Intro to Ethics
Philosophy 010-10: First Session Summer 2018

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Office Hours: As many of you have internships and busy schedules over the summer, I've found it's impossible to have office hours that work for many students over the summer. Because of this, my office hours during summer courses are by (readily available and happily arranged) appointment. I will also stay after class to answer questions most days.

Meetings: 1:00pm-3:00pm Monday-Thursday, Maguire 103

Texts: all readings and other course documents will be available on Canvas. You will not need to purchase any textbooks.

Course Description:
This course will have four main sections. We will begin by examining certain problems that arise when we try to make moral judgments—problems such as cultural relativism ("What's right for us is not necessarily right for them"), subjectivism, ("What's right for me is not necessarily right for you"), and the role of religion in morality (e.g., "What's right is just what God says is right"). Following this, we will consider some philosophical theories of how to systematically think about morality, and their main benefits and criticisms. We will then briefly look at some risks we run in what kind of things we take to be evidence in ethical dilemmas, before finally using our new ethical analysis skills to analyze practical ethical issues such as lying in business transactions, the use of slurs, human enhancement technologies, and our relationships to our parents.

Grading:

> **Quizzes:** Throughout the semester, there will be brief, unannounced quizzes given in class on the assigned reading for that day. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

> **Participation:** The specifics of our participation grading will be debated by students and voted on during the first day of class. No matter what is decided, charity to other students and their arguments will be a significant part of this. Our aim is to learn to debate ethical issues respectfully, and participation grades will reflect your ability to do so.

> **Exam:** There will be one fairly short in-class exam, at the end of the first week of class, on the first section of the course. This will consist of some combination of definitions,

multiple choice questions, short answer questions (requiring a couple sentences), and longer answer questions (requiring a couple paragraphs).

Comments: During Section Two of the course, you will write two comments, focusing on any two ethical theories we cover. These comments will be due before class the class-day after the relevant ethical theory, and will be returned with comments. They will serve as mini ethics papers to give you practice for the final paper. Comments will be between 600 and 800 words in length, and will

> 1. Describe a legitimate ethical dilemma presented in a piece of media (including a newspaper article, novel, short story, television show, movie, song, comic book, online article, public celebrity drama, etc). This ethical dilemma must be commented on by either the person presenting the dilemma or some other person involved. Ex. a journalist might present an ethical dilemma and argue it was handled badly, or a character in a television show might be placed in an ethical dilemma and respond to it. This section should be long enough for me to understand what's happening, but no longer.
> 2. Explain how those presenting or reacting to the ethical dilemma are engaging the relevant ethical theory (implicitly or explicitly).
> 3. Evaluate whether the response to this dilemma was right or wrong, on the basis of this ethical theory. The third section of this paper should be the longest.

Short Paper: There will be a final paper (1,600-2000 words) on one of the topics covered in the readings for the course, which will be due the second-to-last day of class. Topics and guidelines will be given later in the semester. Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade per day.

These will contribute to your final grade in the following way.

Quizzes	10%
Participation	15%
Comments	30%
Paper	30%
Exam	15%

Please Note:
- Late work will be accepted only in the case of a documentable emergency or by prior arrangement. I am very generous with extensions *if they are requested more than 48 hours before the deadline.*

- Laptops and tablets are allowed for purposes of note-taking or other course activities. Any student caught using their laptop or tablet for a non-academic purpose during class time will be asked to leave. All other electronic equipment and all headphones must be silenced and stowed, except by prior request. Recording devices must be discussed with me ahead of time, in order to respect other student's privacy.
- Students are responsible for knowing and following Georgetown policies regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Suspected cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be rigorously investigated, and penalized as severely as possible. I reserve the right to submit any assignment to any plagiarism detection service of my choosing. Consult honor.georgetown.edu for more information about the honor policies.

- Students with disabilities and religiously observant students who require accommodations should speak with me at the beginning of term. I am extremely open to accommodations beyond those that the University requires, so please come and talk to me about what I can do to best make this learning environment accessible. Bring documentation if you have it, but no documentation is required.

Course Schedule

Note: This schedule is tentative and subject to revision, depending on our in-class progress throughout the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas.

