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PHL 110E.02: Introduction to Ethics

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Philosophy 110E Ethics Syllabus

This syllabus is a resource for information regarding class policies. I expect you to consult this syllabus if you have a question about the class policies. If you have a question about class policies that isn't addressed in the syllabus, then please feel free to ask me.

I will be communicating with you via your UM email account, especially for any unexpected changes that may come up with schedule, reading materials, etc. If you find the UM email interface unappealing, I suggest you forward that email to an account that you prefer. I will expect that you check your email daily.

Office hours and contact information

- Professor Armond Duwell
- Office: LA 154
- Email: armond.duwell@umontana.edu
- Office hours: MW9:10-10, F10-11, and by appointment if office hours cannot be attended out of necessity.

Technology Policy

This will be (save for what I need for presenting course materials) a tech-free classroom. That means all phones need to be turned off and put away. No laptop computers will be allowed either. If you want to take notes, and I highly recommend it, you should use a notebook. Deviations from this policy will be accepted only if it is recommended by DSS.

Summary

This course is an introduction to the major approaches to the study of ethics in the Western tradition. We will look at some classical texts from the history of philosophy as well as some of the most influential texts from the last 30 years. Our objectives are to get a sense of the major approaches to ethics, but most importantly learn how to critically evaluate the quality of moral arguments, even those whose conclusions we might agree with.

Required Texts

- Rachels and Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* 5th edition.

Grading

15% reading quizzes, 15% syntheses, 39% midterms, 31% final

I will be posting reading quizzes on Moodle. They will generally be due before the class in which we will start discussing the readings. The quizzes are meant to encourage you to do the readings before class, as well as develop your reading skills. They will not probe deep understanding, but familiarity with the main points of the reading. You may not work collaboratively on the reading exams, but the reading exams are open book.

You will be writing three syntheses in for the course. Syntheses are meant to help you check if you understand the material. Understanding is generally defined as the ability to summarize, infer from, generalize, and/or transfer your knowledge of the material. Syntheses are also opportunities to develop your writing skills.

In a synthesis, you are expected to (1) summarize at least one view covered since the last synthesis, or in case of the first, a view discussed since the beginning of class; (2) summarize the argument behind that view, as well as its strengths and weaknesses; (3) relate it to your own experience or knowledge.

- A range (2.7-3): The synthesis contains an accurate reconstruction of the views and an accurate and charitable reconstruction of the arguments supporting these views. It contains the strengths and weaknesses of these views/arguments. The student demonstrates his/her capacity to make insightful connections between new knowledge and personal experience and/or previously acquired knowledge. The synthesis is clear, written in proper English, and proofread.
- B range (2.4-2.6): The synthesis contains a reasonably accurate reconstruction of the views, as well as a charitable reconstruction of the arguments supporting these views. It includes a reasonably accurate analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of these arguments. The student demonstrates his/her capacity to make connections between new knowledge and his/her personal experience and/or previously acquired knowledge. The synthesis is written in proper English and proofread.
- C range (2.1-2.3): The synthesis presents the views and supporting arguments, their weaknesses and strengths, but does so either not accurately, or in an incomplete manner. The student makes some connections between new knowledge and personal experience and/or previously acquired knowledge, but without articulating these connections properly. The paper is written in proper English and proofread.
- D range (1.8-2.0): The synthesis misconstrues the view in a significant respect or it provides a poor summary of the views and arguments offered or it fails to make connection between new knowledge and the previous knowledge and / or previous experience or it is not written in proper English.
- F (1.5): The synthesis misconstrues the view in a significant respect and it provides a poor summary of the views and arguments offered and it fails to make connection between new knowledge and previous experience and/or previous knowledge.

Missed synthesis assignments may be excused in cases of illness or other extreme circumstances. Relevant documentation is required in such cases. Delay for turning in the assignment may be given if documentation of illness or extreme circumstances is provided.

There will be four exams. The first three exams will each be worth 13% of your grade. The first three exams are non-cumulative. They cover the material since the last exam, or in case of the first exam the material since the beginning of class. The questions on these exams will be multiple choice or short answer questions. The final exam will be worth 31%. It will be cumulative. As with the other tests, it will be multiple choice and short answer questions.

Make up exams will be given only in extreme circumstances, family death, severe illness, severe car accident, etc. *Proof of extreme circumstances is required in order to make up an exam.* Oversleeping is not an acceptable excuse, nor busses running late, stuck in detox, etc. Take extra precautions on exam days to avoid these problems. 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!*

Please note that the dates for the first three exams are tentative, they may be moved up or delayed. I expect you to be available for every class period. If you have some concerns about particular dates in class, e.g. wedding, travel for Griz sports, etc, please let me know at the beginning of the semester.

