiarism of ideas or words is unacceptable.
  - Confirmed academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course.

- Familiarize yourself plagiarism is and academic dishonesty and Rutgers's policies:
  - <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>,
  - [https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid\\_plagiarism](https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid_plagiarism)
  - <https://wp.rutgers.edu/academics/undergraduate/plagiarism>

## **PERSONAL CONDUCT**

- You are responsible for treating your classmates with courtesy and respect
  - At a minimum, this means respecting their time and effort by putting in time and effort yourself
  - Just as your classmates owe you careful attention and engagement, you owe those things to your classmates as well
  - Be mindful of how topics under discussion may impact different members of the class differently
- This course adheres to the Philosophy Departments policy on norms of discourse: <https://philosophy.rutgers.edu/about-us/discourse>

## **COURSE PARTICIPATION**

- Students are expected to participate regularly in course discussions
  - Participation also facilitates and maintains the feeling of shared engagement with course material
  - Having recourse to the intuitions, brainpower and hard work of your classmates will improve your learning (and *vice versa*)

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

- Students needing accommodations should follow the procedures available at <https://ods.rutgers.edu>

## **GRADES**

### **LATE WORK**

- Written work will be assessed a -3% penalty per day late, up to ten days late, at which point the penalty stops accruing.
  - (After 10 days, a piece of written work can earn at most 70%.)

### **EXTENSIONS**

- If you need an extension for a paper, email me with a brief description of your situation
  - If I approve an extension, we will work out an appropriate timeline
- Extensions must be requested at least 24 hours before the paper is due

- There are many very good reasons for extensions: illness, illness in the family, unexpected child care responsibilities, *etc.*
- Having too much work for other courses is *not* a good reason to request an extension
- Extension requests citing this reason will not be granted

### **ANONYMOUS GRADING**

- The papers for this course will be graded anonymously
- Papers submitted through Canvas should not have your name in the text or the filename
- Failure to properly anonymize your submission will result in a -10% penalty to the grade for the paper

### **GRADE APPEALS**

- If you believe your work deserves a different grade than it received, you may ask in writing for reconsideration.
  - Submit this request within one week but no sooner than one day after your work is returned to you.
- Your written request must explain why you believe the work deserves a different grade.
- Please note that if a change is made, the new grade may be either higher or lower.

### **GRADE SCALE**

- Letter grades will be awarded based on percentage credit earned, according to the following scale:

<b>F</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>A</b>
<60%	60 - 69.49%	69.5 - 74.49%	74.5 - 79.49%	79.5 - 84.49%	84.5 - 89.49%	>89.5%

### **CHANGES**

- I may need to change any part of this syllabus at any time
- A new, numbered version of the syllabus will be posted to Canvas
- Changes will be announced and explained in course correspondence

## **Assignments and Assessment**

*More details about these assignments will be distributed online and in class throughout the semester.*

### **WEEKLY READING QUESTION - 13 X 2% EA. - TWO DROPPED - 22% TOTAL**

- Starting September 8th, you'll submit a 'reading question'-style reading response to Canvas each by noon each Wednesday

- In this response, you will do three things: (1) ask a question, (2) explain why it's a question, and (3) attempt an answer to the question
- **(1)** Ask an explicit question about the reading for the upcoming class
  - That is, in a short, relatively direct sentence, frame a question that you're not sure about the answer to, regarding the reading we'll be talking about later that day in class
- **(2)** Spend 100-200 or so words explaining why the question is a question, that is, explaining what you take the author to have said that has raised this question for you
  - This will involve explaining a bit of what you take the author to be arguing for, and what in the text makes you think they are arguing for that
- **(3)** In about 100-200 further words, attempt to answer the question, based on what you've found in the text for the day
  - You won't be graded on whether you get the right answer
    - But you will be (in part) be assessed on how well you think through *how* to answer the question, what would *count* as a meaningful answer, *etc.*
- There will be thirteen opportunities for you to write responses
  - Your worst two attempts will not count toward your final grade

### **MISREADING PAPERS - 2 x 24% EA. - 48% TOTAL**

- A 1200-1500 word paper wherein you will explain why some 'obvious' or 'plain' reading of a text is incorrect
  - You will reproduce a passage, give a plausible reading of it, and then, by way of an argument deploying close reading and background about the text/author, convince your reader that a different reading is actually right
  - You will thus argue for a *new* or *different* understanding (than the original misreading) based on your close reading
- Each should be turned in *within one week* of our discussion of the text you're writing about
  - That is, if you're writing about, e.g., the *Bhagavad Gita*, which we'll discuss October 13th, you must turn in your 'misreading' paper on it by 11:59PM, October 20th
- One of these must be turned in before the first exam, and one must be turned in after it
  - If your first misreading paper earns a B or lower (<85%), you will be eligible to write a third misreading paper for a grade of up to a B (85%)

## EXAMS - 2 X 15% EA. - 30% TOTAL

- Two take-home essay and short-answer exams
- Each exam will ask you to report on views and arguments we have examined
- Exams will be distributed several days before they are due
- Exams will be due via Canvas Friday, **October 22nd**, and Friday, **December 8th**

