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PHL 110E.02: Introduction to Ethics

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Philosophy 110: Introduction to Ethics

Professor Matthew Strohl

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Course description:

This course is a broad introduction to moral philosophy. We will cover topics in metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Readings will be drawn from both historical and contemporary sources.

Required textbook:

Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues, 5th edition, ed. Steven M. Cahn and Peter Markie, Oxford University Press 2009

Grading and exams:

There will be two in-class short answer exams and a final exam. The first 2 exams will each be worth 30% of your grade. The final exam will be worth 40%. It will be cumulative but will emphasize material from the last part of the course.

It is a massive pain to give make-up exams for a class this large. Please be considerate to us and do your best to take the exams when they are scheduled. Unless you receive permission from me at least two weeks in advance, make-up exams will be given only in the case of a legitimate emergency.

Documentation of your excuse is required in order to make up an exam. Exams not taken, for any reason, will receive a zero. *If you have a problem, contact me as soon as you know you have a problem!*

A note about attendance and etiquette:

We will not be keeping track of lecture attendance, because it would be a giant hassle and because we'd like to treat you like adults. The class meets at 8:10AM. I know it's going to be hard for some of you to drag yourselves out of bed in time. It's not optimal for me, believe me, but someone's got to teach at 8:10, and this time it's me. You made a choice to register for this class, you are responsible for showing up. If you don't show up consistently you are going to have a very hard time passing the exams. It would be a very good idea to make a friend or two in the class so you can get notes on the rare occasion that you miss class. You may ask your TA for notes A TOTAL OF THREE TIMES AT MOST, unless there are

mitigating circumstances, in which case I would consider giving your TA permission to give you notes more often. Please come talk with me if you have a problem.

Please do not text during class. Please do not mess with your phone during class. I do not want to see your phone during class! Is that clear enough?? I get the sense sometimes that students feel like they become invisible when they're in a class this large and I can't see them texting. False. I can see it. I don't lecture from notes. I speak extemporaneously, and that takes a lot of focus. When I see someone messing with their phone, it distracts me. Sometimes I completely lose my train of thought and it throws me off my game. Perhaps I'm too sensitive to such things, but in any case, it's real. So I'm asking you nicely to please keep your phone out of sight for the 80 minutes you're in my class. I know some of you are going to do it anyways, and I'm already annoyed. I will call you out in an embarrassing manner if necessary.

Also, **don't have conversations with each other while I am speaking. Even if you are sitting in the back.**

I prefer that you not use a laptop in class, but if you really need one to take notes, please don't sit right in the front.

Academic misconduct:

You are strictly held to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu.SA>). The in-class exams are closed-note: you may not consult anything but your own mind in order to answer questions on the exam. You may not use cell-phones, or any electronic devices to aid you, nor fellow students, nor fellow students' answers on exams, etc. You will receive no credit for any exam that you cheat on. Your conduct will also be reported to the Dean.

Special needs:

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours if you need to make special arrangements. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services. If you are going to take the final at DSS, please schedule it well in advance, as the time slots fill up quickly. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours if you need to make special arrangements. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at www.umt.edu/dss/

Readings:

1/28 Hi, I'm Matt, here's your syllabus, see you Thursday.

1/30 Plato, *Republic*, Book II, 357a-369c

2/4 Plato, *Republic*, Book IV

2/6 cont.

2/11 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1

2/13 cont.

2/18 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2

2/20 cont.

2/25 Hobbes, *Leviathon*, Chapters XIII-XIV

2/27 Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism"

3/4 **FIRST EXAM**

3/6 Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*

3/11 Mill, *Utilitarianism* II

3/13 Mill, *Utilitariansim* III

3/18 Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism"

3/20 Kant, *Groundwork* I

3/25 cont.

3/27 Kant, *Groundwork* II (Warning: extremely difficult)

4/1-4/3 SPRING BREAK

4/8 cont.

4/10 cont.

4/15 **SECOND EXAM**

4/17 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 3, 4, 11, 24, 40

4/22 Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

4/24 Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

4/29 Tooley, "Abortion and Infanticide"

5/1 English, "Abortion and the Concept of a Person"

5/6 Feiberg, "Abortion"

5/8 REVIEW

Final exam: 8-10am, Wednesday, May 14th in Urey Lecture Hall