

Ethics

PHIL 2400 Section 01
MWF 8:30-9:20
Old Main 301

Spring 2019

Instructor: Dan Wack (daniel.wack@usu.edu)

Office Hours: 1-2:30 Wednesdays in Old Main 002A and **by appointment**

UTF: Megan Behan (behan.mj@gmail.com)

Course Description:

In this class, we will examine the three basic ethical theories: Utilitarianism and its more contemporary sister, consequentialism; Kantian ethics; and Aristotelian ethics, often characterized as virtue ethics. The aim is to understand what each of these theories holds forth as good action and how each theory justifies this conception of good action. Additionally, we will think about the ways in which the texts central to these theories encourage certain forms relating to oneself and to others. After reading the central text for each ethical theory, we will consider more recent ethical work by adherents or critics of these basic ethical theories. The goal is to see the ways these theories are still alive and actively shaping our conversations concerning global justice, what sort of lives we want to live, what sorts of limits and responsibilities we have regarding our fellow citizens' actions, and how best to relate to ourselves and to others.

Course Objectives:

1. *Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.* We will be reading three essential texts in the history of ethics and more recent ethical writings that expand upon or critique these fundamental ethical theories. The aim is to understand the arguments presented, to be able to evaluate the arguments' strengths and weaknesses, and to understand the assumptions and motivations that underlie the arguments made.
2. *Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.* We will be learning about the three basic ethical theories. By the end of the semester, you should know the core commitments that structure each theory, how these theories shape contemporary debates about good action, and how each of the three theories is distinguished from the other two.
3. *Develop a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values.* None of these theories gives us a clear list of what we should do and how we should do it. However, in studying these three basic ethical theories, the aim is to better understand your own conception of good action and a good human life. What beliefs and values support your commitment to telling the truth, being a good listener to a friend in need, etc.? The point is not to change your mind about what it is good to do, but to better understand why you take these kinds of actions to be good and to help you understand in what ways you want to relate to yourself and to others.

Required Texts:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Crisp (Cambridge)

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. Paton (Harper)

Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Hackett)

+ pdfs of all other readings will be available through Canvas

Course Requirements:

Students are required to read carefully assigned material, to attend class regularly, to participate in class discussion and to fulfill all homework assignments and exams. Regular class attendance and participation constitutes a small but important portion of the course grade; additionally, routine, thoughtful participation in class is the primary ground for rounding up, rather than down, any borderline course grades. Discussion and questions should be voiced as they arise in the course of the class. Students should prepare for class by identifying passages in the reading they are particularly intrigued or troubled by and be prepared to initiate discussion on them.

Grades: There are a total of 1000 points available to earn in this class. Grades are based on total points students earn over the course of the class.

A	95% or higher
A-	91%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	79%
C+	76%
C	72%
C-	68%
D+	64%
D	60%

Exams: There will be three exams throughout the semester worth 65% of the course grade (650 points). The exams will be take-home multiple choice questions and short answer questions. You can work together with your classmates on the exams, although each person needs to submit their own individual exam sheet. The first two exams are each worth 200 points; the third exam will require some longer written answers and is worth 250 points. The exams are due **at the beginning of class** on the due dates. We will be talking about the exams in class that day. This means late exams will receive 0 total points.

Pop quizzes and Homework Assignments: Every class period (except days when exams are due) a homework assignment will be collected. Each week, one of the homework assignments from that week will be graded, selected randomly by the professor. Each graded homework is worth 15 points; for the entire semester, homework is worth 22.5% of the course grade. The homework assignments must be printed out and submitted in class. Because the point of the homework assignments is to facilitate class discussion, homework not turned in during class (because of absence, etc.) will not be accepted. If the professor feels it is warranted, pop quizzes will be given and factored into the homework and class participation grades.

The remaining 12.5% of the course grade will be based on **active class participation**.

Optional Movie Screenings: There will be three movie screenings over the course of the class. These movies are optional for students. If you object to watching movies or movies of certain kinds, you need not attend the screenings and your grade in the class will not be affected. Students who do watch the movies will have the opportunity to respond to them in the short answer portions of the exams. Alternately, you will be able to complete the exams without answering any questions about the movies.

Policy on Extensions and Grading:

All reasonable requests for extensions will be considered up until noon, one day before the homework assignment is due. Extensions will not be granted after that except in the case of emergency. Emergencies include such things as death, serious injury or illness to some member of one's family, one's circle of friends, or one's person. Homework assignments handed after the day and time due without an extension will be considered late and will be docked one third a letter grade for each day late. Exams must be handed in prior to the beginning of class on the date due in all cases.

