

**Philosophy 21001 (002): Introduction to Ethics  
Part I: Syllabus Material Unique to PHIL 21001**

Spring 2024  
MW 2:15-3:30  
Bowman 122

Professor: Deborah Barnbaum  
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Office Hours: MW 12:15-2:15, W 3:30-4:30, and by appointment

**Course Description:** This course considers several theories in moral philosophy. We will start by looking at Aristotle’s virtue theory. We will then examine several moral normative theories including Kant’s deontology, Mill’s utilitarianism, and W.D. Ross’s ethic of prima facie duties. We will evaluate arguments for and objections to each theory. Finally, we will consider both the challenges and opportunities presented by a feminist perspective. Can the previously discussed theories adequately answer the questions raised by feminist ethics?

**Course Objectives:** Students will be able to present and object to several moral theories, including virtue theory, deontology, utilitarianism, an ethic of prima facie duties, and a feminist ethical theory.

**Diversity Element:** Moral theories ask us questions about how to lead good lives, how to perform the right actions, and ask us to consider the duties and responsibilities that we have towards others. As such, the study of ethics requires us to respect diversity in the moral community. Feminist ethics, in particular, considers the inability of canonical theories to deal with questions of diversity in the ethical sphere.

**Text:**

*Ethical Theory: A Concise Anthology*, ed. Geirsson and Holmgren, Broadview Publishing (Ontario, CA), 2018 – Henceforth *ET*

Hand-outs may also be made available via Canvas during the course. Any intellectual property displayed or distributed to students during this course (including but not limited to PowerPoint presentations, notes, quizzes, examinations) by the professor remains the intellectual property of the professor. This means that students may not distribute, publish, or provide such intellectual property to any other person or entity for any reason, commercial or otherwise, without the express written permission of the professor. Additionally, students may not distribute or publish recordings and/or links to live classroom presentations, lectures, and/or class discussions.

**Course Requirements:**

Your grade will be based on your performance in the following:

Assignment	Point Total	Percentage of Final Grade
Exam #1	100	20%
Exam #2	100	20%

Exam #3	100	20%
Final Exam	150	30%
Attendance and Participation	50	10%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

Grades will be assessed using the following scale:

Grade	Points	Percentage	Grade	Points	Percentage
A	500-460	100-92%	C	389-360	77.9-72%
A-	459-450	91.1-90%	C-	359-350	71.9-70%
B+	449-440	89.9-88%	D+	349-340	69.9-68%
B	439-410	87.9-82%	D	339-310	67.9-62%
B-	409-400	81.9-80%	D	309-300	61.9-60%
C+	399-390	79.9-78%	F	<299	<59.9%

*Short exams.* The short exams will be a combination of objective questions (true/false, multiple choice, fill-in), short answer and longer (i.e.: essay) answer questions. A study guide will be distributed before each short exam. Each short exam is worth 100 points.

*The final.* The final will be an in-class exam and it will be cumulative (viz.: you will be responsible for material from the beginning of the course). The final will have three types of questions on it. First, there will be a set of objective questions (i.e., multiple-choice, true/false), which will comprise about 20% of the exam. Second, there will be a set of both objective and interpretive questions. These questions will present you with a quotation, and you will be asked to both 1) name the author of the quotation, and 2) explain the importance or relevance of the quotation. These questions will comprise about 30% of the exam. Finally, there will be two essay questions that will ask you to apply the theories that you learned this semester to an actual case, and will comprise the remaining approximately 50% of the exam. A study guide will be distributed before the final exam. The final is worth 150 points.

*Class participation.* Class participation can take the form of asking questions, answering questions, reading aloud in class, and engaging members of the class in constructive debate about the issues presented in class. You cannot participate in class unless you both do the reading assigned for each day and attend class. In light of the importance of class attendance, I may occasionally take attendance and use attendance towards calculating participation grades. I am very happy to set up one-on-one virtual meetings with students. Class participation and attendance are worth 50 points.

