

Course Syllabus
Ethics
PHIL 330, Fall, 2008

Instructor: Dr. Matt Zwolinski
Office Hours: Tues: 9:00-12:00; Fri: 2:25-4:25
Office: F167A
Course Website: <http://pope.sandiego.edu/>
Phone: 619-260-4094
Email: mzwolinski@sandiego.edu

Required Books:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*
Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*
John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*
Plus selected readings on Electronic Reserve

Content:

How should you live your life? What goals are worth striving for, and what constraints are there on the ways we can pursue those goals? Moral theories attempt to give us answers to these questions. This course will explore some of those answers.

This course is a study of the nature, history, and application of moral thought. The plan of study is organized around 6 moral philosophers – Aristotle (384-322 BC), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), David Hume (1711-1776), Adam Smith (1723 – 1790), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). These are some of the greatest moral philosophers in the history of Western Philosophy. We will be reading their works as they wrote them and as others have read them for hundreds of years before you. This means the reading will be considerably more difficult than your standard college textbook. But it is also, I believe, considerably more rewarding.

In this course, you will learn both philosophic content and philosophic methodology. In terms of content, we will be primarily concerned with the connection between *reason and morality*, the connection between *morality and self-interest*, and the nature of *happiness*. Ethics is a practical discipline, insofar as it is concerned to tell us what we ought to do. This raises the question of what it is for an action to be rational, and whether it will be in all or most cases rational for us to be moral. What if doing the morally right thing conflicts with my self interest? Do we have to do it anyway ('have to' in what sense)? And finally, what, if anything, does morality have to do with happiness? Is happiness the *goal* of morality? Whose happiness? And just what *is* happiness, anyway?

Apart from the content, you will also learn various skills in philosophic methodology in this course.

- First, you will learn how to read difficult philosophic texts. The primary sources we will cover in this course can be trying. To help you with this, we will spend most of our class periods with the text close at hand, going over it line-by-line in many cases.
- Second, you will learn the skills of conceptual analysis and philosophic argumentation. Much time will be spent in this course getting clear about subtle distinctions between closely related concepts (justice, fairness, desert, etc.), and you will be expected both to be able to analyze the arguments of other philosophers, and to forge new arguments of your own. These are skills that will serve you well in life, from reading the op-ed page of your newspaper to convincing others to see your point of view.
- Finally, you will learn how to write. Specifically, you will learn how to write analytic, argumentative essays which accurately represent philosophic positions and clearly articulate the reasons behind those positions. Again, this is a skill that will serve you well not only in this course, but in almost any endeavor you take on in life (from writing a cover letter to a resume, to getting yourself out of a parking ticket!).

As with any course on ethics, however, the ultimate goal of this course is to help you lead more thoughtful, reflective and worthwhile lives. The questions we study are all ones I find theoretically interesting, but I think the even greater

value lies in their practical interest. These are real-world issues, and some of the most important and perennial ones around. Take it personally!

Course Requirements:

Philosophical readings are dense and difficult. It will probably take longer than you expect to read them once, and it will probably be necessary to re-read most pieces at least once in order to come to an adequate understanding of the material. You should expect to spend at least **six hours per week** outside of class time reading and re-reading the material. If you do this, you will have a much easier time with the short writing assignments, which should probably take up an additional **five to six hours each** in preparation time. Use the study questions on WebCT for help.

The requirements set out in this syllabus are subject to revision at the instructor's discretion.

