

PHI 21001-005 INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

SPRING 2025

TR 11:00-12:15

BOWMAN HALL 224

Instructor: Ender Eddy

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Office hours: Tuesdays 12:15-2, Thursdays 12:15-1:30

Catalog Description: What makes an action morally right or morally wrong, and who gets to decide? Is ethics about performing actions that are morally right, or is it about being a virtuous person? This course examines at least three competing theories about ethics, including challenges to each theory. Students get to decide which theory they think is best, but every theory presents its own strengths and weaknesses.

Requirements: Your work throughout the semester will include attending lectures, reading assigned texts, writing about the readings in discussion forums, taking 6 in-class closed-book quizzes, completing 7 worksheets, leading and participating in student-led discussions, and taking a cumulative final exam.

Texts: PDF selections from the following texts are available in Canvas:

1. Ayer, AJ. *Language, Truth and Logic*. ©1936, 1938, 1946, 1947. The Camelot Press Ltd., London and Southampton. <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.260746/mode/2up>
2. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism*. Trans by Bernard Frechtman. ©1947. The Philosophical Library Inc., New York. <https://archive.org/details/existentialism0000sart>
3. Rachels, James. "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism," *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. ©1986, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2003. McGraw Hill, Boston. <https://archive.org/details/elementsofmoralp00rach/mode/2up>
4. Plato. "Euthyphro," *The Trial and Death of Socrates*. Trans G.M.A. Grube © 2000. Hackett, Indianapolis. <https://archive.org/details/trialdeathofsocr3rdedi00plat>
5. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle. Translated by Joe Sachs. © 2002. Focus Publishing, Massachusetts. <https://archive.org/details/aristotlesachsethics/mode/1up?view=theater>
6. Kant, Immanuel. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Trans Lewis White Beck. ©1997 Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey. <https://archive.org/details/foundationsofmet00kant/page/58/mode/2up>
7. Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism*. ©1863. Parker, Son and Bourn, London. <https://archive.org/details/utilitarianism03millgoog>
8. Parfit, Derek. "Overpopulation and the Quality of Life," *Utilitarianism and its Critics*. ©1990. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York. <https://archive.org/details/utilitarianismit0000unse>

This course may be used to satisfy a **Kent Core** requirement. The Kent Core as a whole is intended to broaden intellectual perspectives, foster ethical and humanitarian values, and prepare students for responsible citizenship and productive careers. This course may also be used to satisfy a **Global Diversity Focus** requirement. Diversity courses provide opportunities for students to learn about such matters as the history, culture, values and notable achievements of people other than those of their own national origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, physical and mental ability, and social class. Diversity courses also provide opportunities to examine problems and issues that may arise from differences, and opportunities to learn how to deal constructively with them.

The official registration deadline for this course is **January 19, 2025**. University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Any course withdrawal(s) processed after the second week of the full semester will appear on your academic record with a grade of 'W'. The last day to withdraw from the course without a 'W' is **January 26, 2025**. The last day to withdraw *with* a 'W' is **March 30, 2025**. 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 her/his/their/hir/zir class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline.

Course Learning Outcomes: Students should gain critical reading and writing skills. Students should understand the arguments and ethical theories of a few representative thinkers in the Western tradition. Students should be able to recognize ethical arguments and theories in “real world” situations. Students should be able to articulate their own arguments responding to the ethical questions. Students should be exposed to and understand a philosophical approach from a methodology or lens that is significantly different from their own.

In-class Activities that Support Outcomes: Class attendance; lectures; take notes; reading comprehension quizzes; in-class review; exams.

Outside Activities that Support Outcomes: Assigned reading; review notes; prepare for exams; writing assignments.

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.

Religious and Spiritual Accommodations: 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).

^^That is the language required by law to be included in the syllabus. The attendance policy below covers these absences without the need for a request in writing.

Student Accessibility Services: 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:

Location: University Library, Suite 100

Email: sas@kent.edu

Phone: 330-672-3391

Web: www.kent.edu/sas

Kent Campus Academic Support: Kent State recognizes many students face challenges and we are committed to supporting your academic journey when you need help. Whether you are struggling in a course, need help writing a paper or actively working to achieve your goals, use the resources below to start building your support system:

Where can I get help from another student who earned a good grade in this class?

Tutoring (www.kent.edu/asc/tutoring)

Where can I go if I need assistance with how to study and meet my academic goals?

Academic Coaching (www.kent.edu/coaching)

Who can review my writing and help me properly cite my work?

Writing Commons (www.kent.edu/writingcommons)

Where should I go when I don't know where to go?


