

# Introduction to Ethics

## Fall 2016 Philosophy

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Scarbrough  
U12: 6:25-7:40 T/Th in FIU Arena 117  
U17: 2-3:15 T/Th in Ziff Edu 110  
Office Hours: T/Th 11:45-1:45 in DM 340B  
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### **Course Description:**

This class is an introduction to moral theory. We will pair historical readings with contemporary insights into those readings. We will focus on what makes an action right or wrong, what makes a person virtuous or vicious, and what role ethics has in a good life. We will spend the majority of our time on Utilitarianism, Kantianism, and Virtue Ethics. Additional topics (briefly) discussed include Relativism, Egoism, Particularism, and Care Ethics. While this is not an applied ethics class, we will spend some time at the beginning and end of class discussing a few topics in applied ethics.

### **Course Objectives:**

Your skills in philosophical reasoning will be developed and tested in three ways:

- (1) **Reading Comprehension:** involves carefully, closely 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.

**Learning Outcome:** By the end of the course I hope that you will be able to read a text critically and defend your own ethical views with reasons and arguments (both verbally and in writing).

### **Important Info at a glance:**

#### Grading:

Participation: 15%  
In-Class Quizzes: 15%  
Mid-Term 20%  
Project Plan 15%  
Argumentative Essay 25%\*  
(Gordon Writing Class)  
Final Exam 10%

#### Books ( 2):

- (1) *The Classical Utilitarian: Bentham and Mill*, ed. John Troyer (Hackett) ~\$10
- (2) *The Practice of Virtue*, ed. Jennifer Welchman (Hackett) ~\$16

#### Books (recommended):1:

- (1) *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant (Hackett) ~\$9

**Student Conduct & Academic Integrity:**

I take academic honesty extremely seriously and will pursue sanctions against any student(s) caught engaging in any form of academic misconduct, in accordance with the **FIU's Code of Academic Integrity**, as well as the definition of plagiarism, readable in the Student handbook. Both the Code and the Handbook are available here:

[https://ugrad.fiu.edu/academic\\_misconduct/Pages/Home.aspx](https://ugrad.fiu.edu/academic_misconduct/Pages/Home.aspx)

Ignorance of policies regarding academic misconduct does not constitute a legitimate excuse for inappropriate behavior.

**Disability Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities should contact Disabled Resource Center (Modesto Maidique Campus) at 305-348-3532 or visit their website to request accommodations at <http://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/student-success/disability-resource-center/request-accommodations/index.php> . Please present the letter of accommodation to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

**Grading:**

Late work will be penalized at 10% a day (or part of a day) unless you have made prior arrangements with me. You may not make up in-class quizzes or participation grades without prior consent of instructor or documented illness/emergency. In cases of *documented* illness or emergency, contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

- Participation: 15%
- In-Class Quizzes: 15%
- Mid-Term 20%
- Project Plan 15%
- Argumentative Essay 25%
- Final Exam 10%

This course satisfies the Gordon Writing Requirement. As such, in this course, students must demonstrate college-level writing skills, which means that their writing must meet the following criteria:

- It has clear purpose and thesis or controlling idea.
- The thesis is supported with adequate reasons and evidence.
- It shows sustained analysis and critical thought.
- It is organized clearly and logically.
- It shows knowledge of conventions of standard written English.
- It shows awareness of disciplinary conventions in regard to content, style, form, and delivery method.

These writing requirements establish the general guidelines by which students' writing will be evaluated. The three writing assignments for this course are: mid-term in-class essay, project proposal, and final argumentative essay.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Points Per Credit Hour</b>
<b>A</b>	4.00
<b>A-</b>	3.67
<b>B+</b>	3.33
<b>B</b>	3.00

<b>B-</b>	2.67
<b>C+</b>	2.33
<b>C</b>	2.00
<b>D</b>	1.00
<b>F</b>	0.00

### **Participation & Attendance (15%)**

I expect students to be actively participating in class (which includes active listening). You can participate in a number of ways: asking good questions in class, participating in in-class assignments, coming to office hours, etc. The use of cell phones in class is strictly forbidden and laptop computers may only be used for academic purposes. Violating this “No surfing. No texting.” policy may result in a lowered participation grade.

