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PHL 110E.02: Introduction to Ethics

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Philosophy 110: Introduction to Ethics

Professor Matt 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, 4th edition, ed. Steven M. Cahn and Peter Markie, Oxford University Press 2009

Grading and exams:

There will be 4 short answer exams. The first 3 exams will each be worth 20% of your grade. The first 3 exams will be non-cumulative. The final exam will be worth 40%. It will be cumulative but will emphasize material from the last part of the course.

Your grader, Alex Hibala, will hold review sessions to help you prepare for exams.

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:

I will not be keeping track of attendance, because it would be a giant hassle and because I'd like to treat you like adults. It's just two hours and forty minutes a week and the material is interesting. Take advantage of the opportunity. Come to class. You'll do a lot better if you come, I promise.

Also, please remember to turn off or at least silence your cell phone, and ***please don't read or send text messages or have a laptop on during class*** (unless you need to use a laptop because of a documented special need). I get the sense sometimes that students feel like if they're surrounded by a lot of other students they become invisible and I can't see them texting. False. I can see it and it's extremely distracting. 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.

If you need to leave early, please sit somewhere where you can leave without causing a commotion.

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. 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. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours to discuss the details. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at www.umt.edu/dss/

Readings:

Unless otherwise noted, read the entire selection

Unit 1: Ancient and Modern Ethics: Are Morality and Self-Interest Opposed?

1/24 Hi, I'm Matt, here's your syllabus, see you Thursday.

1/26 Plato, *Republic*, Book II, 357a-369c, Book IV

1/31 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, sections 4, 5, 7, and 13

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

2/7 Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus," "Leading Doctrines."

2/9 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters XIII-XIV; Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism"

2/14 Butler, *Fifteen Sermons* XI (beginning on pg. 236); review for exam

2/16 Exam on Unit 1

Unit 2: Utilitarianism and Kantianism

2/21 Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*

2/23 Mill, *Utilitarianism* II, III, V (only worry about pg. 355 for Chapter V)

2/28 Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism"

3/1 Kant, *Groundwork* I

3/6 Kant, *Groundwork* II (warning: difficult)

3/8 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 3, 4, 11, 24; review for exam

3/13 Exam on Unit 2

Unit 3: Applied Ethics

3/15 Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"

3/20 Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

3/22 Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion", Marquis, "An Argument that Abortion is Wrong"

3/27 Foot, "Killing and Letting Die"; Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"

4/3-4/5 Spring break. No class.

4/10 Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"; Arthur, "Famine Relief and the Ideal Moral Code"

4/12 Wolf, "Moral Saints"; review for exam

4/17 Exam on Unit 3

Unit 4: More Applied Ethics

4/19 Taurek, "Should the Numbers Count?"; Parfit, "Innumerate Ethics"

4/24 Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"

4/26 Sober, "Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism"

5/1 Shue, "Torture"

5/3 Nagel, "Moral Luck"; review for final

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 8th, 8-10am (same room class meets in)