Academic Advising (www.kent.edu/university-advising)

TRIO Student Support Services (www.kent.edu/studentssupportservices)

Academic Integrity: University policy 3-01.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. The sanctions provided in this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you have any questions, please read the policy at:

<https://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism> and/or ask.

pla·gia·rism

/ˈplājəˌrizəm/ 

noun

the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

(as defined by *Google* in partnership with **OxfordLanguages**)

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, using phrases, sentences, or ideas from a published source, including the Internet, without citing that source, representing another's unpublished work as your own, rewriting or paraphrasing the work of another without giving credit to that source by citation, submitting a writing assignment as your own work that has been copied, in whole or in part, from another's work or another source.

If there is any indication that you may have plagiarized in any of these ways, I will give you a preliminary grade and contact you to inform you of the situation. We can discuss it over email and/or during office hours. If it is determined that you did in fact plagiarize, you will receive a 0 for that assignment or for that question, depending on the situation

and degree of plagiarism. If it happens a second time, you will fail the class. First-time plagiarizers can redo plagiarized assignment for full credit on the condition that you attend KSU's **plagiarism school**: "a one-on-one session lasting about 45 minutes... serving as a means to reeducate and rehabilitate students who plagiarize."

<https://www.kent.edu/plagiarism/plagiarism-school>

Secondary sources can **supplement** primary sources, but they cannot **substitute** for them. Appropriate secondary sources exist to enrich your interpretation of the philosophical content of the primary source. Please do not cite or plagiarize from SparkNotes, CliffsNotes and similar sources. Using websites like these *in lieu of* reading the primary texts does not fulfill the requirements for this course.

AI: You are welcome to make use of AI resources to **supplement** your learning practice, but like other secondary sources, AI is not an acceptable **substitute** for the work of reading, interpreting what you've read, or expressing your thoughts in writing and in speech. If you use AI to assist you with your work, you must quote text that you are copying and cite quoted and paraphrased AI-generated writing as you would any other secondary source. If I suspect you that you have used AI inappropriately, with or without AI detection software in support of my assessment, I will treat it as any other form of plagiarism. Have the courage to use your own reason (the motto of Enlightenment, according to Kant) and try to resist the allure of that flawlessly generic sense of clarity and corner-cutting you may think you've achieved when relying on artificial intelligence to do the work for you!

Here are two peer reviewed online academic resources that are approved for this class:

1. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://plato.stanford.edu>
2. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

You are welcome to work together on your assignments, but it is important that the work you submit reflects your own thought process and writing style. If I receive two or more identical or nearly identical assignments, each student will receive either a 0 on the assignment or on specific questions, depending on the type of assignment and the degree to which it is plagiarized. To avoid this issue, make sure that you do *not copy directly* from anyone else's work or allow any other student(s) to copy directly from your work.

Policy on cell phones, laptops, tablets etc.: In the aim of fostering an engaged and distraction-free environment, please silence your cell phone and refrain from texting and accessing the Internet during class unless it is directly related to class discussion. Your active presence and engagement is important for learning, performing well on quizzes and assignments, and having a worthwhile experience in the classroom. If I notice that you are looking at your phone or any device during a quiz or the final exam, you will get an automatic 0.

Course Evaluation:

10% Attendance

- I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. If you are in the room and I call your name, let me know you are here and I will check your name off. If I call your name and you are not here, you will be counted as potentially absent.
 - Arriving late and leaving early is ½ credit
- **Up to 8 absences excused, no questions asked.** After you've missed 8 classes (or up to 16 points in absences and/or lates / early departures), you will not receive any credit for classes that you do not attend, regardless of the situation. Make sure that you understand this - there will be no negotiating for attendance credit past your 8 excused absences.
- It is very important that you attend class on the day you are scheduled to lead a discussion (see discussion leader under "Assignments"). These cannot be made up. If you *absolutely* cannot make it to class on the

discussion day that you are scheduled to lead, I will need documentation that justifies why your absence is unavoidable, and I will reassign you to a different day. Without reasonable justification with documentation, you will receive a 0. If you and another student would like to swap the days you are scheduled to lead discussion, let me know no later than the class prior to the discussion and I will modify the discussion schedule accordingly.

