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PHIL 2103, Ethics, Syllabus

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CUNY New York City College of Technology

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COURSE INFORMATION

PHIL2103, Ethics

(3 credits, 3 hours)

Course description

An examination of the major ethical theories on what is morally right and wrong, and the meaning of moral concepts (e.g. the concepts of moral obligation, right, duty).

The main focus is upon ethical problems such as capital punishment, aid to the needy, abortion, etc.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should have a basic understanding of several influential theories of ethics, and be able to recognize when contemporary moral claims rely on important concepts in these theories, such as duty, consequences, or virtue. Students will also attain a general ability to apply these theories to moral issues and concerns, and should have detailed knowledge of the moral components of the applied ethics issues discussed in this course.

Required Texts:

This is an OER (Open Educational Resource) course. All required readings for this course are either open access, hosted on external websites, or available for free through the City Tech library to students of City Tech. See hyperlinks in the schedule.

COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT METHODS*
1. Attain a basic understanding of several influential theories of ethics: their features, presuppositions, and implications.	1. Paper, exams, class discussion
2. Be able to recognize when contemporary moral claims rely on important concepts in these theories, such as duty, consequences, or virtue.	2. Class discussion, paper, exams
3. Attain a general ability to apply ethical theories to moral issues.	3. Class discussion, paper, exams
4. Have detailed knowledge of the moral components of the applied ethics issues discussed in this course.	4. Class discussion, paper, exams

SCHEDULE

Class	Topic	Reading
1	Introduction	
2		Suikkanen, Jussi. 2014. " Pleasure ." Ch. 1 in <i>This Is Ethics: An Introduction</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. (Read pp. 3-20) .
3		Suikkanen, Jussi. 2014. " Happiness, Well-being, and the Meaning of Life ." Ch. 2 in <i>This Is Ethics: An Introduction</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. (Read pp. 25-44) .
4	Egoism	Suikkanen, Jussi. 2014. Ch. 3a in <i>This Is Ethics: An Introduction</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. (Read pp. 53-64) .
5	Contractarianism	Hobbes, Thomas. 1651. Leviathan , in the version by Jonathan Bennett* presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com . (Read chapters 13, 14, and 15, pgs 56-74) .
6		Suikkanen, Jussi. 2014. Ch. 3b in <i>This Is Ethics: An Introduction</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. (Read pp. 64-71) .
7		Hardin, Garrett. 1968. " The tragedy of the commons ." <i>Science</i> 162 (3859): 1243-1248. (Read the whole article) .
8	Utilitarianism	Mill, John Stuart. 1865. "What Utilitarianism Is." Ch. 2 in Utilitarianism , in the version by Jonathan Bennett* presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com . (Read pp. 4-17) .
9		Suikkanen, Jussi. 2014. " Consequentialism " and " Mill's Argument for Utilitarianism ." In <i>This Is Ethics: An Introduction</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. (Read pp. 80-90) .
10		Singer, Peter. 1974. " All animals are equal ." <i>Philosophic Exchange</i> 5 (1). (Read the whole article) .
11	Kantian Deontology	Kant, Immanuel. Selection from Chapter 2 of the Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals , in the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com . (Read from the first full paragraph on page 23 through page 30) .
12		Bowie, Norman E. " Kantian Ethics ." <i>Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society</i> , edited by Robert W. Kolb, vol. 3, SAGE Publications, 2008, pp. 1240-1244. (Read the whole article) .
13		Velleman, J David. 1999. " A Right of Self-Termination? " <i>Ethics</i> 109 (3): 606–28. (Read the whole article) .
14	Midterm Review	No reading
15	Midterm	No reading
16	Virtue Ethics	Aristotle. <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> . Translated by W.D. Ross. Kitchener, ON: Batoche Books, 1999. Read Book I, Sections 1, 2, 4, 5, 7; Book X, Sections 1-2.

