

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

Spring 2025
MW 11:00-12:15
Bowman 223

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Office Hours: MW 10:30-11:00, MW 12:15-2:15, 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%
Totals:	500	100%

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 50% 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 30% 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.

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 extra credit by attending one presentation during the Philosophy Graduate Conference, which is during the day on March 1 (a Saturday), or a presentation by Graham Priest, on the evening of February 28 (a Friday). Presentations will be 60-90 minutes each, and all will be in-person on the Kent Campus. Further details about 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 16th. The assignments will be posted by April 1st in Canvas.

Tutoring. The Academic Success Center (ASC) offers support for this course and many others through the following services:

- [Scheduled and drop-in Tutoring sessions](http://www.kent.edu/asc/univ-tutoring) (www.kent.edu/asc/univ-tutoring)
- [Supplemental Instruction](http://www.kent.edu/si) sessions for historically difficult courses (www.kent.edu/si)
- [Scheduled and drop-in Peer Academic Coaching](http://www.kent.edu/coaching) sessions for all students to teach goal-setting, time management, and learning skills (www.kent.edu/coaching)

Students who use our services early in the semester collectively perform better than students who wait until later or do not use services at all. Log into [KSU Navigate](http://www.kent.edu) (<https://kent.campus.eab.com/>) to find support specific to your courses this semester, or visit www.kent.edu/asc for more information on all ASC services, hours and locations, and to sign-up today!

Visit the ASC in the Center for Undergraduate Excellence (CUE) 114, email asc@kent.edu, or call 330-672-3190 for additional assistance, and follow the ASC [@kentstate_asc](https://twitter.com/kentstate_asc) for even more support.

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

Week #1, January 13 and 15: Introduction to Philosophical Argumentation, Aristotle - Eudaimonia as the Most Perfect End

Introduction to Virtue Ethics
ET pp. 321-325

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

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

January 20th: No Class, MLK Day

Nicomachean Ethics, Book I, vii-xii

ET pp. 331-336

Week #3, January 27 and 29: Learning to be Good, The Virtues

Nicomachean Ethics, Book II

ET pp. 336-342

Week #4, February 3 and 5: Catch-up, Review, and Exam #1

Review: February 3rd

Exam #1: February 5th (note that this is the sole exam before midterm grades)

Week #5, February 10 and 12: 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 17 and 19: 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 24 and 26: 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 3 and 5: Catch-up, Review, and Exam #2

Review: March 3rd

Exam #2: March 5th

SPRING BREAK March 10-14

Week #9, March 17 and 19: 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 24 and 26: More of Mill's Objections to Utilitarianism and His Replies

Utilitarianism, chpt. II (continued)

ET pp. 114-125

Week #11, March 31 and April 1: 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 7 and 9: Catch-up, Review, and Exam #3

Review: April 7th

Exam #3: April 9th

Week #13, April 14 and 16: Ross's Ethic of Prima Facie Duties

The Right and The Good, chpt II

ET pp. 259-269

Week #14, April 21 and 23: Feminist Ethics, the Negative Case

Introduction to Feminist Ethics

ET pp. 381-385

Lindemann

ET pp. 386-395

Week #15, April 28 and 30: Feminist Ethics, the Positive Case, In-Class SSIs, and Final Exam Review

Noddings

ET pp. 396-404

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 6th, 10:15-12:30

**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?custome1_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).

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 ; 330-672-3391; VP 330-968-0490; www.kent.edu/sas