20% Quizzes

- 6 quizzes with advanced notice
- Closed-book, administered in class on paper unless otherwise specified
- 6-12 multiple choice, matching, fill-in and/or short answer questions
- **2 lowest scores dropped**
- **No makeups on quizzes**

50% Assignments

- 1 discussion forum response for each reading assignment:
 - For each reading assignment, your first task is to **read** the assigned text and your second task will be to write approximately 10 sentences about it in a discussion forum. Your third task will be to respond to another student in a meaningful way. This is a blank slate, informal and open format with the following criteria:
 1. In 2-4 sentences, what is **your interpretation** of what the reading is about? It needs to be connected to the specific text that is assigned. I'm not looking for a summary or whether or not you enjoyed it. I am interested in how you make sense of the content.
 2. In 4-6 sentences, either **(a)** What was most difficult for you to understand? One way to approach this is to pose a question and then show **your thought process** by attempting to answer your own question. If you can't answer it, then you're done. If you *can* answer it, then it's no longer a genuine question, so keep going until you can write about a question you *can't* answer. Or **(b)** What did you agree with or disagree with and why? Here you can use evidence from your own experience to support your argument. You can also critique the arguments presented in the text on their own terms.
 3. Include one direct **quotation** from the text. This needs to be integrated into your analysis. I don't want to see some random quote that has nothing to do with what you are writing about or a relevant quote tacked on at the end.
 - Timing is important for these assignments. If you submit a response late, even if it's during that day's class, 2 points will be deducted from your score, with 2 additional points deducted for each additional day it is late.

Your primary response is worth 20 points:

- 18-20:** demonstrate that you've read the assignment and have thought about it carefully, fulfills the criteria 1-3 above
- 15-17:** is relevant to the topic and based on the assigned text, but does not demonstrate that you've made a genuine attempt to read and understand it, or does not fulfill criteria 1-3 above
- 14-15:** appears to be thoughtful but is either not clearly relevant to the topic, or, is relevant to the topic, but is not based on the assigned text; or does not fulfill criteria 1-3 above
- 11-13:** does not demonstrate a coherent thought process, regardless of its relevance to the topic; does not fulfill criteria 1-3 above
- 1-10:** your writing is indecipherable and disorganized to the point that I can't understand what you are trying to say; does not fulfill criteria 1-3 above
- 0:** Plagiarism or not writing anything at all

Your comment on another student's post is worth 10 points:

- 9-10:** responding thoughtfully to what another student has written in a way that incorporates your interpretation of the text
- 6-8:** responding thoughtfully to what another student has written without incorporating your interpretation of the text
- 4-5:** commenting on someone's post without evidence of having read or thought much about the text
- 1-3:** simply agreeing or disagreeing with what someone has written; incoherent writing
- 0:** Plagiarism or not writing anything at all

- **7 assignments** designed to facilitate your understanding of the reading assignments, approximately 40-80 pts each

- If you hand in your worksheet after I've collected it on the day it is due, you will receive -2% from your total score and -5% per additional class it is late, up until I hand back graded work.
- Once I have graded and handed back a worksheet, I will accept late work for ½ credit for one additional week. After that week has passed, the assignment is no longer eligible for credit.
- If you are absent on the day your worksheet is due, email me an image of your completed assignment and that will serve as a timestamp for your completed work. Bring your original copy to hand in at your next attended class and write "email" at the top of the page so that I know to check.
- Individual extensions on worksheets for partial or full credit will be determined on a case-by-case basis on the condition that:
 1. You communicate with me in person or over email in a timely manner ("timely manner" means *prior to the day the assignment is due*).
 2. Your attendance is in good standing.
 3. You have a documentable reason for your request e.g. SAS accommodations, a medical situation, a funeral etc.
 4. You are not a habitual extension seeker

If these conditions are not sufficiently met, you are not guaranteed an extension on an assignment.

- **Discussion leader + participant roles:**

Discussion Leader Criteria	
Preparation & logistics: Prepare for an informal discussion with the class by composing a list or set of notes on what you intend to discuss that I will collect as evidence that you showed up prepared. You are welcome to submit a group Google doc as well. Keep the discussion going, stay on topic, make room for one another to speak. You can use the whiteboard, you can read passages from the text and/or respond to student discussion posts. You can pose questions to the class, etc.	10 pts
Summary and analysis: Genuinely attempt to understand the main ideas in the text and analyze what's going on in parts that are difficult to understand.	10 pts
Critical assessment: Critically analyze arguments in the text with supporting reasons.	10 pts
Concrete connections: Evaluate the ideas in the context of your lived experiences.	10 pts
Total points for Discussion Leaders: 40	
Discussion Participant Criteria	

Discussion Leader Criteria	
<p>Preparation & logistics: Prepare for an informal discussion with the class by composing a list or set of notes on what you intend to discuss that I will collect as evidence that you showed up prepared. You are welcome to submit a group Google doc as well. Keep the discussion going, stay on topic, make room for one another to speak. You can use the whiteboard, you can read passages from the text and/or respond to student discussion posts. You can pose questions to the class, etc.</p>	10 pts
<p>Participation: Involve yourself in the class discussion. If I can remember the individual people who contributed to the conversation, they will receive full credit and the rest of the class will not. If enough of you contribute to the point where I cannot recall each individual who contributed, then everyone will receive full credit whether or not you contributed individually. Discussion leaders are also participants. If you are on your phone or laptop scrolling, playing video games or doing homework for another class etc. during student-led discussion, you are not fulfilling the criteria for the assignment. You are welcome to participate using the Google doc provided during class for credit.</p>	10 pts
Total points for Discussion Participants: 10	