- **Quizzes** – I will give 5-10 unannounced, multiple-choice quizzes over the course of the semester. The purpose of these quizzes is to test your completion and comprehension of the day's reading assignment or class discussion, and to encourage attendance at class. They will cover either the reading material assigned for that day or the material and discussion from the previous day's class. You will not be excused from quizzes missed due to absences *unless* you either a) notify me *at least 24 hours in advance and in writing* (email is fine) that you will be absent, or b) provide me with a *documented medical excuse* after your absence. These are the *only* acceptable excuses for missing a quiz, and you may only be excused from two quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes are difficult, so it is vital that you read the material carefully and in advance of class.
- **Study Questions** – On the dates indicated on the syllabus, I will collect your answers to the study questions for the readings assigned up to and including that date. For example, on February 22nd, I will collect your answers to the study questions for all readings up to and including book 10 of Aristotle. Your answers to these questions will be graded on a check/check-plus/check-minus basis, depending on their thoroughness and accuracy. A passing set of study questions will *replace your lowest quiz score* with a "3," a "4," or a "5," respectively. Therefore, if you turn in check-plus responses to all three sets of study questions, your three lowest quiz scores will all be converted to 5s.
- **Papers** – I will assign three writing assignments over the course of the semester.
 - **Short Papers:** The first two will be relatively short – no less than two and no more than three pages (typed, double-spaced, 1 inch margins and normal fonts) in length. I will assign a topic for these papers which will involve two tasks: 1) reconstructing an argument or arguments from one or more of the readings we have covered in class, and 2) providing an original critical evaluation of that/those argument(s). These papers are short not to make life easy for you but in order to force you to think carefully about what is essential to an argument and what is not. I will grade these papers with an eye to *detail* and *conceptual rigor*. Expect to be challenged.
 - **Term Paper:** The third writing assignment will be longer – between 8 and 10 pages (typed, double-spaced, 1 inch margins and normal fonts) in length. You will have more freedom on this assignment with regard to your topic, but will still be expected to reconstruct and critically evaluate some of the arguments we have covered in class. This paper will be due on the day of your scheduled final. I will provide more guidance on my expectations for this assignment as the due date draws closer.
 - **Topic Proposal:** You will be expected to clear your topic with me in advance, by submitting to me an approximately ½ - 1 page proposal no later than April 14th. This proposal should state the subject of your paper (what debate will you be looking at), a rough version of your thesis (what position will you be arguing for), and a preliminary list of sources that you will be consulting. These sources must include at least three philosophic articles which we have not covered in class. Philosophic articles means journal articles or book chapters – internet sites do not count!
 - **Late papers:** Papers are due on Turnitin.com (see below) at the beginning of the class period on the day indicated on the schedule below. Late papers will be penalized 5 percentage points per day, without exception.
- **Participation** – Philosophy is best learned through active conversation with others. It is therefore important that you be a regular participant in classroom discussions. Ideally, you will be sufficiently engaged with the material to contribute to these discussions spontaneously and voluntarily. As an additional stimulus, however, I will call randomly on students to answer questions in class. If you cannot

answer a question satisfactorily (due to lack of preparation or absence), your class participation grade will be affected. Well thought-out contributions to the website will also count toward your participation grade.

Your Grade

Each activity in this class is worth a certain number of points. Your grade will be determined based on a straight (un-curved) analysis of percentage of points earned vs. total points.

Quizzes 5-10 @ 5 points each	25-50
2 Short Papers @ 20 points each	40
Term Paper Topic Proposal:	5
Term Paper:	40
Participation	10
Total Points:	120-145

A+	97 - 100%
A	93 - 96.9
A-	90 - 92.9
B+	87 - 89.9
B	83 - 86.9
B-	80 - 82.9
C+	77 - 79.9
C	73 - 76.9
C-	70 - 72.9
D+	67 - 67.9
D	63 - 66.9
D-	60 - 62.9
F	59.9 or below

Respect

This is a course in ethics, and one of the fundamental ethical values we will study is *respect*. I will treat you with respect in this course, and expect you to do the same for me and your fellow students. What this means in practice is (at a minimum):

For me:

- I will arrive on time and prepared for each class meeting scheduled on the syllabus.
- I will take student questions seriously and attempt to address them as helpfully as I can within the constraints of class time.
- I will keep my scheduled office hours, or provide advance notice if this is not possible.
- I will return written assignments within a reasonable time and provide you with ample constructive criticism and an adequate explanation of your grade.
- I will treat you as an adult. Part of what this means is taking your philosophical opinions seriously. But taking your views seriously does not mean treating you with kid gloves. It means that I will assume that you have put some thought into your position and that I will hold you accountable for it, and challenge you when appropriate. I expect the same from you.
- I will respect your time and not give you “busy work.”

