

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
Wilkinson College
Philosophy Department
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GE COURSE SYLLABUS

GE Area(s): Humanities
Phil. 104
Introduction to Ethics

Spring 2014

Instructor: K. Violet McKeon
Time and Place: TTh 10-11:15 AM, Smith Hall, Room 115
Contact: mckeon@chapman.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-2pm, Jazzman's Café, Beckman Hall

Restrictions:

None

Catalog Description:

Students examine urgent contemporary moral problems based on the insights of major thinkers in the history of philosophical thinking about morality. Practical topics may include abortion, the death penalty, world hunger, and the environment. (Offered every semester.) 3 Credits

Student Learning Outcomes

- Values and Ethical Inquiry (7VI):
 - Students will be able to articulate how values and ethics inform human understanding, structures, and behavior.
- Social Inquiry (7SI):
 - Students will be able to identify, frame and analyze social and historical structures and institutions in the world today.
- SLO 1: WRITING
 - Ability to state and support a thesis, apply knowledge of critical reasoning, accurately interpret philosophic sources, and clearly communicate a balanced account in writing.
- SLO 2: CRITICAL REASONING
 - Ability to construct and analyze complex arguments, and distinguish good reasoning from bad.
- SLO 3E: Ethics
 - Ability to demonstrate knowledge of some of the most important figures and theories in philosophical ethics.

Appropriate Texts (All Mandatory)

Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. trans. Terence Irwin. Hackett Press. 1999.
 Kant, I. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. eds. Mary Gregor and Jens Timmerman.
 Introduction by Christine M. Korsgaard. Cambridge University Press. 2012.
 Bentham, J. and Mill, J.S., *The Classical Utilitarians*. ed. John Troyer. Hackett. 2003.

Reading Schedule

The following is the list of assigned readings that we will follow this semester. You are expected to have read the listed material **before** the day that it is listed. This will allow us to have fruitful discussion during class. This schedule is subject to minor revisions as the quarter progresses at the discretion of the instructor. You will be notified in advance of any changes made.

- Readings not from the main texts will be available online through BlackBoard.

Wk	Topic	Readings (to do before class)
1	2/4 Introduction, Syllabus	(None)
	2/6 What is ethics? An overview	Midgley, "Origin" .pdf
2	2/11 Happiness	Aristotle <i>NE</i> , Book 1
	2/13 Virtue of Character	Aristotle <i>NE</i> , Book 2
3	2/18 Justice	Aristotle <i>NE</i> , Book 5
	2/20 Virtues of Thought	Aristotle <i>NE</i> , Book 6
4	2/25 Incontinence	Aristotle <i>NE</i> , Book 7
	2/27 Pleasure	Aristotle <i>NE</i> , Book 10
5	3/4 Kant's Deontology	Korsgaard's intro <i>GW</i> , pp. ix-xxxiii
	3/6 Good will, Freedom, Duty	Kant, <i>GW</i> 1 st section pp. 9-20
6	3/11 Maxims, Universalization	Kant, <i>GW</i> 2 nd section pp. 21-34
	3/13 The Categorical Imperative	Kant, <i>GW</i> 2 nd section pp. 34-55
7	3/18 Midterm Review	(None)
	3/20 MIDTERM EXAM	(None)
	3/25 **Spring Break – No Class**	
	3/27 **Spring Break – No Class**	
8	4/1 On Liberty (+ Paper prompt discussion)	Mill On Liberty Ch 1&4 (+Ch. 2*)
	4/3 Principle of Utility, Bentham	Bentham, <i>CU</i> pp. 8-26, 92-94
9	4/8 Mill's Utilitarianism Ch. 2	Mill <i>CU</i> , pp. 98-115
	4/10 Mill's Utilitarianism Ch. 3&4	Mill <i>CU</i> , pp. 115-127
10	4/15 Mill's Utilitarianism Ch. 5 - Justice	Mill <i>CU</i> , pp. 127-145
	4/17 Justice as Fairness, 2 principles	Rawls <i>ToJ</i> , .pdf
11	4/22 Original Position	Rawls <i>ToJ</i> , .pdf
	4/24 Maxi-min	Rawls <i>ToJ</i> , .pdf
12	4/29 Moral Responsibility	Strawson, "Impossibility" .pdf
	5/1 Moral Responsibility	Scanlon, "On Blame" .pdf
13	5/6 Applications (+ Paper prompt discussion)	(TBA from contemporary media)
	5/8 Applications	(TBA from contemporary media)
14	5/13 Applications	(TBA from contemporary media)
	5/15 Final Exam Review	
	FINAL EXAMINATIONS	

Essential Facility:

Blackboard or whiteboard, overhead projector, and instructional media support for video.

Major Study Units:

This course surveys four major traditions within the history of ethics: Aristotelian Virtue Ethics, Kantian Deontology, Classical Utilitarianism, and modern Constructivist theory in the Social Contract tradition. We will use contemporary questions of social and environmental justice as foils for better understanding the theories, while simultaneously using the theories to better understand the problems. The course concludes with applied topics we will examine and evaluate from contemporary news media of both national and global concern.

