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PHIL 200.01: Ethics - The Great Traditions

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ETHICS: THE GREAT TRADITIONS

I. Intent of the Course

The academic intent of the course is to teach the three standard versions of contemporary secular ethics and so to equip the student with ethical literacy--the ability to recognize the origin and context of ethical arguments and the ability to convey one's ethical convictions clearly and circumspectly. This is the formal and testable side of the course. The informal and moral aspect that should not and cannot really be tested is the common endeavor to become better people.

II. Readings

We will read the texts in the following order and spend about two weeks on each.

Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, Part I.

Plato, Phaedrus.

Pirsig, Zen, Part II.

Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals.

Pirsig, Zen, Part III.

Mill, Utilitarianism.

Pirsig, Zen, Part IV.

III. Requirements

There will be a 20 minute test every Friday. The first will be on **Friday, September 20**. Each test will consist of (a) three questions that will test your command of the course content and are to be answered with brief statements of about 30 words total for each question; (b) a question that asks you to identify the philosophical point that has been explained in class regarding a passage taken from the readings. It is to be answered in about 30 words; and (c) an essay question to be answered in 150 to 200 words. The answer to (b) will be graded P (passing) or U (unsatisfactory). The answer to (c) will be graded P, U, or E (excellent). A P will raise the grade for (a) by one step (e.g. C- to C); U will lower it by one step (e.g. C- to D+); E will raise it by two steps (e.g. B to A-).

On the day of the final, **Thursday, December 19, at 8:00 AM**, there will be a final test of (a) twelve course content questions, nine drawn from previous tests, three on the material of the preceding week, (b) an essay question. The final test will have the weight of three ordinary tests. To pass the course, you have to pass the final.

You can miss one test (except the final test). If you take all the tests, the lowest grade (or one third of the final if that is your lowest grade) will be dropped. You can make up a test missed only (a) for medical reasons if you provide a statement from your physician or the Health Service, (b) if you are away on University business, (c) if there is a real hardship. Otherwise you will receive an F for a missed test.

IV. Note

****September 23** is the last day to add and drop courses by Cyberbear.

***October 14** is the last day to add and drop classes and change the grading option by paper form.

Office Hours:

Borgmann: MWF, 9:10-10:00 AM and by appointment. LA 149.

Phone and messages: 243-2792.

Please let us know if you have a disability so that we can make accommodations.