*Honors Credit:* Students who have registered through the Honors College are eligible to receive honors credit for this course. In order to receive honors credit students must write two additional papers and take an additional portion of the final exam which will consist of an oral exam in my office. Students will have one week to write the additional papers, which are both 5-7 pages each and will be substituted for the 50 points of class participation credit. Please see me if you are receiving honors credit for this class. *You cannot receive honors credit unless you complete all three of the above additional assignments.*

Make up exams will only be available per University Policy regarding attendance, a link to which can be found under Part II of the syllabus. If you miss a class for any reason, it is recommended that you get notes from at least two other students in the class. After getting notes from other students, if you still have questions about that class, please see your professor.

Since this is an ethics class, it is expected that students will be discussing significant issues about which there may be strong disagreements. Agreement isn't necessary, but respectful debate and discussion are. Please be aware that since this is a class about ethics, topics discussed in this class are likely to include: life and death, justice and injustice, lying and truth-telling, promise keeping, environmental issues, the pandemic and vaccines, and suicide, among others. Students are asked to do the readings ahead of each class so that they can be aware of concerning material prior to each class session and can communicate with the professor accordingly.

*Extra Credit.* Students are eligible for two extra-credit opportunities. The first is fill out two GEIST surveys online, via CANVAS. The first GEIST survey is due by January 23. The second will be due at the end of the semester. Both surveys will take 20 minutes each. Students who fill out each survey receive 10 extra credit points per survey. The second extra credit opportunity is to attend at least one presentation during the Philosophy Graduate Conference, which is during the day on March 16 (a Saturday), or a presentation by Cheshire Calhoun, on the evening of February 2 (a Friday). All presentations will be 60-90 minutes each. Further details about the location of each presentation will be available closer to their respective dates. Attending a presentation will be worth 20 additional points. You're welcome to attend all presentations, but each student is only eligible for 20 extra points for presentations. Students who decline to participate in the above may hand in 5-page papers to substitute for each extra credit opportunity. Those papers need to be received by April 10<sup>th</sup>. The assignments will be posted by March 31<sup>st</sup> in Canvas.

**Class Schedule** (subject to change with advance notice from the professor)

**Week #1, January 17: Introduction to Philosophical Argumentation, Aristotle - Eudaimonia as the Most Perfect End**

**January 15<sup>th</sup>: No Class, MLK Day**

Introduction to Virtue Ethics  
ET pp. 321-325

Nicomachean Ethics, Book I, i-vii  
ET 326-331

**Week #2, January 22 and 24: More on Eudaimonia, Aristotle's Function Argument**

Nicomachean Ethics, Book I, vii-xii  
ET pp. 331-336

**Week #3, January 29 and 31: Learning to be Good, The Virtues**

Nicomachean Ethics, Book II  
ET pp. 336-342

**Week #4, February 5 and 7: Catch-up, Review, and Exam #1**

**Review: February 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Exam #1: February 7<sup>th</sup> (note that this is the sole exam before midterm grades)**

**Week #5, February 12 and 14: Kant - The A Priori Nature of Moral Truth, The Good Will, Three Propositions of Morality**

Introduction to Deontology  
ET pp. 185-188

Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, First Section  
ET pp. 189-193

**Week #6, February 19 and 21: The Categorical Imperative, Perfect and Imperfect Duties**

Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, First Section (continued), Second Section  
ET pp. 189-207

**Week #7, February 26 and 28: The Second Formulation of the Categorical Imperative, The Third Formulation of the Categorical Imperative**

Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, Second Section (continued)  
ET pp. 193-207

**Week #8, March 4 and 6: Catch-up, Review, and Exam #2**

**Review: March 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Exam #2: March 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Week #9, March 11 and 13: Mill - The Principle of Utility, The Doctrine of Swine Objection to Utilitarianism and Mill's Reply**

Introduction to Consequentialism  
ET pp. 109-113

Utilitarianism, chpt. II  
ET pp. 114-125

**Week #10, March 18 and 20: More of Mill's Objections to Utilitarianism and His Replies**

Utilitarianism, chpt. II (continued)  
ET pp. 114-125

**Spring Break: March 25-29**

**Week #11, April 1 and 3: The Ultimate Sanction of Utility, Mill's Three-Part Proof of the Principle of Utility, and Exam Review**