1. Aristotelian Virtue Ethics
2. Kantian Deontology
3. Utilitarianism
4. Constructivism
5. Two (or Three) Selected Applications (TBA)

Pedagogical Methods:

Frequent feedback activities best allow an instructor to gauge student progress. By balancing reading, lecture, discussion and assessment, a flexible course can meet students' needs while maintaining a challenging but manageable pace.

Oral Communication: The class will be largely discussion oriented, with lecturing sufficient to establish the context and theoretical framework. Some days are specially designated for discussion, to allow students to explore their own ideas.

Reading: Reading assignments will emphasize classic primary texts, with occasional secondary reading from both philosophical sources as well as current event media.

Writing: The course will require substantial student writing that demonstrates college-level proficiency, unity, coherence, and development, and conforms to assigned conventions for style and documentation. Informal, ungraded in-class writing assignments may also be used to facilitate discussion.

Reasoning/Critical Thinking: This course will require students to identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or in others' work, as well as develop well-reasoned arguments themselves.

Information and Technical Competence: This course will require students to perform basic operations using personal computers. Students will understand and apply basic research techniques, and locate, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

Methods of Evaluation:

1. (15%) Attendance and participation in class discussions ("scribe" and "on-point" duties)
2. (20%) 10 Short Writing Assignments
3. (20%) Midterm Exam
4. (25%) Term Paper – Due 5/10, on last day of instruction
5. (20%) Final Exam

Turnitin.com

To deter plagiarism, all at-home written assignments will be submitted through turnitin.com. As per the Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy, plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will result in severe penalties. You can access turnitin.com through the Chapman University Blackboard Portal.

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy

“Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university. At their discretion the faculty may submit student work to plagiarism detection software, such as Turnitin for review.”

Computer Policy:

The use of all computing devices is prohibited in class. This includes laptops, tablets, and cell phones. Audio recorders are permitted only if you check with the instructor beforehand. If special circumstances apply, such as a medical condition, students may request special permission for exemption from this rule.

Students with Disabilities

“In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services. If you will need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 if you have questions regarding this procedure, or for information and to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once formal approval of your need for an accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.”

Equity and Diversity

“Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman’s Harassment and Discrimination Policy: <http://tinyurl.com/CUHarassment-Discrimination>. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the Dean of Students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.”

Short Reaction Papers (10) (Due 5/10, by 11:59 pm on TurnItIn via BlackBoard)

Formal Expectations:

- 200 words (About half a page, 12pt font, Times New Roman, double spaced)
- Students must do **10** of these by the end of the semester.
- Hard copy to be turned in at the end of class
- Electronic copy is also due on turnitin.com by the beginning of class.
- Student is “On Point” for any class for which an assignment is done. (see below)

Over the course of the semester, students are expected to write ten (10) brief assignments responding to the day’s readings. Each short assignment may take either of the following two forms:

Option #1: Abstract

Summarize the reading due for the day. Be sure to emphasize the most important points, and skim over the less important details. Being able to identify which are most important and which are less so can be difficult, and is part of this assignment.

Option #2: Critical Response

Summarize a main point from the day’s reading. Do you agree or disagree with this point? Briefly give *reasons* (ideally supported by evidence) why you agree or disagree. This is a good option if you feel like you didn’t “get” the reading, but want to engage with why that might be.

Roughly half of your reactions papers should ultimately be of option 1, while roughly half should take the form of option 2.

“On Point” Duty

On any day that a student chooses to turn in one of these assignments, that student is “On Point.” Students should be *especially* prepared to answer questions on these days, as I will expect them to be able to field questions and be involved in discussion. Ability to do so will be reflected in this portion of the grade. (It does not mean, however, that you are “off the hook” for doing the reading and participating in discussions if you are not on-point.)

“Scribe” Duty

These assignments are intended to allow all students in the class to spend most of their time listening to and participating in discussions, rather than taking detailed notes. We will divvy up the note-taking responsibilities over all students so that each will only have to be responsible for taking notes during two class periods. Scribes will diligently take notes, then meet with their fellow scribe(s) after class to compile one master set, which will be sent to the instructor for approval. Scribes will briefly recap the previous class period at the beginning of the next. The notes will be made available to all on Blackboard.

* Scribe duty will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Both Scribe and On-Point duties make up the majority of your Participation grade.

Term Paper (Due 5/10, by 11:59 pm on TurnItIn via BlackBoard)

Formal Expectations:

- 1500-2000 words (about 5-7 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt, double spaced)
 - include a word count
- Be certain that you have addressed all parts of the prompt
- Present a clear thesis and argue for it, and be sure to use topic sentences for every paragraph.
- Cite all sources both in text and at the end in a bibliography
 - Citations should use either MLA or Harvard manual of style

Paper prompts will be discussed upon the return from Spring Break.