

PHIL 21001: Introduction to Ethics

Spring 2025, Section: 006 (CRN: 16084)

TR 12:30-1:45PM Classroom: Bowman 224

Professor: Dr. Daniel E. Palmer

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Office Hours: 9:30-11:00 AM and 3:30-4:30 PM TR and by appointment (virtual appointments available)

Course Information

Course Description: The course introduces students to some of the ways in which philosophers have approached the study of ethics. In particular, we will be examining several prominent ethical theories in this course, examining their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their application to ordinary moral issues. This course is intended to provide students with the skills necessary to analyze ethical theories and concepts in a thoughtful and systematic way and to develop their ability to address moral issues in a rational manner. By the end of this course, students should be able to understand the nature of ethical theory and reasoning, explain the principles and concepts relevant to the various ethical theories studied, and rationally articulate their own ethical positions on important ethical issues. Class discussion, quizzes, exams, and written assignments will be geared toward facilitating students' achievement of these objectives.

Course Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the nature of moral reasoning and be able to critically analyze ethical arguments.
- Critically read significant philosophical texts concerning the nature of ethical theory and provide clear analysis, in writing, of the positions adopted in these texts.
- Understand and explain various ethical theories representative of the Western philosophical tradition.
- Appreciate the diversity of ethical theories and views, even those they may disagree with.
- Apply ethical theories and arguments to "real world" issues and articulate their own arguments concerning an ethical position on these issues.

Kent Core: This course may be used to satisfy a Kent Core Humanities 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.

Diversity Element: This course may be used to satisfy the University Diversity 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.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Requirements

- Required Textbooks:**
1. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3rd ed. (Hackett Publishing, 2019). ISBN: 9781624668159
 2. Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 3rd ed. (Hackett Publishing, 1993). ISBN: 9780872201668
 3. Mill, John Stuart, *Utilitarianism*, 2nd ed. (Hackett Publishing, 2001). ISBN: 9780872206052
 4. Additional reading materials for the course will be provided by the Instructor

Assignments:

Graded course assignments consist of a number of quizzes (unannounced or ‘pop’ quizzes) and four exams (three during the course of the semester and a final, cumulative, exam). All quizzes and exams are in-class assignments. Information concerning the percentages that each assignment counts towards a student’s grades can be found below (along with the grading scale used in this class). Tentative dates for the exams can be found in the course schedule included with this syllabus. Quizzes, the dates of which, again, are not announced in advance, will consist of objective questions (True/False, multiple choice, etc.) as well as short answer questions covering basic concepts covered while exams will consist of objective questions, short answer questions, and longer essay response questions that require students to analyze and critically reflect on the ideas and theories discussed.

Assignment Distribution and Grading Scale:

Method of Assessment	Number of Assessments	Total Points
Quizzes	7 (top five count)- 20 Points Each	100 Points
Exams	4 In-Class Exams – 100 Points Each	400 Points
	Total Possible Points	500 Points

Grading Scale:

Percentage of Earned Points	Earned Points	Grade
93% -100%	465-500	A
90%-92%	450-464	A-
88%-89%	440-449	B+
83%-87%	415-439	B
80%-82%	400-414	B-
78%-79%	390-399	C+
73%-77%	365-389	C
70%-72%	350-364	C-
68%-69%	340-349	D+
60%-67%	300-339	D
Under 60%	299 and under	F

University Policies, Procedures, and Resources

University Use of Electronic Email: A university-assigned student e-mail account is the official university means of communication with all students at Kent State University. Students are responsible for all information sent to them via their university-assigned e-mail account. If a student chooses to forward information in their university e-mail account, he or she is responsible for all information, including attachments, sent to any other e-mail account. To stay current with university information, students are expected to check their official university e-mail account and other electronic communications on a frequent and consistent basis. Recognizing that some communications may be time-critical, the university recommends that electronic communications be checked minimally twice a week.

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

Request for Religious Accommodation: 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 semester, 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).

Diversity 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.

Basic Needs Support & Mental Well-being

Kent State University is committed to supporting the overall well-being of our students. This support may take the form of assisting students with basic needs such as food and housing. We recognize that the absence of secure housing and access to food makes it difficult for students to achieve their best in and out of the classroom. If you, or someone you know, are unable to afford groceries or lack a safe, secure, and reliable place to live, please visit the CARES Center basic needs resource website: <https://www.kent.edu/carescenter/basic-needs-resources>.

Mental health challenges may also make it difficult for students to reach their full potential. KSU's mental health and wellness resource page provides information on education and awareness, mental health services, and advocacy intervention. To learn more, please visit Kent State's mental health resources and support website at <https://www.kent.edu/mentalhealth>.

Kent Campus Academic Support Statement

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)

There may be additional resources, just ask!

Course Enrollment and Withdrawal: The official registration deadline for this course is 01/19/2025. 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 his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline. The course withdrawal deadline is 03/30/25.

Statement on Academic Presence Verification: In compliance with federal regulations, the University is required to report that enrolled students have participated in at least one academically related activity. If no academic activity is submitted by the end of the fourth week of the semester (for a full-term course) then a grade of NF (Never attended F) will be assigned. The NF mark will count as an F in computing grade point averages. Students who have received an NF mark will lose their access to the course. To avoid an NF mark, students must participate in at least one academic activity as soon as possible and no later than the end of the fourth week.

Academic Honesty: 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://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism> and/or ask your instructor.

Academic Complaint Policy: 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 4-02.3 in the University Policy Register. For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the departmental chairperson.

Notice of My Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights: Any intellectual property displayed or distributed to students during this course (including but not limited to handouts, quizzes,

examinations, etc.) 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.

*****Please Note:** The syllabus and course schedule may be subject to change. Changes will be communicated in class and via email. It is the responsibility of students to check email messages and pay attention to in-course announcements to stay current in the course.

Tuesday	January 14	Introduction to Class
Thursday	January 16	The Nature of Philosophical Ethics
Tuesday	January 21	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , pp. 1-20
Thursday	January 23	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , pp. 21-47
Tuesday	January 28	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , pp. 47-57
Thursday	January 30	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , pp. 58-79
Tuesday	February 04	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , pp. 79-101
Thursday	February 06	Thomas Hobbes and John Rawls (Reading Provided)
Tuesday	February 11	John Rawls (Reading Provided)
Thursday	February 13	John Rawls (Reading Provided)
Tuesday	February 18	Exam #1
Thursday	February 20	Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 1-17
Tuesday	February 25	Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 19-26
Thursday	February 27	Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 27-38
Tuesday	March 04	Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 27-38
Thursday	March 06	Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 63-67
Tuesday	March 11	Spring Break, No Class
Thursday	March 13	Spring Break, No Class
Tuesday	March 18	On the Morality of Truth-Telling (Reading Provided)
Thursday	March 20	Exam #2
Tuesday	March 25	Mill, Utilitarianism, pp. 1-26
Thursday	March 27	Mill, Utilitarianism, pp. 1-26
Tuesday	April 01	Mill, Utilitarianism, pp. 1-26
Thursday	April 03	Mill, Utilitarianism, pp. 35-41
Tuesday	April 08	Utilitarianism Continued
Thursday	April 10	Ethics of Care (Reading Provided)
Tuesday	April 15	Ethics of Care (Reading Provided)
Thursday	April 17	Exam #3
Tuesday	April 22	Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia (Readings Provided)
Thursday	April 24	Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia
Tuesday	April 29	Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia
Thursday	May 01	Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia
Monday	May 05	Final Exam (12:45 - 3 p.m.)