

“The whole of moral matters is placed in the context of the virtues”
so that “nothing in morals will be overlooked.”

~St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II.1.1, Prologue

“We are not inquiring into what excellence [i.e., virtue] is for the sake of knowing it, but for the sake
of becoming good, since otherwise there would be no benefit at all.”

~Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II.3

Course Information:

Title: PHIL 336—Virtues and Vices
Time: MWF 12:20-1:15
Location: Camino 101
Prerequisites: Upper-division standing or permission of the instructor

Instructor Information:

Dr. Kevin Timpe
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Office Hours: 2:30-5:00 Mondays and Wednesdays
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Course Description:

There are three major approaches to normative ethics. Deontological approaches primarily emphasize duties or rules. Consequentialist approaches understand morality in light of the consequences of our actions. Virtue based approaches to ethics focus primarily on moral character. This is a course in virtue ethics.

In focusing on moral character, virtue ethics asks questions such as “How should I live?” and “What kind of person ought I to be?”. In this course, we will attempt to answer these, and similar questions, by focusing our attention on what moral character is, how our moral character is related to particular virtues (e.g., prudence and temperance) and vices (e.g., sloth and gluttony), and how we can foster the kind of moral character that we ought to have.

Texts:

Required:

Aquinas, *The Cardinal Virtues*, translated by Richard Regan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005). **(CV)**

Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, translated by John Ciardi (New York: New American Library, 2003). **(DC)**

Highly Recommended:

The Ethics of Aquinas, edited by Stephen Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002). **(EA)**

Additional readings will also be distributed via E-reserve (**ER**) in the library. The **ER** password for this course is ‘**Espresso**’. Students are expected to print out and bring to class the readings from **ER**.

This course will also make use of **WebCT**. Students are responsible for regularly checking WebCT to keep current with the course schedule, as well as for various handouts and assignments.

Course Expectations:

Students are to keep up with the reading and have read closely and thoroughly enough to participate in class discussion. Students will bring the reading materials to class and be prepared to discuss those readings. Failure to participate on a *regular* basis will result in the lowering of the student's course grade.

Approximately one reading question per class period will be posted on WebCT (there are a few days for which there will be no reading questions). Students are responsible for answering *any 15* of these questions throughout the course of the semester. Answers to individual questions will only be accepted on the day the reading assignment in question is discussed in class (particular due dates for individual questions will be on WebCT). Completing the assigned number of reading questions is a *necessary but not sufficient* condition for adequate class participation.

Students will write *three* papers during the course of the semester on topics. The first of these papers will focus on the nature of a particular vice and its corresponding virtue. The second paper will relate this vice and its corresponding virtue to the larger issue of character formation, specifically as illustrated by Dante's *Purgatorio* and the film *Seven*. The final paper will be a reflection paper, relating the course materials to the student's own character. Further details on the papers will be forthcoming. Papers will be docked 1 full letter grade for every day, or part thereof, they are late.

There will be two exams for the course. Tests will consist primarily of short-answer and essay questions. There are *no* makeup exams, including rescheduled final exams. Study guides will be circulated prior to the exams.

Course Grade:

Class Participation	15%
First Exam	15%
Second Exam	15%
Virtue/Vice Paper	20%
<i>Purgatorio/Seven</i> Paper	20%
Reflection Paper	15%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale:

A	> 93%
A-	90-92%
B+	88-89%
B	83-87%
B-	80-82%
C+	78-79%
C	73-77%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	< 60%

Academic honesty:

This is a course concerned with moral character, and thus academic dishonesty in any form (e.g., plagiarism, copying reading questions, cheating on a test) will *not* be tolerated. The University of San Diego's policy on academic honest reads, in part, as follows:

Academic dishonesty, and allegations of academic dishonesty, are matters of University-wide concern in the same way that academic integrity is a matter of University-wide concern. Students bear the responsibility not only for their own academic integrity but also for bringing instances of suspected academic dishonesty to the attention of the proper authorities.... Penalties imposed by the instructor or supervisor with respect to a course or academic exercise may include: reduction in grade of the affected person in the course or exercise; the requirement that the affected person withdraw from the course or exercise; the requirement that all or part of the course or exercise be retaken; the requirement that the person engage in additional work in connection with the course or exercise.

Cheating on an assignment is grounds for failure of the course. I *will not* hesitate to fail you if you cheat.