For you:

- You will respect the opinions of your classmates, and respond to them with seriousness, courtesy, and charity.
- You will show up to class on time.
- You will read the material assigned for class prior to the meeting at which we are scheduled to discuss it.
- You will take responsibility for turning in your written assignments on time.
- You will respect my time and the time of your fellow students by helping to make our time together as productive and conducive to learning as possible.

Integrity

Doing your own work is part of what it means to have respect for me, for your fellow students, and for yourself.

As above, my treating you with respect involves treating you like an adult. As an adult, you are responsible for knowing the University’s regulations concerning Academic Integrity. **“I didn’t know it was plagiarism” is not an excuse.** Any violation of the Code of Academic Integrity is grounds for failure from the class in addition to any further penalties deemed appropriate by the Academic Integrity Committee.

USD subscribes to a service called Turnitin.com. Turnitin.com is a web-based application that compares the content of submitted papers to the Turnitin.com database and checks for textual similarities. All required papers for this course may be subject to submission to Turnitin.com for textual similarity review and to verify originality. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting textual similarities and verifying originality. Each student is responsible for submitting his or her papers in such a way that no identifying information about the student is included. A student may not have anyone else submit papers on the student’s behalf to Turnitin.com. A student may request in writing that his or her papers not be submitted to Turnitin.com. However, if a student chooses this option, the student may be required to provide documentation in a form required by the faculty member to substantiate that the papers are the student’s original work.

KEY DATES AT A GLANCE

Sept 17	-	WA1 Due
Sept 19	-	No class: this course only
Sept 26	-	Study Questions #1 Due
Oct 3	-	No class: this course only
Oct 15	-	WA2 Due
Oct 17	-	No class: Fall Holiday
Nov 7	-	Study Questions #2 Due
Nov 21	-	Term Paper Topic Proposal Due
Nov 26-28	-	No classes: Thanksgiving
Dec 12	-	Study Questions #3 Due
Dec 19	-	Term Paper Due at 2:00 PM

Schedule of Readings for PHIL 330: Ethics Fall, 2008 Professor Matt Zwolinski

Week 1 (Sept 3 – 5)	<u>Introduction to Moral Philosophy</u>
Required Reading:	- Rand: "Philosophy: Who Needs It?" - Plato: "The Ring of Gyges"
Week 2 (Sept 8 - 12)	<u>Hobbes on Morality and Self-Interest; Game Theory</u>
Required Reading:	- Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chapter XI, paragraphs 1-4; Chapter XIII, Chapter XIV, paragraphs 1-5, 18-20; Chapter XV, paragraphs 1-5 - Robert Axelrod, <i>The Evolution of Cooperation</i> , Chapters 1, 2, and 4 (Reserve)
Recommended Reading:	- Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on "Hobbes's Moral and Political Philosophy": http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes-moral/ - Stanford Encyclopedia entry on "Game Theory": http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/game-theory/ - Stanford Encyclopedia entry on "Game Theory and Ethics": http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/game-ethics/
Week 3 (Sept 15 - 19)	<u>Aristotle on Happiness as the Final End</u>
	<i>WA1 Due Sept 17</i> <i>No class Friday, September 19th (Instructor away)</i>
Required Reading:	- Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book 1 (1-5, 7-11, 13)
Recommended Reading:	- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy on "Aristotle's Ethics": http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics/ - Julia Annas, "Making Sense of My Life as a Whole," in her <i>Morality and Happiness</i> - David Gauthier, <i>Aristotle's Ethics</i> , chapter 1 - Thomas Nagel, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia," <i>Phronesis</i> 1972; 17; 252-59
Week 4 (Sept 22 - 26)	<u>Aristotle on Moral Virtue, Courage and Temperance</u>
	<i>Study Questions #1 Due Sept 26</i>
Required Reading:	- Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Books 2 and 3
Recommended Reading:	- Rosalind Hursthouse, "Moral Habituation," <i>Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy</i> 6 (1988), pp. 201-19 - Julia Annas, "The Virtues," in her <i>Morality and Happiness</i>

- Myles Burnyeat, "Aristotle on Learning to be Good," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, Rorty, Amelie Oksenberg, ed.

