

1-2014

## PHL 110E.01: Introduction to Ethics

Paul Muench

*University of Montana - Missoula*, paul.muench@umontana.edu

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Philosophy 110E  
Prof. Paul Muench (pronounced "Minch")

University of Montana  
Spring 2014

**office:** LA 101B **office hours:** T 2:30-4, W 1:30-3:30, Th 2:10-3:30, or by appointment  
**mailbox:** LA 101 **email:** paul.muench@umontana.edu **office phone:** (406) 243-2351

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### **Introduction to Ethics**

Tuesday/Thursday, 9:40-11 a.m., MCG 210

This is a course on moral reasoning that examines a series of questions regarding the kind of persons we become and the lives we lead: What is happiness? What is a good life? How should I live? Should I fear death? What role should reason play in my life? What role should the emotions play? What is friendship? What is love? What is marriage? Course materials will be drawn from a mixture of traditional philosophical works together with some philosophically challenging works of literature and film.

#### **Course Requirements**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Exam #1 (Thursday, 2/27)                     | 30% |
| 2. Exam #2 (Thursday, 3/27)                     | 30% |
| 3. Final Exam (Thursday, 5/15, 8:00-10:00 a.m.) | 40% |

#### **Course Objectives**

After completing this course you should have acquired a working knowledge of several philosophy texts, deepened your understanding of a number of ethical questions, and increased your capacity for moral reasoning.

#### **Readings**

##### Required Books

These books are required and can be purchased at the UM bookstore (it may also be worth checking the prices at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com)).

1. Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Dover, ISBN 978-0486270623)
2. Thoreau, *Walden* (Dover, ISBN 978-0486284958)
3. Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (Vintage, ISBN 978-0307951335)

##### Additional Required Readings

PDFs of additional individual readings will be made available on Moodle. If you want to print out all of the required readings, I will also make available a PDF of the entire Course Packet. I suggest that you print this file at Campus Quick Copy and have it bound. Double-sided printing costs \$0.13 per page. The file is formatted to be printed double-sided with the pages being flipped on the short edge (landscape).

## Film Screenings

We will watch three films in this course:

1. *Vertigo* (1958; 128 min). Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, with James Stewart, Kim Novak, and Barbara Bel Geddes. **Wednesday, April 16**, 5:10 p.m., MCG 210.
2. *Gaslight* (1944; 114 min). Directed by George Cukor, with Ingrid Bergman, Charles Boyer, and Joseph Cotton. **Wednesday, April 23**, 5:10 p.m., MCG 210.
3. *The Philadelphia Story* (1940; 112 min). Directed by George Cukor, with Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, and James Stewart. **Wednesday, April 30**, 5:10 p.m., LA 11.

These films will also be on reserve in Mansfield Library.

## Teaching Assistant

John Stanfield is the teaching assistant for this course. Here is his contact information:

Email: [john.stanfield@umontana.edu](mailto:john.stanfield@umontana.edu)

Office: 252 Corbin Hall

Office Hours: Th 1:00-2:00 p.m. or by appointment

## Moodle

This course has a Moodle page (<http://umonline.umd.edu>). For more information on how to access Moodle, go to [http://umonline.umd.edu/student/moodle\\_help.php](http://umonline.umd.edu/student/moodle_help.php).

## Email

Any email that I send to the class will be sent to your university email address via Moodle.

## Accommodation for Disabilities

Whenever possible, and in accordance with civil rights laws, the University of Montana will attempt to provide reasonable modifications to courses for students with disabilities who request and require them. Please feel free to set up a time with me to discuss any modifications to this course you may require. For more information, contact Disability Services for Students (<http://life.umd.edu/dss/>), located in the Lommasson Center, room 154.

## Attendance, Participation, Class Etiquette

Attendance and Participation: Your attendance and participation are crucial for the success of this class and will play a significant role in determining whether or not our time together proves to be intellectually fulfilling. As many of you probably know, it is a university requirement that you attend all class meetings for courses in which you are enrolled (<http://www.umd.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html#attendance>). In my experience, students also get the most out of those classes that they regularly attend.

Etiquette: As a courtesy to me and to your fellow classmates, during class please do not (1) talk to a classmate while I or others are speaking; (2) consult other reading materials (such as newspapers, crossword puzzles, etc.) or play computer games; or (3) use your cell phone. Cell phones should be turned off or placed on vibrate—and should not be taken out during class. If you know that you will have to leave class early, please sit near an exit so you can minimize the disruption.

## **Exams**

This course has two exams during the term (each worth 30% of your final grade) and a final exam (worth 40% of your final grade): (1) Exam #1 will be held in class on Thursday, 2/27; (2) Exam #2 will be held in class on Thursday, 3/27; (3) the Final Exam will be held in class on Thursday, 5/15 from 8-10 a.m. Missed exams cannot normally be made up.

## **The Art of Reading**

Reading, like writing, is an art that can only be acquired through extensive and intensive practice. In general, you should plan to read each assignment for this course two times before you come to class: (i) read it through once to get a sense of the overall shape of the discussion and what the chief issues and questions seem to be; (ii) read it a second time, going more slowly and with an eye to how the different parts hang together. As Thoreau put it, “To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written. [...] [T]his only is reading, in a high sense, not that which lulls us as a luxury and suffers the nobler faculties to sleep the while, but what we have to stand on tip-toe to read and devote our most alert and wakeful hours to” (“Reading,” *Walden*).

