

PHIL 4: Introduction to Ethics

Summer 2019
MTWR 3:30 – 4:35 p.m.
South Hall 1430

Instructor: Dylan Abney
Email: abney@ucsb.edu
Office Hours: M&R 2:30-3:30 p.m.
Office Location: South Hall 5706

Teaching Assistant: Tom Costigan
Email: tcostigan@ucsb.edu
Office Hours: T&W 12:30-1:30 p.m.
Office Location: South Hall 5706

Course Description

This is an introductory course on ethics. At the most general level, the course will have three parts: (1) **meta-ethical theory**, (2) **normative ethical theory**, and (3) **applied ethics**.

In the section on **meta-ethical theory**, we will attempt to answer some important metaphysical, epistemological, and semantic questions about ethics itself: *Are there objective moral facts, or is it all relative? If there are moral facts, how do we come to know them? What do we mean when we label an action 'good' or 'bad', 'required' or 'impermissible'?*

In the section on **normative ethical theory**, we will focus on the following questions: *As moral agents, how should we act? What are our moral obligations, and to whom are we obligated? Is the moral rightness or wrongness of our actions determined by our intentions or instead by the consequences of our actions? Or is it some mix of the two?* In an attempt to answer these questions, we will discuss two of the most influential families of normative theories: consequentialism and deontology. Our discussion of consequentialism will focus on utilitarianism, and our discussion of deontology will focus on Kantian ethics.

In the section on **applied ethics**, we will use the ethical frameworks from earlier in the course and apply them to contemporary ethical issues. We will discuss five different topics: (1) abortion, (2) distributive justice, (3) global aid, (4) career choice, and (5) technology.

Required Texts

Utilitarianism, John Stuart Mill (Suggested Edition: *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill*, Modern Library Classics)

Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Immanuel Kant (Suggested Edition: Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, Introduction by Christine Korsgaard)

Grading Breakdown

Category	Date	Weight
Short paper (3-4 pages)	Due Thursday, 7/11	25% of total course grade
Midterm exam	Monday, 7/15	30% of total course grade
Discussion section attendance	-	10% of total course grade
Cumulative Final exam	Thursday, 8/1	35% of total course grade

Classroom Expectations

Electronics: Cell phone and laptop use is not permitted in lecture. If you need to make a phone call or send a text, please feel free to step outside of the room to do so. Regarding laptops, I will make exceptions in some cases. If you have a compelling reason to use a laptop in class, you should send me an email at the beginning of the quarter.

Recording devices are not permitted.

Attendance: Discussion section attendance is mandatory and will count for 10% of your overall course grade. Absences may be excused in some cases (e.g., medical issues), though documentation must be provided to your TA. It is up to the TA's discretion which absences will count as excused.

Lecture attendance is not mandatory but is *strongly encouraged*. Given that this is a summer course, we have a lot of material packed into a short amount of time. On top of this, most of the course content will be delivered in lecture. While some lecture notes may be posted online from time to time, students should not rely solely on the online notes and readings. In the event of an absence, students are encouraged to attend office hours or to reach out to fellow students to catch up on the material.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is taken very seriously. There is no tolerance for cheating or plagiarism. When turning in an assignment or exam, you are representing that you alone produced the work. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. More on the subject can be found at the page below:

<https://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/AcademicIntegrity.aspx>

Students with Disabilities

The University's Disabled Students Program offers services (e.g., notetaking & test-taking accommodations) for students with disabilities. If you qualify for such services, you are encouraged to reach out to DSP as early in the course as possible at <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu>.

Late/Make-up Policy

If your paper is turned in late, there will be a penalty of 1/3 of a letter grade per 24 hours. For example, if you turn in a B+ paper a few hours late, your paper will turn into a B. If it becomes over 24 hours late, it will move to a B-, and so on.

Generally speaking, **there will be no opportunities to make up the exams**. If you cannot make the scheduled exams for a compelling and verifiable reason (e.g., work or medical reasons), you should reach out to us at least one week before the scheduled exam, though ideally you will reach out to us as soon as possible. We make no guarantees regarding make-up opportunities, but we will do our best to accommodate in select cases.

Tentative Course Schedule on p. 3 (subject to change)

Week 1	Moral Reasoning & Meta-Ethical Theory	Reading/Notes
Monday, 6/24	Course introduction	No reading assignment for Week 1. Lecture notes will be posted on Gauchospace.
Tuesday, 6/25	Moral reasoning + logic	
Wednesday, 6/26	Meta-ethics	
Thursday, 6/27	Meta-ethics, cont'd.	
Week 2	Normative Ethical Theory: Consequentialism	
Monday, 7/1	Intro. to utilitarianism	Mill, selections from <i>Utilitarianism</i>
Tuesday, 7/2	Utilitarianism, cont'd.	Mill, cont'd.; paper topics released
Wednesday, 7/3	Criticisms of utilitarianism	Williams, "Consequentialism and Integrity"
Thursday, 7/4	N/A	Independence Day. No class.
Week 3	Normative Ethical Theory: Deontology	
Monday, 7/8	Intro. to Kantian ethics	Kant, selections from the <i>Groundwork</i>
Tuesday, 7/9	Kantian ethics, cont'd.	Kant, cont'd.
Wednesday, 7/10	Criticisms of Kantian ethics	
Thursday, 7/11	Review for midterm exam	Paper due today
Week 4	Applied Ethics: (1) Abortion & (2) Distributive Justice	
Monday, 7/15	Midterm exam	
Tuesday, 7/16	Abortion	Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"
Wednesday, 7/17	Abortion, cont'd.	Thomson, cont'd.
Thursday, 7/18	Distributive justice	Selections from Rawls & Nozick
Week 5	Applied Ethics: (3) Global Aid & (4) Career Choice	
Monday, 7/22	Utilitarianism and global aid	Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
Tuesday, 7/23	Kantian ethics and global aid	O'Neill, "A Kantian Approach to Famine Relief"
Wednesday, 7/24	Ethics of career choice	MacAskill, "Replaceability, Career Choice, and Making a Difference"
Thursday, 7/25	Ethics of career choice, cont'd.	MacAskill, cont'd.
Week 6	Applied Ethics: (5) Technology	
Monday, 7/29	Ethics of design	Harris, "How Better Tech Could Protect Us from Distraction" (TED Talk on GS)
Tuesday, 7/30	Ethics of artificial intelligence	Bostrom, "The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence"
Wednesday, 7/31	Review for final exam	
Thursday, 8/1	Cumulative final exam	