

**01:730:107 • Philosophy 107**

**Introduction to Ethics**

Fall 2019 • M/W 6:10–7:30 PM • Scott Hall 203

Final exam time: Monday 12/16, 8–11 PM

*This course will use Canvas, not Sakai*

Dr. David Goldman

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Office Hours: M/W 5–6 PM & by appointment

NOTE: 35 College Ave. may be locked after 5. If so, please call my office phone at 848-932-7536 and I'll let you in.

*Course Description*

What's the right thing to do? What makes an action right or wrong? And why think there really is any right or wrong, anyway?

Ethical theories attempt to provide systematic answers to these questions. In this course we will look at some of the most important and interesting philosophical attempts to answer them. The philosophers we read answer these questions in wildly different ways.

You might notice that these three questions are quite different. The first is a question about what moral principles we should in fact follow; the other two are questions about the status or grounding of those moral principles. The first is, in a sense, more immediately and practically relevant: you might walk out the door and, right away, apply one of the moral principles we learn in class. I hope to convince you that the second and third questions are of equal practical importance: it matters whether morality has a good foundation or not, and it matters what that foundation is.

*Course Goals*

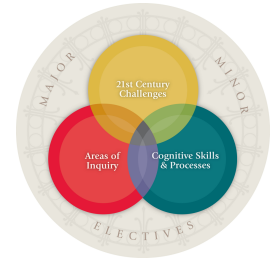
By the end of this course, you'll be able to *do philosophy* about these ethical questions and views. That involves a few things:

- You'll be able to figure out what argument someone else is making, and provide a clear, accurate, and fair explanation of that argument in your own words.

- You'll be able to examine someone else's argument and identify places where it may be weak or open to objection.
- You'll be able to clearly state your own view, and argue for that view.

This course also meets Core Curriculum goal AHp, which means that by the end of this course you will be able to:

- examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.



### *Texts*

*Please use only the editions and translations listed below. If acquiring any of these is difficult or unreasonably expensive, please contact me.*

- Plato, *Republic*, Translated by G. M. A. Grube, revised by C. D. C Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1992)
- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, revised edition, edited by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by David Ross and Lesley Brown (Oxford World's Classics: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.

Many of these readings are difficult and complex. Don't be daunted! In philosophy we compensate for this difficulty by assigning fewer pages of reading than you will find assigned in many other courses. We'll also spend a lot of class time practicing how to unpack a philosophical text.

### *Grading*

- 10% Attendance and participation
- 10% 350–700 word argument response assignment  
Assigned Weds 9/18; due Monday 9/23
- 15% First 700–1000 word objection-response paper

Assigned Weds 10/2; due Weds 10/9

- 15% Second 700–1000 word objection-response paper  
Assigned Weds 10/16; due Weds 10/23 (\*\*bring a hard copy to class; no no-questions-asked extensions for this paper\*\*)
- 30% 1,400–2,100 word final paper  
Assigned Monday 11/11; due Monday 11/25
- 20% Final Exam  
Cumulative; short-answer and short-essay  
8–11 PM on Monday 12/16

Papers should be submitted electronically by 11:59 PM on the due date. Each student may avail herself of one *no questions asked* 48-hour extension on an assignment for this class. Just let me know before the paper is due. (You don't have to wait for me to reply to approve your request. So, an e-mail at 11:55 PM telling me that you're taking your extension today is perfectly fine.) All other extensions must involve a documented, approved excuse.

Late papers not excused by the previous paragraph will be penalized at a rate of ½ of a letter grade (e.g., from a B+ to a B) per day late.

I expect you to review and abide by the definition of academic integrity at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>. Two specific points that are particularly relevant to this course: (a) you must cite *any* source of ideas or material that you use in your work, whether it is a book, or a website, or a friend who took intro ethics last year; and (b) you must cite a source *regardless of whether you quote from it directly, summarize it, or just draw on its ideas*. (The one exception: in assignments completed for this class, you don't need to cite lectures, handouts, or discussions from this class.) This course will use Turnitin to scan your papers for signs of potential plagiarism, and I report all cases of apparent plagiarism to the proper authorities for further investigation.

### *Attendance and Participation*

Learning to do philosophy takes practice. We'll spend a significant portion of our time in class practicing doing philosophy. Regular attendance and active participation is essential to doing well in this course.

That said, I will absolutely accommodate religious holidays, emergencies, and the like. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please discuss with me ahead of time if possible. Also, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. The system will automatically send me an e-mail.

### *Disability Accommodations*

I'm committed to including students with disabilities in this course. If you need specific accommodations for a disability, please provide me with your Letter of Accommodation **at the beginning of the semester**. If you don't have a Letter of Accommodation yet, please contact the Office of Disability Services at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registering-for-services>.

### *Schedule*

Week 1	No class Monday	
	Weds 9/4	Introduction
Week 2	Mon 9/9	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book II 357a1–363e2 (marginal Stephanus numbers)
	Weds 9/11	Re-read
Week 3	Mon 9/16	Plato, <i>Republic</i> IV.434d1–445e1
	Weds 9/18	Re-read <b>Argument response assignment handed out</b>
Week 4	Mon 9/23	Re-read <b>Argument response due</b>
	Weds 9/25	Hume, <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> 2.3.3: “Of the Influencing Motives of the Will” (on Canvas)
Week 5	Mon 9/30	Hume, <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> 3.1.1–2: “Moral Distinctions not derived from Reason” and “Moral Distinctions derived from a moral sense” (on Canvas)
	Weds 10/2	Re-read <b>First objection-response paper assigned</b>

Week 6	Mon 10/7	Philippa Foot, "Moral Arguments" pp. 102–109 (on Canvas)
	Wed 10/9	Kant, <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> : Preface <b>First objection-response paper due</b>
Week 7	Mon 10/14	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> Section I
	Wed 10/16	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> Section I <b>Second objection-response paper assigned</b>
Week 8	Mon 10/21	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> Section II
	Weds 10/23	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> Section II <b>Second objection-response paper due</b>
Week 9	Mon 10/28	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> Section II
	Weds 10/30	Re-read
Week 10	Mon 11/4	Bentham readings (on Canvas)
	Weds 11/6	Bentham
Week 11	Mon 11/11	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> selections (on Canvas) <b>Final paper assigned</b>
	Weds 11/13	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> selections (on Canvas)
Week 12	Mon 11/18	Williams, <i>Utilitarianism: For and Against</i> (on Canvas)
	Weds 11/20	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book 1 (focus especially on chs. 1–5, 7, 8, and 13)
Week 13	Mon 11/25	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book 1 <b>Final paper due</b>
		No class Wednesday
Week 14	Mon 12/2	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> II.5–9, III.6–7
	Weds 12/4	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VI.1–2, 5, 12–13
Week 15	Mon 12/9	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> X.6–8

Weds 12/11      Review

**\*\*\*this syllabus is subject to revision\*\*\***