University Policies & Procedures:

Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. [Faculty Code Policy #403](#) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
 - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually;"
 - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
 - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;

- Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
- Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
- Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **Plagiarism:** representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: [ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity](#)

Sexual Harassment/Title IX

Utah State University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from acts of sexual misconduct and discrimination and to fostering respect and dignity for all members of the USU community. Title IX and USU Policy 339 (<https://www.usu.edu/policies/339/>) address sexual harassment in the workplace and academic setting.

The university responds promptly upon learning of any form of possible discrimination or sexual misconduct. Any individual may contact USU's Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity (AA/EO) Office for available options and resources or clarification, leading to an informal resolution of the matter. Further information and forms for reporting an incident to USU can be found here: <http://aaeo.usu.edu>

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Diversity Statement

Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Division of Student Affairs: <https://studentaffairs.usu.edu>, (435) 797-1712, studentservices@usu.edu, TSC 220
- Student Legal Services: <https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services>, (435) 797-2912, TSC 326,
- Access and Diversity: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu>, (435) 797-1728, access@usu.edu; TSC 315
- Multicultural Programs: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multiculture>, (435) 797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa>, (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
- Provost's Office Diversity Resources: <https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity>, (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:
The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State
University: <https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode>

Grievance Process

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: [Article VII](#).

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:

- [Student Conduct](#)
- [Student Code](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [USU Selected Academic Policies and Procedures](#)
- [USU Academic Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy](#)

Emergency Procedures

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.

Course Schedule:

Week 1

M 1.7: Introduction to Class, What Is Ethics?

W 1.9: Diamond, “Having a Rough Story about What Moral Philosophy Is”, Homework #1

F 1.11: Diamond, “Having a Rough Story about What Moral Philosophy Is”, Homework #2

Week 2

Aristotle and Virtue Ethics

M 1.14: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I.1-5, Homework #3

W 1.16: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I.7-13, Homework #4

F 1.18: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, Homework #5

Week 3

M 1.21: No Class—Martin Luther King Day

W 1.23: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III.1-5, Homework #6

F 1.25: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III.6-12, Homework #7

Week 4

M 1.28: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V, Homework #8

W 1.30: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VII.1-10, Homework #9

F 2.1: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VII.11-14, Homework #10

Week 5

M 2.4: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII, Homework #11

W 2.6: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IX, Homework #12

W 2.6: OPTIONAL SCREENING—*Rushmore* (Old Main 203, 7 pm)

F 2.8: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X, Homework #13

Week 6

M 2.11: Geach, “Good and Evil”, Homework #14

W 2.13: Foot, “Euthanasia”, Homework #15

F 2.15: Foot, “Euthanasia”, Homework #16

Week 7

M 2.18: No Class—Presidents’ Day

W 2.20: **Exam 1 Due**

F 2.22: No Class—Instructor out of town

Week 8

Kant and Neo-Kantianism

M 2.25: *Groundwork*, Preface, Homework #17

W 2.27: *Groundwork*, First Section, Homework #18

F 3.1: *Groundwork*, Second Section, Homework #19

Week 9

M 3.4: *Groundwork*, Second Section, Homework #20

W 3.6: Kant, “What Is Enlightenment?”, Homework #21

Th 3.7: OPTIONAL SCREENING—*The Philadelphia Story* (Old Main 203, 7 pm)

F 3.8: Kant, “What Is Enlightenment?”, Homework #22

Spring Break—3.11 through 3.15

Week 10

M 3.18: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Homework #23

W 3.20: Mills, “Kant and Race, Redux”, Homework #24

F 3.22: Mills, “Kant and Race, Redux”, Homework #25

Week 11

M 3.25: Foot, “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives”, Homework #26

W 3.27: **Exam 2 Due**

Utilitarianism and Consequentialism

F 3.29: *Utilitarianism*, Chapter I, Homework #27

Week 12

M 4.1: *Utilitarianism*, Chapter II, Homework #28

W 4.3: *Utilitarianism*, Chapter III, Homework #29

F 4.5: *Utilitarianism*, Chapter IV, Homework #30

Week 13

M 4.8: *Utilitarianism*, Chapters V, Homework #31

W 4.10: Singer, “Famine, affluence, and morality”, Homework #32

F 4.12: Anscombe, “Modern Moral Philosophy”, Homework #33

Week 14

M 4.15: Anscombe, “Modern Moral Philosophy”, Homework #34

W 4.17: Emerson, “Self-Reliance”, Homework #35

Th 4.18: OPTIONAL SCREENING—*Miller’s Crossing* (Old Main 203, 7 pm)

F 4.19: Wittgenstein, “Ethics”, Homework #36

Week 15

M 4.22: Final class discussion

F 4.26: **Exam 3 Due**