

PHIL 1306: Introduction to Ethics

Fall 2021 Syllabus
Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:30pm-3:45pm
Location: GR 2.530

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Course Description

What is a good life? What makes an action morally right? Is there a single true morality? In this course, we will study three central ethical theories that attempt answers to these questions—utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics, and the implications they have for specific ethical problems of contemporary interest. We will then reflect on the nature of disagreement among these normative ethical theories and what it means for whether there exists a single true morality. We will end the course by studying two special topics regarding human nature and the nature of emotions. Throughout the course, we will read historical and contemporary sources in Western and Eastern traditions, as well as empirical research from the sciences.

Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course. All readings will be provided electronically through *eLearning*.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Define key terms and recognize important problems that arise in ethical theorizing.
- Summarize these questions and proposed answers in your own words.
- Write an argumentative paper that presents either a cogent criticism or defense of an existing view within the philosophical literature.

- Develop novel philosophical views and arguments of your own.

Course Assignments

(1) Quizzes: 30%

There will be a quiz every other week. Each quiz will be available through *eLearning* for 24 hours, **opening on Wednesday at 7pm and closing on Thursday at 7pm**. You will have 10 minutes to complete each quiz. These quizzes will be brief and focus on the broad strokes of the readings discussed in lectures, rather than minute details from the texts. Each quiz will be worth 5 points. Your score from the lowest quiz will be dropped at the end of the semester. There will be no make-up quizzes.

Reading quizzes will be open on: **09/01, 09/15, 09/29, 10/13, 10/27, 11/10, 12/01**.

(2) Two Papers: 30%+40%

There will be two short writing assignments due on **10/08 and 12/10 at 7pm**. Each of them will ask you to reconstruct and critically evaluate a philosophical argument in 5 pages (double-spaced typescript). They will be submitted through *eLearning*. I will give you suggested topics at least two weeks before each due date. Further detailed instructions on how to write a philosophy paper will be provided during the writing workshop on **09/15**.

Grading Scale	A+ 98-100
	A 93-97
	A- 90-92
	B+ 87-89
	B 83-86
	B- 80-82
	C+ 77-79
	C 73-76
	C- 70-72
	D+ 67-69
	D 63-66
	D- 60-62
	F 00-59

Tentative Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
08/23	Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading
08/25	Utilitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bentham, <i>An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation</i>, chapters 1, 3, & 4 • Foot and Thomson, "Dilemmas"

08/30	Utilitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i>, chapter 2
09/01	Utilitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Godwin, “The Archbishop and the Chambermaid” • Rawls, “The Separateness of Persons” • Williams, “Jim and the Indians”
09/06		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor Day, No Class
09/08	Utilitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nozick, “The Experience Machine” • De Brigard, “If You Like It, Does It Matter if It’s Real”
09/13	Utilitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
09/15	Writing Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Reading
09/20	Deontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant, <i>Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals</i>, first section
09/22, 09/27	Deontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant, <i>Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals</i>, second section
09/29	Contemporary Perspectives on Utilitarianism and Deontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nagel, “Moral Luck”
10/04	Contemporary Perspectives on Utilitarianism and Deontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolf, “Moral Saints”
10/06	Virtue Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, Book 1
10/11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Cancelled
10/13	Virtue Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, Book 2
10/18, 10/20	Confucian Virtue Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analects</i>, selections (Introduction, 1.1-1.2, 1.4-1.7, 1.16, 2.1, 2.3-2.4, 2.7-2.8, 2.19-2.20, 3.4, 3.7, 3.22, 3.26, 4.1-4.6, 4.10, 4.14, 4.17, 5.7-5.10, 5.12, 5.26-5.28, 6.3-6.5, 6.11-6.12, 6.18, 6.20, 6.30, 7.5, 7.16, 7.22, 9.3, 9.11, 9.18, 10.1, 10.9, 10.14, 10.19, 10.22, 11.4, 11.7-11.13, 11.22-11.23, 12.1-12.5, 12.7, 12.10-12.12, 12.16-12.17, 12.19-12.20, 12.22, 13.3, 13.9-13.12, 13.15, 13.18, 13.23-13.24, 13.27, 14.5, 14.9, 14.12, 14.16-14.17, 14.21-14.22, 14.27-14.28, 14.35-14.36, 14.42, 15.5-15.6, 15.16, 15.18-15.21, 15.24, 15.33, 15.36, 16.1, 16.4-16.5, 16.9, 17.6, 17.13, 17.21, 19.6, 19.8)
10/25	Care Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilligan, “Images of Relationship”
10/27 11/01	Ethical Pluralism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zhuangzi</i>, selections
11/03	Ethical Pluralism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huang, “The Ethics of Difference in the <i>Zhuangzi</i>”

11/08, 11/10	Is Human Nature Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mencius</i>, 1A, 2A6-2A8, 4A17, 5A2, 6A1-20
11/15	Is Human Nature Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tomasello, <i>Why We Cooperate</i>, selections • Optional: Watch “A Lecture in Psychology: Origins of Human Cooperation and Morality,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOHxsZBD3Us
11/17	What is an Emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James, “What is an Emotion”
11/22, 11/24		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall Break No Class
11/29	What is an Emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon, “Physiology, Feelings, and Behavior
12/01, 12/06	What is an Emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nussbaum, “Emotions as Judgments of Value,” I-IV

Course Policies

Be Prepared for Class

In order to be successful, please read the assigned readings, ideally two or three times, and come to class prepared to discuss questions and comments pertaining to the readings.

Academic Integrity

The instructor expects from students a high level of academic honesty and will not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Violations will be reported. Please familiarize yourself with UTD’s policy: <https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/dishonesty/>

Late Paper/Extension/Make-Up Policy

Written assignments are due at the time and date specified in the assignment instructions. Papers submitted after the time specified, but on the due date may be penalized one-third letter grade, and will be penalized by an additional full letter grade for each day they are late after the date specified. Extensions for extenuating circumstances must be requested at least one week before an assignment is due.

Accommodation Policy

This course is designed with all students in mind, but we are not all the same. The instructor would like to work with each student so that the course and its requirements fit with their abilities. If you would like to discuss such matters, please contact the instructor during the first week of class. Under UTD policy, for an accommodation to be officially considered, a student must register with Student AccessAbility. Please contact their office here: <https://www.utdallas.edu/studentaccess/>