

PHILOSOPHY 010: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Summer 2019 | Session II
MTWR | 5:45PM-7:45PM | Magui

Instructor: Jason Farr
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Office Hours: Wednesdays | 10:30AM-12:30PM | Philosophy Dept.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND AIMS:

In this course we will investigate questions concerning morality. The primary skill we will practice is philosophical reflection, by which we will systematically interrogate our beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad, what is meaningful, valuable, oppressive, or harmful. We will do this, as Aristotle says, not merely for some theoretical understanding of morality, "but in order to become good people, since otherwise there would be nothing of benefit in [our investigation]." Our course will thus be structured around contemporary moral issues each Georgetown student needs to consider in their everyday life. Some topics will include: happiness and the good life, structural injustices, obligations to those in need, and treatment of non-human animals and the environment.

Along the way, there are several additional aims of the course. First, you will learn traditional philosophical approaches to Western ethics that continue to hold relevance to moral thinking today. Second, you will practice reading and writing philosophical texts. This will include learning to comprehend philosophical material while charitably reconstructing philosophers' arguments, and learning to craft careful, well-constructed arguments of your own. Third, you will practice respectful and detailed discussion of important moral issues.

Required Texts

Lindemann, Hilde. *Holding and Letting Go: The Social Practice of Personal Identities*

Lear, Jonathan. *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*

All other readings on Canvas

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

Readings	Philosophical readings are difficult, and much of class will be dedicated to understanding the assigned readings. I will use the latter part of each class period to set you up to be able to complete the next assigned readings, and you will be expected to have read thoroughly (though certainly not completely understood) the readings assigned for each class.
Discussion Puzzlements	You will submit one discussion puzzlement per class period for which there are readings assigned. Three skips are allowed without penalty. The puzzlements are not “gotcha” questions. They are meant to pick out aspects of the reading that you would like to discuss more in class.
Papers	<u>Three papers</u> will be assigned throughout the course. Each paper will be based on your choice among several prompts that I assign. The first two papers will be roughly 1,000 words (about 4 pages), while the third will be roughly 1,500 words (about 6 pages). Each student will get detailed feedback on the first two papers that will prepare them for the following papers.
In-class Assignments	Roughly 5 will be assigned randomly throughout the course. They will be short and relatively easy, most often having to do with practicing philosophical writing. The lowest grade will be dropped.
Attendance	Since summer courses are condensed, you may miss two class periods without a valid excuse. Beyond this you will need doctor’s notes, etc. Excessive absences will lower participation grades.
Extensions / Late Papers	Extensions of an appropriate length will happily be granted, but only if you email me more than 24 hours in advance of the deadline. Late papers will incur grade reductions of about a third of a letter grade per day past the deadline.

Participation

Participation is extremely important, especially in a smaller summer course. You will be expected to participate in discussions each class. That said, how much you speak in class will not correlate perfectly with your participation grade. You are graded on genuine and serious engagement with the material, as well as exhibiting respect and courtesy in discussions both with peers and with me.

Drafts

Drafts are encouraged though not required to be submitted to me no later than three days before the deadline. I will give three pointed, constructive comments on how to improve the paper.

Grade Breakdown

1st Paper: 15%: **Due July 22nd**
2nd Paper: 25%: **Due August 2nd**
3rd Paper: 30%: **Due August 13th**
In-class assignments: 5%
Discussion Puzzlements: 10%
Participation: 15%

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. We will discuss these issues in class, but please acquaint yourself with Georgetown policies [here](#) and [here](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with a multitude of different disabilities and learning styles will absolutely be given accommodation when and where possible. Students need to inform me at the beginning of the course so accommodations can be made.

COURSE READINGS AND SCHEDULE

I reserve the right to change readings (with sufficient notification to you) throughout the term. Often the readings will only be **selections** of what is marked below. I will likely supplement with podcasts and videos. These will be assigned in class.

July 8	<i>Week 1</i>	WHAT IS ETHICS?	Introductory: No Assigned Reading
July 9	(Ancient to Modern)	NATURAL GOODNESS	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I
July 10		NATURAL GOODNESS	Foot, <i>Natural Goodness</i> , Chps 2-3
July 11		SCIENTIFIC TURN	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> (Introduction, Chps 1, 6-10) [something about disenchantment]
July 15	<i>Week 2</i> (Search for Grounding)	UTILITARIANISM	<i>Mill</i> , Chp 19, p.158-164 <i>Nozick</i> , Chp. 16, p.141-143 Leguin, "Omelas"
July 16		AUTONOMY	<i>Kant</i> p.218-238 Rawls, <i>TJ</i> sections 3-4.
July 17		AUTONOMY	Korsgaard, "The Authority of Reflection"
July 18		CRITICAL THEORY	Wollstonecraft, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Women</i> (Chp 2-3) Marx, <i>German Ideology</i> (selections), <i>Economic Manuscripts</i> (1859 preface).
July 22	<i>Week 3</i> (Social Ethics)	HOLDING AND LETTING GO *FIRST PAPER DUE*	Lindemann, Chp 1, 2
July 23		HOLDING AND LETTING GO	Lindemann, Chp 3, 4
July 24		HOLDING AND LETTING GO	Lindemann, Chp 5, 7
July 25		HOLDING AND LETTING GO	Lindemann, Chp 6, 7
July 29	<i>Week 4</i> (Contemporary Moral Problems)	IDENTITY	Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" Fausto-Sterling, "How to Build a Man" Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology"
July 30		IDENTITY	Mills, "But What Are You Really?" Outlaw, "Toward a Critical Theory of Race" Spelman, "Managing Ignorance"

July 31	ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS	Anderson, "Animal Rights" Jamieson, "Animal Liberation is an Environmental Ethic"
August 1	ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS	Gardiner, "Ethics and Global Climate Change" Jamieson, "When Utilitarians should be Virtue Theorists"
	SECOND PAPER DUE AUGUST 2	
August 5	MORAL PROGRESS	Jaeggi, "Resistance to the Perpetual Danger of Relapse: Moral Progress and Social Change"
<i>Week 5</i> (Going Forward)		
August 6	RADICAL HOPE	Lear, <i>Radical Hope</i> , Part I
August 7	RADICAL HOPE	Lear, <i>Radical Hope</i> , Part II
August 8	RADICAL HOPE	Lear, <i>Radical Hope</i> , Part III
August 13	*FINAL PAPER DUE*	