Miscellaneous Information:

All students will utilize their USD email accounts. I will sometimes use email to communicate with the class as a whole. Thus, I expect you to check your email on a reasonable and regular basis. If you normally use a different email address, you will need to set your USD account to automatically forward all received mail to your preferred account.

Students are expected to treat all others in the class with the respect that is due.

Students will turn off all cell-phones during this course. The instructor gets to answer any phone that rings.

You should become familiar with my web-page, as it has links to E-Reserve and WebCT. Also note that email is probably the best way to communicate with me outside of class.

Rough Course Schedule (Subject to Change):

The current class schedule of readings and assignments can be found on the course WebCT site. Make sure you check this *regularly!*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading to be Discussed</u>
Background Materials		
8 September	Initial Assignment	—
11 September	<i>Obedience</i>	—
13 September	Course Overview	Syllabus
15 September	Virtue & Its Rivals	Mayo, "Virtue or Duty" (ER) Kant, "The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals" (ER)
18 September	Virtue & Its Rivals	Fieser, "Utilitarianism" (ER) Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (ER)
Moral Character, Human Nature and Happiness		
20 September	Moral Character	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> book II (ER)
22 September	Moral Character	Mumford, "Dispositions" (ER)
25 September	Moral Character	Jacobs, "Voluntariness and Habits" (ER)
27 September	Moral Character	Miller, "Social Psych & Virtue Ethics" (ER)
29 September	Human Nature	Stump, "Aquinas's Account of Freedom" (ER)
2 October	Human Nature	Weed, "Voldemort, Boethius, and the Destructive Effects of Evil" (ER)
4 October	Eudemonia	Devettere, "Happiness" (ER)

6 October	Class Discussion	Cahn, "The Happy Immoralist" (handout)
Aquinas on the Cardinal Virtues		
9 October	Aquinas on Virtue	Pope, "Overview of the Ethics of Aquinas" (EA/ER)
		Paper 1 due
11 October	Aquinas on Virtue	Westberg, "Good and Evil in Human Acts" (EA/ER)
13 October	The Cardinal Virtues	"The Divisions of Virtue" (handout)
16 October	Test 1	
18 October	Prudence	Keenan, "The Virtue of Prudence" (EA/ER)
20 October	No Class	(Fall Holiday)
23 October	Prudence	Aquinas on Prudence (CV)
25 October	Temperance	Cates, "The Virtue of Temperance" (EA/ER)
27 October	Temperance	Aquinas on Temperance (CV)
30 October	Fortitude	Houser, "The Virtue of Courage" (EA/ER)
1 November	Fortitude	Aquinas on Fortitude (CV)
3 November	Justice	Porter, "The Virtue of Justice" (EA/ER)
6 November	Justice	Aquinas on Justice (CV)
8 November	Justice	Aquinas on Justice (CV)
10 November	Make-Up	
13 November	Seven	—
15 November	Seven	—
Dante and the Seven Deadly Sins		
17 November	Background to Dante	Cardi, "How to Read Dante" (DC) Cardi, "Translator's Note" (DC)
20 November	Dante's World	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos I-IV (DC)
22 November	Dante's World	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos V-IX (DC)
24 November	No Class	(Thanksgiving)
27 November	Pride	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos X-XII (DC) Aquinas, <i>ST Ilallae</i> , 162.4 and 162.6 (WebCT)
		Paper 2 due
29 November	Envy	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos XIII-XIV (DC) Aquinas, <i>ST Ilallae</i> , 36.1 (WebCT)
1 December	Wrath	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos XV-XVII (DC) Aquinas, <i>ST Ilallae</i> , 158.1 (WebCT)
4 December	Sloth	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos XVIII-XIX (DC) Aquinas, <i>ST Ilallae</i> , 35.1 and 35.2 (WebCT)
6 December	Avarice	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos XX-XXI (DC) Tolstoy, "How Much Land..." (ER)
8 December	Gluttony	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos XXII-XXIV (DC) Aquinas, <i>ST Ilallae</i> , 148.1 (WebCT)
11 December	Lust	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos XXV-XXVII (DC)
		Paper 3 Due
13 December	Dante Wrap-Up	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos XXVIII-XXIII (DC)
Wrapping Up		
15 December	Make-Up	
20 December	Final Exam (2:00 PM)	