

Intro Ethics Fall 2018
Introduction to Ethics – Fall 2018
PHI2600 Tuesdays and Thursdays

PHI2600-U05 / 12:30-1:45 / GC 278B

PHI2600-U06 / 2-3:15pm / GC 286

PHI2600-U17 / 5-6:15 pm / OW 100

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Scarbrough

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Course Description: T

This class is a brief introduction to moral theory and applied ethics. The first part of the course will focus on three big moral theories: Utilitarianism, Kantianism, and Virtue Ethics. These theories present accounts of what makes an action right or wrong, what makes a person virtuous or vicious, and what role an ethical theory should play in a good life. Some of the applied ethical topics discussed will include: whether we have an obligation to follow the law, our obligations to global famine relief, abortion, animal rights, and oppression.

Learning Objectives: Your skills will be developed and tested in three ways:

- (1) **Reading Comprehension:** involves close reading all the assigned texts;
- (2) **Philosophical Writing:** involves completing a variety of written assignments designed to teach you how good philosophical writing differs from other familiar types of writing (this is a Gordon's Rule course);
- (3) **Class Discussion:** involves actively, respectfully engaging with your peers and instructor about philosophically complex, abstract theories that have implications for how we should make choices and live our lives.

Success in this course requires you to prepare yourself for class discussion by reading critically, to defend your own views with reasons and arguments, and to give a good faith effort to develop your philosophical skills, both verbally and in writing.

Required Texts:[\[3\]](#)

(1)**Cahn, Steven M.**, ed. *Exploring Ethics: An Introductory Anthology*, 4th Ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).[\[4\]](#) (\$45-55 new, \$15-30 used, \$15-25 rental)

This book is required and you must bring it to class. You may bring an electronic copy to class but it must be on a computer or e-reader (not on your phone).

* All other written texts will be placed in a shared folder on our CANVAS site.*

(2) **Movies:** You must also watch 2 movies during the course of this class. These movies may be available for free on YouTube, or at the FIU library (Kanopy) or on DVD. You might also be required to purchase a rental for \$1.99 each so please factor that into your budget. You will be responsible for tracking these movies down to watch them. (\$4)

Evaluation Criteria:

- **Attendance and Participation 10 points:** You are required to attend class sessions. Attendance includes being awake, alert, and prepared. There will be group discussions and group work in class. You are being graded on the quality of your contribution to the class. I do not care what position you take in group discussion, as long as you are respectful of those around you. You will never be marked off for disagreeing with me or one of your fellow classmates. Additionally, I have a “no cell phones” policy in class. If I catch you on your cell phone, you will be marked absent for the day.
- **Small Assignments 10 points (4 total – 2 points each):** There will be several points in the semester where you will have to hand in “homework.”
 - –The first of these is in WEEK 5 where you will have to track your expenses for 48 hours (2 point).
 - -The second of these is in WEEK 7 where you will be asked to calculate your current grade (2 points).
 - -For the third of these you must hand in a 1-sheet fact sheet for your debate prep on 11/6. This must be handed in before class. (2 points)
 - -On 11/27 you must submit a copy of your draft/outline (2 pts)
 - -On 11/27 you must bring a copy of your draft to class and give feedback on a classmate’s paper (2 pts)
- **Writing Assignments: 70 points:** This is a GORDON RULE course and as such you must have at least three writing assignment and must write a minimum of ten pages. There are three types of writing assignments in this class: Smaller Writing Scaffolding Assignments, Journal Entries, and a Final Paper. Both the Smaller Writing Scaffolding Assignments and Journal Entries are designed to help you accomplish your final paper. **I will not grade submissions sent to me via email. You must upload your submission to TURNITIN or CANVAS.**
 - Small Scaffolding Writing Assignments: Total: 30 points total
 - Writing and Introduction – 5 points
 - Writing an Exegesis -10 points
 - Writing an Objection/Response – 5 points

Writing an Argument – 5 points

Writing a Conclusion – 5 points

More information will be given on your small writing assignments.

- Journal Entries: Each entry 8 points / 2 entries total 16 points total

Twice in the semester you will be asked to watch a movie and apply our philosophical readings to that movie. These journal entries will accomplish three things:

-2 points: First you must give a brief summary of the movie (half a page to a page). The summary is to show me that you watched the movie (and didn't simply read the wiki page).

