

Course Syllabus

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Logistics

Spring, 2024

PHIL 4/51030: Ethical Theory

<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/>

Prof. Michael Byron

[\(https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/\)](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/)

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Hours: MW 10:30–12 & by appointment

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Tel: 330/672.2315

Catalog Description: In this course, students will explore developments in the dominant normative theories of 20th and 21st century Anglo-American ethics, including consequentialism, deontology, virtue ethics, ethics of care, and varieties of contract theory.

Learning outcomes :

- Demonstrate increased awareness and understanding of complex issues and complex philosophical texts.
- Demonstrate exposure to and knowledge of main views and issues in ethical theory.
- Demonstrate recognition of philosophical arguments encountered in complex philosophical writings within the contexts and traditions that inform those arguments and writings.
- Demonstrate the ability to draw links or associations between various arguments and philosophical sources and resources.
- Develop the ability to present complex philosophical ideas, theories, and perspectives fairly, objectively, and critically.
- Engage students in development of written reflection and response.

University Requirements:

This course may be used to satisfy upper division hours for university requirements and for philosophy majors and minors or, for graduate students, to satisfy an elective of the Philosophy MA program.

Texts:

Required

1. David Copp, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*, ISBN 978-0195325911

Recommended

1. *An Introduction to Ethics*, G. Thomas, Hackett, 1993, 0872201848
2. *Foundations of Ethics: An Anthology*, R. Shafer-Landau ed., Blackwell, 2007, 1405129522
3. *Contemporary Debates in Moral Theory*, J. Dreier ed., Blackwell, 2006, 1405101792
4. *Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*, H. LaFollette ed., Blackwell, 2013, 1444330098

Calendar :

Unit 1: Axiology & Consequentialism, weeks 1–3

Unit 2: Deontology, Rights & Kant, weeks 4–7


Unit 3: Virtue & Care Ethics, weeks 8–10

Unit 4: Particularism & Intuition, weeks 11–13

Unit 5: Continental & Feminist Ethics, weeks 14–16

The midterm exam (undergraduates) is an in-class short essay exam on the first half of the course, scheduled in week 8.

The final exam (undergraduates) is an in-class short essay exam on the second half of the course, scheduled in finals week.

The complete schedule and links to all reading and homework assignments may be found in  <https://learn.kent.edu> **Canvas** (<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/>).

Requirements:

- Undergraduates: class contribution, reading summaries, forum posts, short paper (first and final drafts), midterm and final exams

- Graduate students: class contribution, reading summaries, forum posts, presentations, term paper

Final Exam: The final exam will take place during the assigned time for this course, **Thu. May 9, 12:45–3pm.**

Grading :

Undergraduate

- Contribution: 10%
- Summaries/Discussion: 40% (if more than 5, drop lowest 1)
- Exams: 20% (10% each)
- Short paper: 30%

Graduate

- Contribution: 10%
- Summaries/Discussion: 40% (if more than 5, drop lowest 1)
- Presentations: 20% (10% each)
- Term paper: 30%

Expectations:

Attendance & Contribution: In accordance with university policy, **students are expected to attend class**. Absences may be excused with proper documentation indicating an objectively good reason for missing class. Each unexcused absence will deduct 5% from your contribution grade.

Pandemic policies: students who are excused for pandemic-related reasons may request and receive extensions for their work, but the requirements will not change. Students are responsible for submitting all work by the original or extended deadline. If class must be canceled more than twice in a row, some number of class meetings may have to be held via Teams, but I will make every effort to minimize the number of such meetings.

Discussion Forum: regular contribution to the Discussion Forum is required. 'Regular contribution' entails **two substantive posts per week on average**. That's 30 for the course: if they all appear in the last week of the course, that does not satisfy the "regular" part of the requirement (but if you miss a week and make it up the following week, that's fine). A substantive post opens a new thread, asks a probing question, applies a relevant bit of text, or the like. Discussion forum contribution is a component of the overall contribution grade.