17		Suikkanen, Jussi. 2014. " Virtue Ethics ," In <i>This Is Ethics: An Introduction</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. (Read pp. 124-133).
18		McDougall, Rosalind. " Parental Virtue: A New Way of Thinking About the Morality of Reproductive Actions ." <i>Bioethics</i> 21, no. 4 (2007-05): 181-90. (Read the whole article).
19		Hursthouse, Rosalind. 1991. " Virtue Theory and Abortion ." <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 20 (3): 223-246. (Read the whole article).
20	Feminist Ethics	Frye, Marilyn. 1983. " Oppression ." From <i>The politics of reality: Essays in feminist theory</i> . Berkeley: Crossing Press. (Read the whole article).
21		Miller, Sarah Clark. 2017. " Feminist Ethics ." In <i>Philosophy: Feminism</i> , edited by Carol Hay, 189-213. Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA. (Read the whole article).
22		Wendell, S. (1989). " Toward a feminist theory of disability ." <i>Hypatia</i> , 4(2), 104–124. (Read the whole article).
23	Care Ethics	Noddings, Nel. 2013. " Why care about caring? " In <i>Caring: A feminine approach to ethics & moral education</i> , 7-27. Berkeley, California: University of California Press. (Read the whole article).
24	Divine Command Theory	Suikkanen, Jussi. 2014. " Divine Command Theory " and " The Euthyphro Dilemma ." In <i>This Is Ethics: An Introduction</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. (Read pp. 151-158).
25		Paul, Pope John. 1995. <i>Encyclical letter Evangelium vitae</i> . Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. (Read sections 53-56, beginning on page 42).
26	Subjectivism and Relativism	Suikkanen, Jussi. 2014. " Subjectivism " and " Relativism " In <i>This Is Ethics: An Introduction</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. (Read pp. 141-151).
27		LaFollette, Hugh. 1991. " The truth in ethical relativism ." <i>Journal of Social Philosophy</i> 22 (1): 146-154. (Read the whole article).
28		Bishop, J. P. 2004. " Modern liberalism, female circumcision, and the rationality of traditions ." <i>The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy</i> 29 (4): 473-97. (Read the whole article).
29	Final Review	No reading
30	Final Exam	No reading

DUE DATES AND GRADE CONTRIBUTION

Item	% of grade	Due date
Participation	10%	Ongoing
Midterm	15%	XX
Homework	20%	Ongoing
Theory Application Paper 1	20%	XX
Theory Application Paper 2	20%	XX
Final exam	15%	XX
TOTAL	100%	

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Class Participation

Verbal discussion—such as taking and defending positions and asking or answering critical questions—is a vital part of the practice of philosophy. Consequently, the final grade for this class reflects this. Professor MacDougall takes note of student participation after class every day. Students must be present to participate, but for full credit must actively and verbally participate by asking critical questions, answering questions posed to the class, or volunteering ideas and thoughts relevant to class topics. Sometimes participation points can be gained by posting to an online discussion board or completing some other assignment (to be explained in class). Participation points can additionally be earned by contacting Dr. MacDougall by email or by arranging meetings during office hours. However, there is no way to get full credit for this segment of the class without active verbal participation. Exceptions may be granted in unusual circumstances by Dr. MacDougall if it is discussed at the beginning of the semester.

Homework and Quizzes

Homework and quiz grades are a large component of this class. In this class, we will learn to read philosophy works to discover the thesis and arguments of each assigned reading. Homework assignments may require students to identify these components of the assigned reading. Homework will be assigned a class ahead of time. If for some reason you must miss class, you can check the [Homework page](#) (found under “Assignments”) to see if any assignments have been announced.

The instructor will occasionally give comprehension quizzes on readings. Students will generally be forewarned about these a class in advance. Reading quizzes will usually cover major points or arguments from that day's readings.

Theory Application Papers

Each student is required to write two 1000+ word Theory Application Papers over the course of the semester.

You can see the requirements for [Theory Application Papers](#) under "Assignments."

Midterm

The midterm will cover material from the first half of the semester. Format will be explained during the midterm review session. You can find [exam study sheets](#) under "Assignments" when they become available.

Final

The final will be structured like the midterm. The final will not be primarily cumulative, but will instead focus on the content learned in the second half of the course. Students will be expected to remember some of the basic ideas learned in the first half of the course, of course. You can find [exam study sheets](#) under "Assignments" when they become available.

POLICIES

Attendance and Lateness

Attendance in class is not mandatory at CUNY. However, attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. Students receive a participation grade for the semester, and participation is not possible if students are not present.

Penalties and extensions:

Late assignments will be penalized in proportion to their tardiness, 3 points (out of 100) per academic day to a maximum of 10 points per week, and will receive no comments. No assignments will be accepted after the last regular class day before the final.

If for some reason you cannot meet a deadline, please discuss this with me well in advance of the due date. I will consider granting extensions on a case-by-case basis. The only exceptions to this "well-in-advance" rule will occur for bereavement or medical necessity (you will need to demonstrate evidence for

either of these. For example, you will need a note from a doctor explaining that you could not make it to class in the case of medical necessity).

Students requiring special accommodation:

If students require any special accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester. Students may also wish to contact the [The Student Support Services Program \(SSSP\)](#). I will be more than happy to make any special accommodations I can.

Academic Integrity Statement

The CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity is that academic dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension and expulsion. New York City College of Technology of the City University of New York is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of intellectual honesty and academic integrity. Intellectual honesty is the foundation of all academic and scholarly pursuits. Any form of academic dishonesty is viewed by the faculty as a serious offense which undermines the bonds of trust and honesty. Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using crediting and citing sources.