Date	Reading Prior to Class	Assignment
Section One:	**Ethical Arguments**	
6/4	"Evaluating Moral Arguments", Lewis Vaughn 43-52	
6/5	"Subjectivism, Relativism, and Emotivism", Lewis Vaughn 53-62	
6/6	"Subjectivism, Relativism, and Emotivism", Lewis Vaughn 22-33 "Euthyphro", Plato	
6/7	"Sources of Normativity" Lecture 1,	Test 1

	Christine Korsgaard Optional: 15 Minute Interview with Korsgaard on Ethics, posted on Canvas	
Section Two:	**Ethical Theories**	
6/11	Excerpts from "Hedonism", John Stuart Mill "Hedonism, Its Powerful Appeal", Russ Schafer-Landau	
6/12	Excerpts from "Plato on Commensurability and Desire", Martha Nussbaum "The Repugnant Conclusion", Jonathan Spelman	
6/13	Aristotle on Virtue "Virtues and Vices", Philippa Foot	
6/14	"Persons, Situations and Virtue Ethics", John Doris "On some Vices of Virtue Ethics", Robert Louden	
6/18	"Sources of Normativity", Lecture 3, Christine Korsgaard	
6/19	"The Trolley Problem", Judith Jarvis Thompson	
6/20	"Moral orientation and moral development", Carol Gilligan	
6/21	"Caring and Evil", Claudia Card "An Ethic of Care Critique", Thea Hassan	
Section Three:	**Ethical Evidence**	
6/25	"Epistemic Value and What we Care About", Linda Zagebski	Both comments must be turned in before class on this day
6/26	"Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Suffering", Kristie Dotson "Managing Ignorance", Elisabeth Spelman.	*Note: There is more reading on this day than is normal for this course. Please budget your time*

		accordingly: Both readings are necessary.
Section Four:	**Making Ethical Arguments**	
6/27	"Feminist Killjoys", Sara Ahmed	
	"Is Business Bluffing Ethical?", Albert Carr "Truth in the Marketplace", Burton Leiser	
6/28	"Genetic Engineering and Elitism in Sport", Torbjörn Tännsjö "A Not-so-New Eugenics", Robert Sparrow	
7/2	"Meaning and Uselessness: How to Think about Derogatory Words", Jennifer Hornsby	*Note: I will announce this in class as well, but as a part of our discussion of the ethics of using slurs* **it is not permissible to use these slurs ourselves. Doing so will result in an extremely significant participation point penalty.** *That we are discussing the possibility that slurs harm others should make the reasons for this clear.*
7/3	Catch-up day if we get delayed, if not, material will be voted on.	
7/4	Holiday	
7/5	"Licensing Parents," Hugh LaFollete "What Do Grown Children Owe Their Parents?," Jane English "Filial Piety as a Virtue," Philip J. Ivanhoe	Final Paper due before class today, turned in on Canvas

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	60-66
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	F	0-59

Grading Rubric for Written Work: Guides on writing papers in philosophy will also be posted on Canvas in the assignment folder, should you need extra assistance.

Excellent (90 – 100): An excellent essay answers the question in a clear and concise manner. It *goes beyond* basic understanding and incorporates new ideas or synthesizes information to show connections between previously unmentioned concepts. It will focus on arguments rather than exposition, and the logic behind these arguments will be sound. It is free of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors, and it fulfills the requirement without unnecessary fluff.

Good (80 – 89): A good essay answers the question clearly and adequately, but does not incorporate new ideas or perspectives. It may have a few grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors, but not so many that they affect the overall clarity of the essay. It may lean more heavily towards exposition than argumentation, or the argumentation present may not be entirely logically sound.

Average (70 – 79): An average essay attempts to provide answers to every aspect of the question, but is lacking in overall clarity and precision. It may not be a paper which falls under the purview of ethical argument. Also, the essay may miss obvious points or fail to make obvious connections. Average essays may have several grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors, which may affect the overall clarity and precision of the essay.

Needs Improvement (60 – 69): An essay that needs improvement may answer some parts of the question, but fails to address the question fully. It is also lacking in overall clarity. It likely contains many grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. It may also fail to meet the word requirement.

Unacceptable (0 – 59): An unacceptable essay fails to answer the assigned question. It may also fail to meet the word requirement.