Summaries: a written summary is required for the initial reading of each unit. Please follow the general instructions on the [Summary Assignment](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/pages/summary-assignment) (<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/pages/summary-assignment>) page. Five summaries are assigned and required; students may submit (via email) additional summaries on assigned readings to be averaged into their grade, and the lowest score will then be dropped (only for those submitting 6 or more summaries).


Every student should come prepared for class. That means, at a minimum, that you should **bring your readings and a prepared mind** to every class meeting. Your contribution will sometimes include answering questions from me or from other students.

Please silence phones during class; if you anticipate an emergency call, please notify me and sit near the door to slip out for your call. Otherwise, the **use of devices during class is a distraction and not permitted**.

Registration:

The official registration deadline for this course is **Week 1**. 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. Students must confirm enrollment by checking their class schedules (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline. The course withdrawal deadline is **Week 10**.

Cheating :

University policy 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://bit.ly/1KZAB05>  (<http://bit.ly/1KZAB05>) or ask.

Classroom Environment:

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.

Students with disabilities:

Kent State University is committed to inclusive and accessible educational 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:

Location: University Library, Suite 100

Email: sas@kent.edu (<mailto:sas@kent.edu>)

Phone: 330-672-3391; VP 330-968-0490


Web: www.kent.edu/sas  (<http://www.kent.edu/sas>)

Notice of copyright and intellectual property rights :

Any intellectual property displayed or distributed to students during this course (including but not limited to presentations, notes, quizzes, examinations) by the professor remains the intellectual property of the professor. This means that the student 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.

Testing Your Faith: Requests for accommodation under this policy shall be submitted to the Department of Philosophy office in writing, typed, and double-spaced, no later than the deadline specified by policy. The request must clearly state the purpose of the accommodation and must also specify the particular accommodation(s) desired. Contact the Students Ombuds office for more information about the policy.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
	 Summary 1: Value Theory, ch. 13, intro + §§1-3 (pp. 57-67) (https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100351)	due by 9am

Thu Jan 18, 2024

 [Week 1 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100359)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100359>) due by 9am

Tue Jan 23, 2024

 [Weeks 2–3 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100366)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100366>) due by 9am

Tue Feb 6, 2024

 [Summary 2: Deontology, ch. 15, Intro, §§1, 3 only](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1192509)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1192509>) due by 9am

 [Week 4 & 5 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100368)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100368>) due by 9am

Tue Feb 20, 2024

 [Week 6 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100369)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100369>) due by 9am

Tue Feb 27, 2024


 [Week 7 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100371)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100371>) due by 9am

Tue Mar 5, 2024

 [Week 8 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100372)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100372>) due by 9am

 [Midterm Exam](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1209010)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1209010>) due by 11:59pm

Tue Mar 12, 2024

 [Summary 3: Care Ethics, ch. 19](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1192832)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1192832>) due by 9am

 [Weeks 9 & 10 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100373)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100373>) due by 9am

Tue Mar 19, 2024

 [Short Paper First Draft](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1209053)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1209053>) due by 11:59pm

 [Term Paper Prospectus](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100344)
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100344>) due by 11:59pm

 [Summary 4: Particularism, ch. 20, pp. 567–81](#)
due by 9am

Tue Apr 2, 2024

<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1192834>

 [Weeks 11 & 12 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100361) due by 9am
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100361>)

 [Week 13 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100363) due by 9am
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100363>)

Tue Apr 16, 2024

 [Term Paper First Draft](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100343) due by 11:59pm
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100343>)

 [Summary 5: Continental Ethics, pp. 461–71](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1192836) due by 9am
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1192836>)

Tue Apr 23, 2024

 [Week 14 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100364) due by 9am
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100364>)

 [Week 15 Reading](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100365) due by 9am
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100365>)

Tue Apr 30, 2024

 [Short Paper](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1209095) due by 11:59pm
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1209095>)

Tue May 7, 2024

 [Term Paper](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100358) due by 11:59pm
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1100358>)

Fri May 10, 2024

 [Final Exam](https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1209012) due by 11:59pm
(<https://kent.instructure.com/courses/79908/assignments/1209012>)