20% Final exam: The final exam will be cumulative and administered in our classroom on the designated date and time: Friday, May 9th 12:45-3:00

Grading Scale: *rounding up .45 and higher*

93-100 A	83-87 B	73-77 C	63-66 D
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-
88-89 B+	78-79 C+	68-69 D+	0-59 F

Course Schedule

	Week 1	Mon Jan 14 Introduction to the class	Thurs Jan 16 Is - ought problem Intro to Emotivism: Hume's Fork For week 2: Read excerpt from AJ Ayer's <i>Language, Truth and Logic</i>
NON-COGNITIVISM	Week 2	Tues Jan 21 Emotivism	Thurs Jan 23 Emotivism <i>*Discussion forum response on Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic due</i> For weeks 3-5: Read excerpt from Sartre's <i>Existentialism</i>

	Week 3	Tues Jan 28 Student-led Discussion 1 on Emotivism Assignment 1 due at the end of class	Thurs Jan 30 Subjectivism
MORAL RELATIVISM	Week 4	Tues Feb 4 Subjectivism / Existentialism Quiz 1 on Emotivism *Discussion forum response on Sartre's <i>Existentialism</i> due	Thurs Feb 6 Subjectivism / Existentialism For week 5-6: Read James Rachels' "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"
	Week 5	Tues Feb 11 Student-Led Discussion 2 on Subjectivism Assignment 2 due at the end of class	Thurs Feb 13 Cultural relativism For weeks 6-7: Read Rachel's "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"
	Week 6	Tues Feb 18 Cultural relativism Quiz 2 on Subjectivism *Discussion forum response on Rachels' "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" due	Thurs Feb 20 Student-led Discussion 3 on Cultural relativism Assignment 3 due at the end of class For weeks 7-8: Read Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i>
	Week 7	Tues Feb 25 Divine Command Theory: Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i> *Discussion forum response on Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i> due	Thurs Feb 27 Divine Command Theory: Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i> Quiz 3 on Cultural Relativism

	Week 8	Tues Mar 4 Divine Command Theory: Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i>	Thurs Mar 6 Student-led Discussion 4 on Divine Command Theory Assignment 4 due at the end of class For weeks 10-11: read excerpt from Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
	Week 9	Tues Mar 11 SPRING BREAK	Thurs Mar 13 SPRING BREAK
VIRTUE ETHICS	Week 10	Tues Mar 18 Virtue Ethics: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Books I-II	Thurs Mar 20 Virtue Ethics: Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Books I-V, X Quiz 4 on Divine Command Theory / the <i>Euthyphro</i>
	Week 11	Tues Mar 25 Virtue Ethics: Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Books I-V, X *Discussion forum response on Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> due	Thurs Mar 27 Student-led Discussion 5 on Virtue Ethics Assignment 5 due at the end of class For weeks 12-13: Read excerpt from Kant's <i>Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>
DEONTOLOGY	Week 12	Tues Apr 1 Deontology	Thurs Apr 3 Deontology Quiz 5 on Virtue Ethics *Discussion forum response on Kant's <i>Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> due

	Week 13	Tues Apr 8 Deontology	Thurs Apr 10 Deontology Student-led Discussion 6 on Deontology Assignment 6 due at the end of class For weeks 14-15: Read excerpts from Mill's <i>Utilitarianism</i> and Parfit's "Overpopulation and the Quality of Life"
UTILITARIANISM (vs. EGOISM)	Week 14	Tues Apr 15 No class	Thurs Apr 17 Utilitarianism
	Week 15	Tues Apr 22 Utilitarianism Quiz 6 on Deontology	Thurs Apr 24 Utilitarianism vs. Egoism *Discussion forum response on Mill's <i>Utilitarianism</i> due
	Week 16	Tues Apr 29 Student-led Discussion 7 on Utilitarianism, Egosim & Trolleyology Assignment 7 due at the end of class	Thurs May 1 Review for final exam *attendance optional
FINALS WEEK	Week 17	Final exam Fri May 9 12:45-3:00 PM https://www.kent.edu/fbe-center/spring-final-exam-schedule-content	

Disclaimer: Although it is unlikely that this course schedule will be amended or altered, if a situation arises that necessitates a change, any changes will be announced in class and posted in Canvas.