-2 points: Then you must apply the movie to one of our philosophical readings. This requires you to relate a scene in the movie to one of the moral theories we are discussing. For example, if we are studying Utilitarianism, you would have to first define Utilitarianism and try to apply its central tenant to the behavior of one of the characters in the film.

-2 point: Finally, you must briefly tell me your opinion. For example, "Do you agree that theory X rightly captures the moral dilemma presented in movie Y?" This is not your opinion about whether the movie is a good movie or not, or whether or not you like the moral theory. Rather, focus on whether the moral theory captures what is morally salient in the film.

Journal entries are due **BEFORE CLASS** the day for that class reading. For example, if you want to do a journal on our unit "Obligation to Follow the Law" and want to discuss Martin Luther King Jr., you must submit your journal before the class where we discuss this reading. You **must** watch the movie assigned for that week. You may not choose your own movie or a movie assigned for another week. You may only write one journal entry per week. You must complete your first journal entry by the end of WEEK 6.

- In class Paper Midterm 10 points

You will have an in-class midterm where you will be given a topic one week before your midterm and you will have to write an in-class essay on that topic. Everyone in the class will write on the same topic. This should help prepare you for your final paper.

- Final Paper: 15 points

Your final paper will be based on your paper outline. Your final paper should be 4-8 pages long. Topics for final papers will be discussed in class.

All writing assignments (except your in class midterm) will be handed in on **TURN IT IN** (which can be accessed through **CANVAS**).

- **Small Quizzes 10 points:** There will be 5 in-class quizzes. Each will be worth 2 points. These quizzes will not be announced in advanced. The quizzes cannot be made up if you are absent that day (unless documented illness or emergency).

- **Final Quiz 5 points:** The final quiz will be during our final class.

Grading Scale: A = 93-100 points, A- = 90-92 points, B+ = 87-89 points, B = 83-86 points, B- = 80-82 points, C+ = 77-79 points, C = 73-76 points, C- = 70-72%, D+ = 67-69 points, D = 63-66 points, D- = 60-62 points, F = 59 points and below

Missed Classes: You can miss three classes without penalty. After that, your participation score will go down two point per absence (or 2% of your final grade per absence). If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from another student.

You may not make up in class quizzes, exams, participation credit, or draft revisions without prior consent of instructor or documented illness/emergency. [\[5\]](#)In cases of *documented* illness or emergency, contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

Class Etiquette: I expect you not to disrupt me, or other students, during class. If you are disruptive, I will ask you to leave the class, Disruptions may include texting on your phone, surfing the internet, talking with other students (not about course material), reading the paper, watching videos, doing work for other classes, etc. Disruptions will lower your participation grade. Additionally, I expect you to treat other students (and their opinions) with respect. *This includes not taking photos or videos of me or your fellow students without permission.*

Grading Policy: You are graded on the merit of your work (not your effort). If you believe you have been graded unfairly, I am willing to look over your work again, but be aware that I will re-evaluate it and provide you with a new grade. This means that there is a chance that your grade may go down because I may decide that I was too generous the first time. Late written work will be penalized at 1 point a day (or part of a day) unless you have made prior arrangements with me. For example, if an assignment is worth 5 points, and you hand it in 4 days late, you can receive 1 point on that assignment. You may hand in ONE late assignment past the penalized date for 50% credit. You must indicate on that assignment that it is your one "LATE ASSIGNMENT."

Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration with other students on assignments. *Academic dishonesty disadvantages honest students, and is clearly unfair to hardworking students. Instructors have a duty, therefore, to protect honest students, and to insure that they are not disadvantaged by dishonest students.* For more information, see FIU's Academic Misconduct policy (Section 2.44). There are serious consequences for academic misconduct, including suspension and expulsion from the university. **All students suspected of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Academic Misconduct and receive a "0" on their assignment.**

Safe Zone Statement: I am part of the Safe Zone Ally community here at FIU. This means I am part of a network of trained FIU faculty/staff/students who are available to listen and support you in a safe and confidential manner. As a Safe Zone Ally, I can help connect you with resources on campus to address problems you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual orientation/gender identity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus.

Commitment to Disability Access: It is my moral and legal obligation to provide students with disabilities accommodations to help them succeed in my classroom. I take this responsibility seriously. You need not disclose to me your disability, but I can work with you to provide accommodations to help you succeed. You may also choose to work with the Disability Resource Center. The Disability Resource Center collaborates with faculty to provide inclusive learning environments. More information may be found at the DRC's website: drc.fiu.edu.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

*All readings must be completed by the date they are listed in the syllabus.