## Calendar with Topics and Readings

*You are expected to read this material before the class-day it is listed under.*

### **§1: ANCIENT GREECE**

#### **01 Sep - Forms of Normativity**

Plato, *Crito* (excerpt)

#### **08 Sep - Wisdom**

Plato, *Apology* (28e - 35d)

*Euthydemus* (279e - 282e)

#### **13 Sep - Happiness and Function**

Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* Bk.I

#### **15 Sep - Virtue/Virtues**

Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* Bk.II

#### **20 Sep - Hedonism**

Diogenes Laertius, "Aristippus"

#### **22 Sep - Epicureanism (I)**

Diogenes Laertius, "Epicurus's Ethics"

#### **27 Sep - Epicureanism (II)**

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* III.ii-ix

#### **29 Sep - Stoicism (I)**

Epictetus, *Handbook*

#### **04 Oct - Stoicism (II)**

Diogenes Laertius, "Zeno" (excerpt)  
Cicero, *On the Ends...* Bk.III (excerpt)

## **2: INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA**

#### **06 Oct - Background and Metaphysics**

Kena Upanishad, Isa Upanishad

#### **11 Oct - The Good, The Pleasant, and Death**

Katha Upanishad

#### **13 Oct - Conflict and Character**

*Bhagavad Gita* (excerpt)

#### **18 Oct - The Search and the Path**

Noble Search (Ariyapariyesana Sutta, MN 26)  
An Analysis of the Path (Magga-vibhanga, SN 45:8)

#### **20 Oct - The Life of the Mind**

The Fruits of the Contemplative Life (Samannaphala Sutta, DN 2)

#### **Exam #1 due 22 Oct, 11:59PM**

## **3: MODERN EUROPE**

#### **25 Oct - Stoicism (III)**

Descartes and Elizabeth, *Correspondence* starting 22 Jun 1645

#### **27 Oct - Universal Affection**

Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (2.23-36)

#### **01 Nov - Moral Duty**

Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* I

#### **03 Nov - Pleasure and Happiness**

Mill, *Utilitarianism* ch.1-2

**08 Nov - Society**

Mill, *On Liberty* ch.1

**4: CLASSICAL CHINA**

**10 Nov - Social Relationships**

Confucius, *Analects*, Bks.1, 2, 4, and 8

**15 Nov - The Way (Dao)**

Laozi, *Dao De Jing* 1-22 (tr. Moss Roberts)

Laozi, *Dao De Jing* 1-22 (tr. Ames and Hall)

Read through **both** the Moss Roberts **and** the Ames and Hall translations/  
commentaries

(For best results, place them side by side and read simultaneously through them)

**17 Nov - Universal Love**

Mozi, "On Cultivating the Self," "On Standards and Rules," "On Universal Love I,"  
"Against Music I"

**22 Nov - Legalism**

Han Feizi, "On Having Standards"

**29 Nov - Commentary and Combination**

Zhuangzhi, "The Way of Heaven"

**01 Dec - Chinese Buddhism**

Heart Sutra

Huineng, *Platform Sutra* (excerpt)

**6: JAPAN**

**06 Dec - Japanese Zen Buddhism**

Dōgen, "On Good and Evil" / "Not Doing Wrongs" (*Shōbōgenzō*, Ch.10)

**08 Dec - Fusion of Traditions**

Suzuki Shōsan, "Right Action for All" (excerpt)

**Exam #2 due 10 Dec, 11:59PM**



## 13 Dec - Wrap Up

No new reading

# Resources

## ACADEMIC RESOURCES

### DISABILITY SERVICES (ODS)

<https://ods.rutgers.edu>

(848) 445-6800

The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.

### ACADEMIC SUPPORT

<https://newbrunswick.rutgers.edu/academics/academic-support>

This site has links to help you find your academic advising office, understand degree requirements and your progress toward them, and links to services to help you succeed, like:

- Writing Centers (<https://wp.rutgers.edu/writingcenters/writingcenters>)
- Learning Centers (<https://rlc.rutgers.edu>)
- Program in American Language Studies, for non-native English speakers (<https://pals.rutgers.edu>)
- RU1st, for first-generation, underrepresented, and low-income students (<https://diversity.rutgers.edu/ru1st>)

### LIBRARY TUTORIALS

<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/tutorials>

The library has a number of helpful tutorials to get you started with searching, understanding the difference between scholarly and popular literature, and avoiding plagiarism. Check them out!

## **STUDENT-WELLNESS SERVICES**

### **COUNSELING, ADAP & PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES (CAPS)**

*<http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/>*

*(848) 932-7884*

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

### **VIOLENCE PREVENTION & VICTIM ASSISTANCE (VPVA)**

*<http://vpva.rutgers.edu>*

*(848) 932-1181*

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

### **SCARLET LISTENERS**

*<http://www.scarletlisteners.com>*

*(732) 247-5555*

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

### **“JUST IN CASE” WEB APP**

*<http://codu.co/cee05e>*

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.