**Attendance is required** for this course. Each student is expected to attend every session.

**Students may miss three meetings without penalty.** I need no documentation or explanation for these first three absences. For each class missed beyond three, however, I shall lower the student’s final grade by one level (e.g., A- to B+). I will neither accept nor entertain excuses, doctor’s notes, letters from your employer, stories about your car, and so on. If you have more than three absences and are unsatisfied with your lowered grade, you may visit the Registrar, plead your case, and the Registrar might allow you to drop the course and grant you a tuition refund. Please do not bring such matters to me, however. I am here to assess your work and, if you don’t show up, I will assess accordingly.

### **In-Class Quizzes (15%)**

There will be a number of unannounced in-class quizzes. The number of quizzes given will depend on your particular class. The more consistently you come to class having finished the assigned reading, the fewer in-class quizzes will be given. Your lowest grade will be dropped and your quiz grade will be an average of the remaining quizzes. The quizzes will not be announced in advance, and cannot be made-up.

### **Mid-Term Exam (20%)**

The midterm exam will consist of term-identification, quote identification, and one long-answer essay questions.

### **Project Plan (for your argumentative essay) (15%)**

You must prepare a ‘project plan’ for your argumentative essay. More information will be given in class but your project plan must include: an outline of your argumentative essay (including thesis statement), a paragraph explaining the importance of your topic, and your exegesis. You will receive feedback on your project plan before starting your final argumentative essay.

### **Argumentative Essays (25%)**

The topic of your argumentative essay will be approved by me (before your project plan is due). You will be asked to apply one of the ethical theories you learned in this class to a topic that is close to your heart. If this is difficult for you, I am happy to provide a topic for you.

### **Final Exam (10%)**

Your final exam will be cumulative and will be similar in structure to the midterm except there will be no long-answer essay question.

### **Books (required):**

**The Classical Utilitarian: Bentham and Mill**, ed. John Troyer (Hackett) (ISBN: 978-0-87220-649-6)

**The Practice of Virtue**, ed. Jennifer Welchman (Hackett)(ISBN: 978-0872208094)

### **Books (recommended):**

**Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals**, Immanuel Kant (Hackett) (ISBN: 978-0-87220-166-8)

<b>Date / Topic</b>	<b>Assignment Due *</b>
Tues, Aug 23 Introductions	No assignment: personal introductions and syllabus overview
Thurs, Aug 25 Making Good Ethical Arguments	What is philosophy? Why take philosophy classes? “The Pink Guide to Taking Philosophy Classes” <a href="http://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/159252/pinkguide.pdf">dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/159252/pinkguide.pdf</a> AND...in-class Tom Regan “How <u>not</u> to Answer Moral Questions” (we will read together in-class)
Tues, Aug 30 Making Good Ethical Arguments	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> , <a href="http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyphro.html">http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyphro.html</a> (We will also work on common argument forms in class) Recommended (but not required) reading: <a href="http://www.iep.utm.edu/divine-c/#H3">http://www.iep.utm.edu/divine-c/#H3</a>
Thurs, Sep 1 Making Good Ethical Arguments / Civil Disobedience	Plato, <i>Crito</i> : <a href="http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html">http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html</a>
Tues, Sep 6 Applied Ethics Topic: Civil Disobedience	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail” : <a href="https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html">https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html</a> OR see an early draft of the letter here (audio option as well): <a href="https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/letter-birmingham-jail">https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/letter-birmingham-jail</a>
Thurs, Sep 8 Applied Ethics Topic: Civil Disobedience	No assignment (catch up on reading). Watch <i>Black Power Mix Tape</i> in class (and discussion)
Tues, Sep 13 Applied Ethics Topic: Civil Disobedience	Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), 1966 “Black Power Speech” <a href="http://www.blackpast.org/1966-stokely-carmichael-black-power-0">http://www.blackpast.org/1966-stokely-carmichael-black-power-0</a> Debate Day In-Class!

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\* The readings are listed by the class dates when we will begin discussing them; you should read the assigned reading prior to coming to class that day. I reserve the right to change/alter/add/eliminate readings.