**I reserve the right to change/adjust this schedule. Changes will be announced in class.

WEEK 1: Introduction

No movie

8/21 Tues

Reading: None

Assignments Due: None

8/23 Thurs

Reading: "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism", James Rachel (Cahn)

Assignment Due: None. You may not write your journal entry for this week.

WEEK 2: Obligation to Follow the Law / Cultural Relativism

Movie: *I Am Not Your Negro* (James Baldwin, Raoul Peck, 2017)

8/28 Tues

Reading: continue "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism", James Rachel (Cahn)

Assignments Due: None

Event: Practice quiz in class (no credit, just practice)

8/30 Thurs

Reading: Plato's *Crito* (Cahn)[\[6\]](#)

Assignments Due: None

WEEK 3: Obligation to Follow the Law

Movie: *If A Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* (Curry & Cullman, 2011)

9/4 Tues

Reading: MLK, "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (Cahn)

Assignment Due: Introductions Assignment due 9/7 by 11:59 pm (Friday)

9/6 Thurs

We will watch some of *Black Power Mix Tape* (Olsson, 2011) in class.

Listening (not reading): Stokely Carmichael / Kwame Ture, "Black Power"[\[7\]](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFFWTsUqEaY> (listen to 10 minutes)

Event: Practice introduction writing in class

Assignment due: Your introduction is due by 11:59 on Friday 9/7

WEEK 4: Utilitarianism

Movie: *Do The Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989)

9/11 Tues

Reading: Mill, "Utilitarianism" (Cahn)

Event: Discuss exegesis assignment due 11:59 on Friday 9/14

9/13 Thurs

Reading: Pojman, "Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism" (Cahn)

Due: Writing an exegesis assignment due Friday 9/14 at 11:59pm.

WEEK 5: Utilitarianism Applied

Movie: *Maria Full of Grace* (Marston, 2004)

9/18 Tues

Reading: Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (Cahn)

Due: Small assignment expense reports (print out hand in in class)

9/20 Thurs

Reading: No reading /No journal for today

Discussion: Discussion on objection /responses

Event: Poverty simulation and effective altruism

Please bring laptops to class!

Due: Objection / Response assignment due 9/21 at 11:59 pm

WEEK 6: Kantianism

Movie: *A Clockwork Orange* (Kubrick, 1972)[8]

9/25 Tues

Reading: Immanuel Kant, "The Categorical Imperative" (Cahn)

Event: Discuss argument assignment due Friday (9/21) at 11:59pm

9/27 Thurs

Readings: Onora O'Neill "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics" (Cahn)

Due: 9/27 is the last change you have to do Journal #1.

WEEK 7: Kantianism Applied / Midterm In-class

Movie: *Born into Brothels* (Briski & Kaufmann, 2004)

10/2 Tues

Readings: Onora O'Neill "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems" (PDF)

Event: Discuss writing an outline for papers

10/4 Thurs

Reading: No reading

Event /Due: In class writing exam

Due: Argument assignment due 10/5 Friday at 11:59

WEEK 8: Aristotle and Virtue Ethics

Movie: *Cider House Rules* (Hallstrom, 1999)

10/9 Tues

Reading: Aristotle, "The Nature of Virtue" (Cahn)

Reading: Julia Driver, "Virtue Ethics" (Cahn)

Discuss conclusion assignment due 10/12 at 11:59 pm

10/11 Thurs NO CLASS

Conclusion assignment due 10/12 at 11:59 pm

WEEK 9: Aristotle and Abortion

Movie: *Cider House Rules* (Hallstrom, 1999)

10/16 Tues

Reading: Hursthouse, "Virtue Ethics and Abortion" (Cahn)

10/18 Thur

Readings: Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral" (Cahn)

Small assignment: Calculate your current grade due 10/19 by 11:59pm

WEEK 10: Abortion and Animal Rights

Movie: *After Tiller* (Shane & Wilson, 2013) (abortion - Tuesday)

Movie: *Blackfish* (Cowperthwaite, 2013) (for animal rights - Thursday)

10/23 Tues

Reading: Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" (Cahn)