Utilitarianism, chpts. III and IV  
ET pp. 125-129

**Week #12, April 8 and 10: Exam #3**

**No Class on April 8<sup>th</sup> – Eclipse Day!**  
**Exam #3: April 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Week #13, April 15 and 17: Ross's Ethic of Prima Facie Duties**

The Right and The Good, chpt II  
ET pp. 259-269

**Week #14, April 22 and 24: Feminist Ethics, the Negative Case**

Introduction to Feminist Ethics  
ET pp. 381-385

Lindemann  
ET pp. 386-395

**Week #15, April 29 and May 1: Feminist Ethics, the Positive Case, In-Class SSIs, and Final Exam Review**

Noddings  
ET pp. 396-404

**Final Exam: Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 12:45-3:00**

**Part II: Syllabus Material Common to the College of Arts and Sciences  
and/or Kent State University  
(in alphabetical order)**

**Academic Complaints:** The Philosophy Department Grievance Procedure for handling student grievances is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures set down as University Policy 3342-16 in the University Policy Register. For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the departmental chairperson.

**Academic Dishonesty:** University policy 3342-3-01.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. None of these will be tolerated in this class. The sanctions provided in this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you have any questions, please read the policy at

[http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/policydetails.cfm?customel\\_datapageid\\_1976529=2037779](http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/policydetails.cfm?customel_datapageid_1976529=2037779)  
and/or ask.

**Attendance:** The university policy regarding attendance, 3-01.2 can be found at:  
<http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-class-attendance-and-class-absence>

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement:** Kent State University is committed to the creation and maintenance of equitable and inclusive learning spaces. This course is a learning environment where all will be treated with respect and dignity, and where all individuals will have an equitable opportunity to succeed. The diversity that each student brings to this course is viewed as a strength and a benefit. Dimensions of diversity and their intersections include but are not limited to: race, ethnicity, national origin, primary language, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, mental and physical abilities, socio-economic status, family/caregiver status, and veteran status.

**Land Acknowledgment Statement:** We acknowledge that the lands of Kent State University were the previous homes of people who were removed from this area without their consent by the colonial practices of the United States government. Before removal, these groups created networks that extended from Wyoming to the Florida Coast and Appalachia and to the northern reaches of Lake Superior. These societies included people of the Shawnee, Seneca-Cayuga, Delaware, Wyandots, Ottawa and Miami. We honor their lives – both past and present – and strive to move beyond remembrance toward reflection and responsibility through honest accounts of the past and the development of cultural knowledge and community.

**Registration Deadlines:** The official registration deadlines for this course can be found by doing a Detailed Class Search of the Schedule of Classes. University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline.

**Religion Accommodations Statement:** The University welcomes individuals from all different faiths, philosophies, religious traditions, and other systems of belief, and supports their respective practices. In compliance with University policy and the Ohio Revised Code, the University permits students to request class absences for up to three (3) days, per term, in order to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. Students will not be penalized as a result of any of these excused absences.

The request for excusal must be made, in writing, during the first fourteen (14) days of the semester and include the date(s) of each proposed absence or request for alternative religious accommodation. The request must clearly state that the proposed absence is to participate in religious activities. The request must also provide the particular accommodation(s) you desire.

You will be notified by me if your request is approved, or, if it is approved with modification. I will work with you in an effort to arrange a mutually agreeable alternative arrangement. For more information regarding this Policy you may contact the Student Ombuds ([ombuds@kent.edu](mailto:ombuds@kent.edu)).

**Students with Disabilities:** Kent State University is committed to inclusive and accessible education experiences for all students. University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. Students with disabilities are encouraged to connect with Student Accessibility Services as early as possible to establish accommodations. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic medical conditions, or injuries), please let me know immediately. Student Accessibility Services (SAS) Contact Information: University Library, Suite 100; [sas@kent.edu](mailto:sas@kent.edu) ; 330-672-3391; VP 330-968-0490; [www.kent.edu/sas](http://www.kent.edu/sas)