PHI 204 INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS FALL 2023

Instructor: Del Kiernan-Lewis

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Office Hours: TR 2-3 PM

Classroom location: MC

Course meeting days and time: T/R 12:30-1:45

**Textbooks Required:**

You should purchase the following two books for this course:

1. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. translated by C.D.C. Reeve.

Hackett Publishing Company, 2014.

Paperback. ISBN 978-1-62466-117-4

2. Robin Attfield, *Environmental Ethics: A Very Short Introduction.* Paperback.

**‎** OUP Oxford, 2018.

**Canvas**

This syllabus, study questions for the three exams, and other reading assignments (designated as “file on Canvas” below in the course schedule) will be posted on the Canvas page for this course.

**course overview and objectives**

This course will be divided into three parts with an exam at the end of each part. We will begin by thinking briefly about the nature of philosophy and philosophizing. Then we will consider what ethics as a philosophical discipline is all about. Before we look at several theories which provide an account of what makes an action right or wrong, we’ll discuss moral relativism--the idea that right and wrong are always just a matter of opinion similar to taste in music or food. Next we’ll consider theories that make right and wrong either a matter of doing your duty or a matter of doing what produces the best results. In the second part of the course, we will study the role of morality in achieving a good life. We will read and discuss most of *The Nicomachean Ethics* in which Aristotle develops an account of morality based on virtues and vices andreflects on the questions, “What is a good life for a human being?” and “What distinguishes a person of bad character from a person of good character?” In the third part of the course, we will focus on key concepts and issues in environmental ethics. Throughout this course, the topics studied are intended to engage us in philosophical reflection about the world and about ourselves, but especially about the kinds of lives we might choose and the sort of character we might aspire to have.

**class requirements**

1. Regular attendance and participation in class discussion of the assigned readings. You are expected to keep up to date with assigned readings as they are announced in class and on Canvas. Class participation is very important in this class. You are expected to read the assigned materials before we discuss them together in class, and to come prepared to discuss each reading with other students.

2. 14 in-class pop quizzes over assigned readings. Quiz days will not be announced.

3. Three in-class exams.

**evaluationAcademic**

Each of the above requirements will count for the following portion of your final grade:

1.(10%) Regular attendance and participation in class and group discussion of the assigned readings. Please put your cellphone and laptop away when class is in session.

2. (15% ) 14 pop quizzes. Since doing the class readings is a requirement of this course, there will be random pop quizzes over class readings. If you have conscientiously done the readings, you will have no problem answering the quiz questions.

3. (3 X 25 = 75%) Three in-class exams.

**Academic honesty**

In this course, all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students’ dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their own efforts. Cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of F for the assignment/test with no make-up permitted.

**Grading Scale:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | 92 to 100% |
| A- | 90 to 91.9% |
| B+ | 88 to 89.9% |
| B | 82 to 87.9% |
| B- | 80 to 81.9% |
| C+ | 78 to 79.9% |
| C | 72 to 77.9% |
| C- | 70 to 71.9% |
| D | 60 to 69.9% |
| F | Below 60% or by non-attendance |

**class schedule**

1. Tuesday, Aug. 15. Intro.

2. Thursday, Aug. 17. Chs. 123 of *Learning to Philosophize*. Docx on Canvas.

3. Tuesday, Aug. 22. Ethics: A general introduction to end of 4 ethical ‘isms”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/intro_1.shtml>

4. TH, Aug. 24 . “The maze of moral relativism” and “On Trying Out one’s new sword”. <https://archive.nytimes.com/opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/the-maze-of-moral-relativism/>

5. TU, Aug. 29. Emotivism and Subjectivism. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/emotivism_1.shtml> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/subjectivism.shtml>

6.TH, Aug. 31. Duty-based ethics.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/duty_1.shtml>

7. TU, Sept. 5. Utilitarianism and Cost-Benefit Analysis. 217-227. Docx on Canvas.

8. TH, Sept. 7. Utilitarianism and Cost-Benefit Analysis. 227-237.

9.TU, Sept. 12. Test review

10. TH, Sept. 14. Test #1

11.TU, Sept 19. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics (NE). Book I, 2-6, 8-14, 18-20. Ethics and happiness.

12. TH, Sept. 21.NE, Book II, 21-34. Virtue of character.

13. TU, Sept. 26.NE, Book III, 35-46. Courage

14. TH, Sept. 28. NE, Book III, 46-56. Temperance/Intemperance

15. TU, Oct. 3. NE, Book IV, 57-61/Generosity; 69-71/mild-mannerednbess, 72-74.

Oct. 5. FALL BREAK. NO CLASS.

16.. TU, Oct. 10. NE, Book V, 77-82. Justice/Injustice. Book VI. Virtues of Character and Thought, 98-104, 111-112.

17. TH, Oct. 12. Book VII, 136-148, 150-155. The Virtue of Friendship

18. TU, Oct. 17. Test Review.

19. TH, Oct. 19. Test #2.

20.. TU, Oct. 24 Robin Attfield, Environmental Ethics, A Very Short Introduction. (hereafter Attfield) , 1-17.

21.TH, Oct. 26. Attfield, Ch. 2, 17-28. Some key concepts.

22. TU, Oct. 31. Attfield, Chapter 3, 29-43. Future generations.

23. TH, Nov. 2. Attfield, Ch. 4, 44-52. Principles for right action

24.TU, Nov. 7. Attfield, Chapters 4 & 5, 53-66. Principles for right action (continued)

25. TH, Nov. 9.Attfield, 66-76. Sustainable development goals.

26. TU, Nov. 14. Day for catch-up and review.

27. TH, Nov. 16. Test Review.

28. TU, Nov. 21. Test #3.