



Course Syllabus

Introduction to Ethics—Web Course

Phil. 21001-01-16248
Fall, 2024

Dr. Frank Ryan
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(and by email 24/7)
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Graduate Instructor	email	Discussion Question Section (by last name)
Ben Campbell	bcamp36@kent.edu	A-D Hours: W 2:00-5:00 contact via email
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		Dr. Ryan: R-Z

Just drop by Dr. Ryan’s and Deidra Jenkins in-person Office Hours—no appointment necessary
Or contact your course or section instructor for a personalized Teams meeting.



Course Design: What must we do to be happy? Is the highest good found in wealth, fame, love, or spirituality? Throughout history great minds have sought the key to happiness and a worthwhile life—a search collectively called ethics. This introduction covers a wide range of beliefs, from the objectivist claim that we have absolute duties to others to the relativist view that our sole moral obligation is to ourselves. Our journey will be aided by some of the keenest minds in history, including Aristotle, Kant, Nietzsche, and Dewey. Ultimately, our study of ethics yields options rather than final answers: the choice of values in the quest for a meaningful life is an ongoing pursuit.

Required Text: Denise, Peterfreund, & White, *Great Traditions in Ethics*, Twelfth Ed.
(Note: This text is now out of print, so it may not be available from campus bookstores. However, it is widely available online. You may also use an earlier edition; the content is the same though the pagination may differ from that of this syllabus.)

Grading: Grades are calculated according to the standard scale:

≥ 93 = A; 90-92 = A-; 88-89 = B+; 83-87 = B; 80-82 = B-;
78-79 = C+; 73-77 = C; 70-72 = C-; 68-69 = D+; 60-67 = D; ≤ 59 = F

42% is determined by two Unit Tests (21% ea.) in multiple choice format.

28% is determined by a cumulative final exam, also multiple choice.

30% is a participation grade based upon responses to a question posted to the Discussion Board and due every three weeks (6% each). To earn full credit, you must post a one paragraph response (*minimum* four sentences) to the question, plus one reply of a similar length to the post of another student. Posts are evaluated in terms of demonstrated knowledge of the topic and the proficiency of your argument. Your Section Instructor is responsible for monitoring and evaluating your posts. Please direct any questions about a post to that person.

Important:

1) ***Do not use ChatGPT or any other form of AI support in writing your posts. Doing so is a violation of the Plagiarism/Academic Honesty policy and subject to the full penalties prescribed below.*** (Note: The Discussion Board questions address specific content presented in this course as interpreted by your instructor. “Generic” responses are easily detected.)

1) Students who make significant contributions to the Discussion Board above and beyond the requirements noted above may earn 1-2 points of extra credit per assignment.

2) All graded assignments (discussion board posts, homework, and exams) *must be completed by each week’s midnight deadline. Once the deadline has passed, the portal to the assignment closes and no work can be received or sent.*

Expectations: This course develops skills mastered only with diligent practice. Accordingly, completing all homework exercises and discussion questions is extremely important. **Web-based courses require special attention to self-discipline and time management. You should plan to invest at least as much time in the lectures and reading materials as you would in a traditional course, typically 1-2 hours per day.**

Academic Honesty: For the complete policy, go to <http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism>

Acts of cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that subvert the goals of the institution and the rights of fellow students. Students caught cheating will receive no credit for the assignment and are subject to additional sanctions including failing the course and additional University disciplinary actions.

I. "Cheat" means to intentionally misrepresent the source, nature, or other conditions of academic work so as to accrue undeserved credit, or to cooperate with someone else in such misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- 1. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) prompts or guidance for any written assignment.**
- 2. Using unauthorized information in examinations.**
- 3. Securing, giving or exchanging information during examinations.**
- 4. Having another person take one's place for any academic performance.**
5. Possessing partial or whole copies of examinations, tests or quizzes before these are distributed for student use.
6. Using a substantial portion of a piece of work previously submitted for another course or program to meet the requirements of the present course or program without notifying the instructor to whom the work is presented.
7. Presenting falsified information in order to postpone or avoid examinations, tests, quizzes, or other academic work.