## **Academic Dishonesty**

I will not tolerate cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty in this course. In addition to being a violation of the University of Montana Student Conduct Code ([http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php)), cheating harms your fellow students by giving you an unfair advantage, and harms you since you thereby fail to take yourself seriously. In general, the first instance of cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade (“F”) for the course and is also subject to University sanction.

# Schedule of Readings and Exams

(Subject to change with advance notice)

CP = Course Packet

## I. Having a Life

### Week 1

T 1/28      **Introduction**

Th 1/30      **Ignorance and Self-Deception**

(1) Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, 1-22

(2) Plato, "Socrates on Ignorance," *Apology*, 17a-24b (CP #1)

### Week 2

T 2/4      **Life and Death**

Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, 22-53

Th 2/6      **Happiness**

(1) Aristotle, "Happiness," *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a15-1101b9 (CP #2)

(2) Annas, "Making Sense of My Life as a Whole" (CP #3)

### Week 3

T 2/11      **Desire, Work, Discontent**

(1) Plato, "Socrates on Desire," *Symposium*, 199c-201c (CP #4)

(2) Thoreau, "Economy," *Walden*, 1-13

Th 2/13      **Clothing and Shelter**

Thoreau, "Economy" (cont.), *Walden*, 13-26

### Week 4

T 2/18      **An Experiment in Living**

Thoreau, "Economy" (cont.), *Walden*, 26-52

Th 2/20      **Body and Spirit**

(1) Swift, "The Lady's Dressing Room" (CP #5)

(2) Thoreau, "Higher Laws," *Walden*, 136-144

### Week 5

T 2/25      **Simplicity and Self-Respect**

(1) Thoreau, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," *Walden*, 53-64

(2) Didion, "On Self-Respect" (CP #6)

Th 2/27      **Exam #1**

## II. Self Disturbance

### Week 6

T 3/4

#### **What is Anger?**

- (1) Seneca, "On Self-Control" (CP #7)
- (2) Seneca, *On Anger* #1 (CP #8)

Th 3/6

#### **Can Anger Be Controlled?**

Seneca, *On Anger* #2 (CP #9)

### Week 7

T 3/11

#### **What is Death?**

- (1) Kierkegaard, "What it Means to Die" (CP #10)
- (2) Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus" (CP #11)

Th 3/13

#### **Should We Fear Death?**

- (1) Epicurus and Lucretius, "On Fear of Death" (CP #12)
- (2) Nussbaum, "Mortal Immortals" (CP #13)

### Week 8

T 3/18

#### **What is it Like for Fear to Govern How We Live?**

Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (CP #14)

Th 3/20

#### **Can We Overcome the Fear of Death Without Losing Our Humanity?**

- (1) Hemingway, "Short Happy Life" (cont.)
- (2) Hemingway, Excerpt from *Men at War* (CP #15)
- (3) Jackson, "Point of View, Distancing, and Hemingway's 'Short Happy Life'" (CP #16)

### Week 9

T 3/25

#### **Socrates on Anger and the Fear of Death**

Plato, *Apology*, 28b-42a; *Phaedo*, 114d-118a (CP #17)

Th 3/27

#### **Exam #2**

### Week 10

T 4/1

#### **No Class (Spring Break)**

Th 4/3

#### **No Class (Spring Break)**

### III. Relationships

#### Week 11

T 4/8

##### **What is Friendship?**

Aristotle, "Friendship," *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155a-1162a34 (CP #18)

Th 4/10

##### **Why Do Friendships End? What is it to Be a Friend to Oneself? How Many Friends Should We Have?**

Aristotle, "Friendship" (cont.), 1162a35-1172a15 (CP #18)

#### Week 12

T 4/15

##### **What is Sex?**

(1) Nagel, "Sexual Perversion" (CP #19)

(2) Rhees, "Sexuality" (CP #20)

W 4/16

**Film Screening: *Vertigo*** (5:10 p.m., MCG 210)

Th 4/17

##### **What is Desire? What is Fantasy? (Discuss *Vertigo*)**

(1) Wood, "*Vertigo*" (CP #21)

(2) Klevan, "*Vertigo*: Accounting for Melodrama" (CP #22)

#### Week 13

T 4/22

##### **What is Marriage?**

(1) Tolstoy, "Alyosha the Pot" (CP #23)

(2) Milton, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (CP #24)

(3) Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Act I, 1-28

W 4/23

**Film Screening: *Gaslight*** (5:10 p.m., MCG 210)

Brooks, "The Uses of Melodrama" (CP #25)

Th 4/24

##### **What is Melodrama? (Discuss *Gaslight*)**

(1) Cavell, "Melodrama and Comedy" (CP #26)

(2) Cavell, "Naughty Orators: Negation of Voice in *Gaslight*" (CP #27)

(3) Cavell, "*Gaslight*" (CP #28)

#### Week 14

T 4/29

##### **What Are the Costs of Inequality in a Marriage?**

(1) Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Acts II and III, 29-72

(2) Ibsen, "Alternative Ending to *A Doll's House*" (CP #29)

W 4/30

**Film Screening: *The Philadelphia Story*** (5:10 p.m., MCG 210)

Th 5/1

##### **What is Remarriage? (Discuss *The Philadelphia Story*)**

(1) Cavell, "Ibsen" (CP #30)

(2) Cavell, "The Importance of Importance" (CP #31)

(3) Cavell, "*The Philadelphia Story*" (CP #32)

Week 15

T 5/6

**Catch Up; Review**

Th 5/8

**Conclusion**

Week 16

Th 5/15

**Final Exam**

Where: MCG 210

When: 8:00-10:00 a.m.

What to bring: Blue Book and Pen/Pencil