10/25 Thurs

Readings: David Foster Wallace, "Consider The Lobster" (PDF)

WEEK 11: Animal Rights

Movie: *Earthlings*. (Monson, 2005) – for animal rights

10/30 Tues

Readings: Peter Singer, "On Animals" (PDF)

Due: paragraph on feedback by 11:59

11/1 Thurs

Reading: Tom Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights" (Cahn)

Due: paragraph on feedback by 11:59 on 11/2

WEEK 12: Animal Rights Debate & Pornography

Movie: *Hot Girls Wanted*, (Bauer & Gradus, 2015) OR *Don Jon* (Gordon-Levitt, 2013)* Only Thursday

11/6 Tues – No journal for today

Reading: None. Catch up animal rights. You can do your journal on Regan
DEBATE DAY ON ANIMAL RIGHT (winning team gets +2 points EC)

Small assignment due: Debate Prep

11/8 Thurs

Reading: Longino, "Pornography, Oppression, and Freedom" (Cahn)

WEEK 13: Pornography and Oppression

Movie: *Hot Girls Wanted*, (Bauer & Gradus, 2015) (Pornography)

Movie: *Persepolis* (Satrapi & Paronnaud, 2007) (oppression)

11/13 Tues

Reading: Feinberg, "The Case Against Pornography" (Cahn)

11/15 Thurs

Reading: Young, "Five Faces of Oppression" (PDF)

WEEK 14: OPPRESSION

11/20 Tues

Reading: Hay, "A Feminist Kant?" (PDF or

here: <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/12/08/a-feminist-kant/>)

*Final journal option must be completed by class today

11/22 Thurs
NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

WEEK 15: DRAFT REVISIONS AND FINAL QUIZ

***No journal this week**

11/27 Tuesday

In-class review for final quiz

Due: Bring Draft to class for draft revision (30 min)

11/29 Thursday

Final 5 point quiz

FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY AT 11:59pm

CHECK LIST OF ASSIGNMENTS (in order of due date)

Participation Credit	___/10 points	ongoing
Introduction Assignment (writing)	___/ 5 points	9/7
Exegesis Assignment (writing)	___/ 10 points	9/15
Singer Expense Report (small)	___/ 2 points	9/18
Objection / Response (writing)	___ / 5 points	9/20
Last chance to complete journal #1 (writing)	___/ 6 points	9/27 or before
In-class writing assignment (writing)	___/10 points	10/4
Argument Assignment (writing)	___/ 5 points	10/5
Conclusion Assignment (writing)	___ / 5 points	10/12
Calculate your current grade (small)	___/2 points	10/19
Paragraph on feedback (small)	___ / 2 point	11/2
Debate prep (small)	___/2 points	11/6
Debate Day in-class	winning team +2 points	11/6
Second Journal Entry must be completed (writing)	___ / 6 points	11/20 (or before)
Outline bring to class / peer feedback (small)	___ / 2 points	11/27
Outline on TURNITIN	___ / 2 points	11/27
Quizzes (in-class)	___ / 10 points possible	Continuous
Final Quiz (final day)	___/ 5 points	11/29
Final Paper	___ / 15	12/3

ENDNOTES:

[1] Office hours are first come, first serve EXCEPT if you make an official appoint through escarbro.appointy.com

[2] Email is a much more effective form of communication than phone.

[3] I try my best to keep my course costs down (approx. \$50). However, this means I expect every student to purchase the text/movies (or rent). If this is a hardship for you, you must let me know within the first week of the course. I advise those of you who are worried about the cost of textbooks to go to the library and have a textbook ordered for you on interlibrary loan. Please look at sites like bookfinder.com for cheap textbooks.

[4] There are on-line resources associated with this text. Please

visit: <http://www.oup.com/us/cahn>

[5] Documented illnesses/emergencies do not include car trouble, work schedules, or family trips/vacations.

[6] Remember that your journals (2 over the course of the term) must be done PRIOR to class on the day we discuss the reading. For example, if you wanted to discuss *Crito* and *I am not your Negro*, you would have to hand in your journal before class today.)

[7] If you want to write your journal on Ture, you should listen to the whole speech or read it. A PDF of the speech is up on CANVAS.

[8] *A Clockwork Orange* is a very violent movie with depictions of rape. Please do not choose to watch this movie for your journal if you suspect watching this movie might be too upsetting for you.