Thurs, Sep 15 Relativism and Egoism	<i>The Challenges of Cultural Relativism</i> , James Rachels <a href="http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwphl/Graham2010/Rachels.pdf">http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwphl/Graham2010/Rachels.pdf</a>
Tues, Sep 20 Relativism and Egoism	Selections from Thomas Hobbes <i>Leviathan</i> <a href="http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hobbes1651part1_2.pdf">http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hobbes1651part1_2.pdf</a>
Thurs, Sep 22 Relativism and Egoism	“Psychological Egoism” Joel Feinberg (pdf) <a href="http://punzel.org/Intro/FeinbergPsychologicalEgoism.pdf">http://punzel.org/Intro/FeinbergPsychologicalEgoism.pdf</a>
Tues, Sep 27 Utilitarianism	Jeremy Bentham, <i>An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> , Ch. 1 & Ch. 4 (pp. 8-12, 19-22, 92-94 in Troyer).
Thurs, Sep 29 Utilitarianism	John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 95-115 in Troyer)
Tues, Oct 4 Utilitarianism	John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, Chapter 4 (pp. 122-127 in Troyer)
Thurs, Oct 6 Utilitarianism: Application	<b>HURRICANE DAY</b>
Tues, Oct 11 Utilitarianism Debate Day	Utilitarianism Applied: Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence and Morality” <a href="http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rarneson/Singeressayspring1972.pdf">http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rarneson/Singeressayspring1972.pdf</a>
Thurs, Oct 13 Deontology	Catch up day.
Tues, Oct 18 Deontology	<b>EXAM</b>
Thurs, Oct 20 Deontology	Selections from Immanuel Kant, <i>Grounding for the Metaphysic of Morals</i>

Date	Assignment Due
Tues, Oct 25	<b>*TOPIC FOR YOUR ESSAYS DUE</b> READING CHANGED!: Onora O’Neill: “Kantian Approaches to some Famine Problems” (pdf in shared folder and link here: <a href="http://folk.uib.no/ebj030/ExPhil/O’Neill.pdf">http://folk.uib.no/ebj030/ExPhil/O’Neill.pdf</a> )
Thurs, Oct 27	Kant catch up day.

Deontology: Application	
Tues, Nov 1 Deontology: Application	Catch-up day <b>*PROJECT PLAN DUE</b>
Thurs, Nov 3 Virtue Ethics	Introduction, <i>The Practice of Virtue</i> (Welchman, p. xi-xxiii) Aristotle, Book I (pp.5-20 in Welchman)
Tues, Nov 8 Virtue Ethics	Aristotle, Book II, (pp 20-34 in Welchman)
Thurs, Nov 10 Virtue Ethics: Application	Rosalind Hursthouse, "Applying Virtue Ethics to Our Treatment of Animals" (pp. 136 -155 in Welchman)
Tues, Nov 15 Virtue Ethics: Application?	John Doris, selections from <i>Lack of Character</i> (pdf)
Thurs, Nov 17 Virtue Ethics	Virtue Ethics catch-up day (no assigned reading)
Tues, Nov 22 Care Ethics	Seyla Benhabib, "The Generalized and the Concrete Other: The Kohlberg-Gilligan Controversy and Moral Theory" (online here: <a href="https://sites.sas.upenn.edu/educationglobal/files/the_feminist_philosophy_reader_-_alison_bailey.pdf">https://sites.sas.upenn.edu/educationglobal/files/the_feminist_philosophy_reader_-_alison_bailey.pdf</a> )
Thurs, Nov 24 NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
Tues, Nov 29 Care Ethics	Virginia Held, "Taking Care: Care as Practice and Value" (online here: <a href="https://sites.sas.upenn.edu/educationglobal/files/the_feminist_philosophy_reader_-_alison_bailey.pdf">https://sites.sas.upenn.edu/educationglobal/files/the_feminist_philosophy_reader_-_alison_bailey.pdf</a> )
Thurs, Dec 1 Criticism of Traditional Ethical Theory	Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints" <a href="http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rarneson/Courses/susan_wolfessay1982.pdf">http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rarneson/Courses/susan_wolfessay1982.pdf</a>
Tuesday Dec 6	<b>PAPERS DUE</b>
Thursday Dec 8 FINAL EXAM	<b>FINAL EXAM (U17: 12-2 in Ziff 100; U12: 5-7 in FIU Arena)</b>