Kent Core Course: This course may be used to satisfy a Kent Core requirement in the Humanities and Fine Arts. The Kent Core is intended to broaden intellectual perspectives, foster ethical and humanitarian values, and prepare students for responsible citizenship and productive careers.

Grievance Policy: The Philosophy Department Grievance Procedure for handling grievances is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures set down as University Policy 3342-4-16 in the *University Policy Register*. For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the Departmental Chairperson.

Prerequisite, Registration and Withdrawal Notice: There is no prerequisite for this course. By University policy, you must be officially registered in order to attend this class or receive credit for it. Please confirm your enrollment by checking your class schedule (using Student Tools in Flashline). The deadline for withdrawing from the class is Sunday, October 27, 2024.

Religious Compliance Statement: The University welcomes the beliefs and practices of diverse faiths, philosophies, and other systems of belief. In compliance with University policy and the Ohio Revised Code, students are permitted to request excused class absences for up to three days per term to participate in sanctioned activities authorized by a religious or spiritual organization. The request for excusal must be made in writing during the first fourteen days of the semester and include 1) the date(s) of each proposed absence, 2) a clear explanation of the activities involved, and 3) the specific accommodation(s) you desire.

Student Accessibility Policy: University Policy 3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information on registration procedures).

Topic/Power Point	Reading	Assignments/Tests
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<i>Week 1, August 19-August 25</i>		
1. Introduction: Ethics in Life/ An Ethical Continuum	Canvas: read essay on A.I.	Introduce Yourself! Discussion Question #1 Posts (2) <i>Deadline midnight</i> <i>Sunday, August 25</i>
I. Objectivism		
<i>Week 2, August 26-September 1</i>		
2. Socrates and the Sophists; Plato	7-13	
3. Plato	13-20	
September 2, Labor Day Observance		
<i>Week 3, September 3-September 8</i>		
4. Augustine: The Confessions	59-66	
5. Augustine: The City of God/Intro to Kant	66-72	
<i>Week 4, September 9-September 15</i>		
6. Kant: Good as Good Will	142-149	
7. The Categorical and Practical Imperatives	149-155	
II. Naturalism		
<i>Week 5, September 16-September 22</i>		
8. Aristotle: The Virtuous Life	21-34	Discussion Question #2 Posts (2) <i>Review Unit 1 Study</i> <i>Questions and Guide</i> UNIT 1 EXAM <i>Deadline midnight</i> <i>Sunday, September 22</i>
<i>Week 6, September 23-September 29</i>		
9. The Social Contract 1: Hobbes & Locke	88-101	

Week 7, September 30-October 6: Fall Break

Week 8, October 7-October 13

10. The Social Contract 2: Hume and Smith 129-141

Week 9, October 14-October 20

11. Kant's Legacy 1: Hegel

12. Kant's Legacy 2: Marx 186-199

Discussion Question #3
Posts (2)
Deadline midnight
Sunday, October 20

III. Social Justice and Relativism

Week 10, October 21-October 27

13. Utilitarianism 1: Bentham & Mill 156-163

14. Utilitarianism 2: Mill 163-169

Week 11, October 21-October 27

15. Neo-Utilitarians, Ayer, & Moore 262-271; 240-251

Week 12, October 28-November 3

16. Dewey: The Construction of Good 226-238

Discussion Question #4
Posts (2)
Review Unit II Study
Questions and Guide
UNIT 2 EXAM
Deadline midnight
Sunday, November 3

Week 13, November 4-November 10

17. What is Justice? 1: Kohlberg & Gilligan

18. What is Justice? 2: Rawls & Nozick 300-311

Week 14, November 11-November 17

19. Nietzsche: The Will to Power 211-224

IV. Philosophy of Religion

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Week 15, November 18-November 24

- 20. Does God Exist?
- 21. Irreligion and Humanism

Discussion Question #5
Posts (2) Deadline midnight
Sunday, November 24

Week 16, November 25-December 1: Thanksgiving Break

Week 17, December 2-December 8

Review Unit 3 Study Questions and Study Guide
Review All Study Guides for Comprehensive Final

Week 18, December 9-December 13

FINAL EXAM
(Deadline 3 pm Friday,
December 13)