Week 5 (Sept 29 – Oct 3) Aristotle on Friendship and Happiness
No class Friday, October 3rd (Instructor Away)

Required Reading: - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 8 (1-8, 13-14),
Book 9 (3-4, 8-9), and Book 10 (6-8)

Recommended Reading: - David Bostock, *Aristotle's Ethics*, chapters 8-9
- Sarah Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, chapter 7
- John Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship," *Review of Metaphysics*, JE 77; 30: 619-648

Week 6 (Oct 6 - 10) Hume on Reason and Morality

Required Reading: - Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* Book 2, Part 3, Section 3, and Book 3,
Part 1, Section 1

Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on the Humean Theory of Motivation
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-motivation/#MorJudMot>
- Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on "Hume's Moral Philosophy,"
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hume-moral/>

Week 7 (Oct 13 - 17) Hume on Sympathy

WA2 Due Oct 15

No class Friday, October 17th (Fall Holiday)

Required Reading: - Hume, *Treatise*, Book 3, Part 1, Section 2; "Why Utility Pleases" (Reserve),
"Concerning Moral Sentiment" (Reserve)

Week 8 (Oct 20 - 24) Introduction to Kant

Required Reading: - Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork*, Preface and Section 1

Recommended Reading: - Christine Korsgaard, "Introduction to Kant's *Groundwork*"
- Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on "Kant's Moral Philosophy":
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral/>

Week 9 (Oct 27 - 31) Kant on the Categorical Imperative

Required Reading: - Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork*, Section 2

Recommended Reading: - Joshua Glasgow, "Kant's Principle of Universal Law" (Reserve)
- Christine Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, chapters 1-4
- Thomas Hill, "Humanity as an End in Itself," *Ethics* Oct 1980, vol.
91, pp. 84-99

Week 10 (Nov 3 - 7) More on the Categorical Imperative; Moral Luck

Study Questions #2 Due Nov 7

Required Reading: - Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork*, Section 2
- Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck" (Reserve)

Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia entry on "Moral Luck":
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-luck/>
- Bernard Williams, "Moral Luck," chapter 2 of his book,
Moral Luck.

Week 11 (Nov 10 - 14) Introduction to Utilitarianism and Mill's Theory of the Good

Required Reading: - John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapters 1 and 2

Recommended Reading: - Roger Crisp, *Mill on Utilitarianism*, chapter 2
- Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on "Mill's Moral and Political
Philosophy," by David Brink.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mill-moral-political/>.

- Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “Consequentialism”
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism/>
- Mill’s Essay on “Bentham” in Mary Warnock, ed., *Utilitarianism and On Liberty*

Week 12 (Nov 17 - 21) Mill’s Theory of the Right
Topic Proposal Due Nov 21

- Required Reading:** - John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapter 2
- Recommended Reading:** - JJC Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (Cambridge, 1973)
- Roger Crisp, *Mill on Utilitarianism*, chapter 5

Week 13 (Nov 24 - 28) Mill’s Theory of the Right, continued
No classes Wednesday, November 26 – Friday, November 28 (Thanksgiving)

- Required Reading:** - John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2

Week 14 (Dec 1 - 5) Adam Smith’s Theory of Moral Sentiments

- Required Reading:** - Adam Smith, The *Theory of Moral Sentiments* Part I, Section I; Part I Section II, Chapters I-III;
- Recommended Reading:** - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “18th Century Scottish Philosophy”
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scottish-18th/#SmiMorSen>
- Jim Otteson, *Adam Smith’s Marketplace of Life* (Cambridge, 2002)
- Charles Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1999)

Week 15 (Dec 8 - 12) Adam Smith’s Theory of Moral Sentiments
Study Questions #3 Due Dec 12

- Required Reading:** - Adam Smith, The *Theory of Moral Sentiments* Part II, Section I and II