The date for the final exam is not tentative. It is 8:00-10:00 on 12/18. I will not allow people to take the exam early, and I will not reschedule the final exam because you have made travel plans in conflict with the course.

For all exams, you are expected to remain in the exam room until you are completed with your exam.

Attendance and Etiquette

Attendance is crucial in this course. It is impossible to learn philosophy without doing it, i.e. engaging in philosophical discussion. You are expected to arrive on time, stay for the duration of class and participate in discussion. If you have to leave early, please tell me at the beginning of class and sit close to the exit to minimize the disturbance to the class. Cell phones should be turned off and put away for the duration of class as well as laptops. You will be asked to leave if you are doing anything not relevant for class, e.g. reading the newspaper, sleeping, doing work for other classes, etc.

If you do have to miss a class, it is YOUR responsibility to find out what was covered, learn that material, and prepare for the next class appropriately. Moodle will be the primary means by which I convey what material is covered and what you are responsible for preparing.

Academic Misconduct

You are strictly held to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu.SA>). The 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 related to those disabilities. 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/. Please inform me if you have any accessibility issues.

Drop policy

I adhere to the UM policy on dropping courses. Between the first and 45th instructional day, it is entirely your decision whether to drop the course or not. If you want to drop course between the 46th instructional day and the last instructional day prior to finals week, and you want me to recommend the drop, you will have to provide reasons that you should be allowed to drop the course. Acceptable reasons demonstrate that some (post 45th instructional day) circumstance *out of your control* interferes with your ability to complete the course. Simply not having done the work required of you, or belief that you do not think that you can get the grade you want, or that you need such and such grade to maintain your financial aid, are not sufficient reasons for me to recommend dropping the course after the 45th instructional day, though they might be prior to the 45th day.

Tentative Schedule

This schedule IS GOING TO CHANGE. For the most up to date class information, look on Moodle. You are held responsible for staying up to date in class even if you were absent. If you are absent, please contact me as soon as possible to know what your current responsibilities are.

The readings in this class are not that lengthy, that said, *you are expected to read everything at least twice!* Once before the class that we will discuss it in, and once after class.

Week 1

- Introduction to course, topics, syllabus, etc.
- Office hours (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQq1-_ujXrM)
- Stokes on Opinion <https://theconversation.com/no-youre-not-entitled-to-your-opinion-9978>

Week 2 9/4-9/8

- McIntyre: Chapter 1 (available on Moodle)
- Arguments (available on Moodle)
- EMP1: What is morality? (available on Moodle)

Week 3 9/11-9/15

- Scientific Studies in the News (<http://www.rollingstone.com/tv/news/watch-john-oliver-call-out-bogus-scientific-studies-20160509>)
- Critical Thinking Qualia Soup (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OLPL5p0fMg>)
- EMP 2: Cultural Relativism (available on Moodle)
- Tolerance (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsbwDF3MAbk>)
- **Synthesis 1**

4 9/18-9/22

- Judging like cases alike (Moodle reading)
- Singer, Norross, and Machen (Moodle readings)
- Food of a nation (http://mosthorriblethingever.com/team_impact/)
- *Food Inc.* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnfE721NKDw&feature=youtu.be>)
- Optional: *KGVO Talk Balk* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kETXGnFvqvE>)
- **Exam 1 Friday 9**

Week 5 9/25-9/29

- EMP 4: Morality and religion
- Leiser (reading on Moodle)
- Tucker on religion and climate change: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARINaUM4Oc>)
- Optional: Climate change statements from world religions (<http://fore.yale.edu/climate-change/statements-from-world-religions/>)

Week 6 10/2-10/6

- EMP 7: The utilitarian approach
- Singer (on Moodle)
- Film: *A Death of One's Own*

Week 7 10/9-10/13

- Rachels and Doerflinger (on Moodle)
- Oregon's Death with Dignity Act
([https://public.health.oregon.gov/ProviderPartnerResources/EvaluationResearch/DeathwithDignityAct/Pages/ar-i\(ndex.aspx\)](https://public.health.oregon.gov/ProviderPartnerResources/EvaluationResearch/DeathwithDignityAct/Pages/ar-i(ndex.aspx)))
- EMP 8: The debate over utilitarianism
- **Synthesis 2**

Week 8 10/16-10/20

- The Ones who walk Away from Omelas (<http://engl210-deykute.wikispaces.umb.edu/file/view/omelas.pdf>)
- Extreme Measures (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0116259/>)
- Tuskegee Experiments
(<http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/classes/33d/projects/medicine/The%20Tuskegee%20Syphilis%20Study.htm>)
- **Exam 2 Friday 10/20**

Week 9 10/23-10/27

- EMP 9: Are there absolute moral rules?
- EMP 10: Kant and respect for persons
- The ferry scene *The Dark Night*
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4GAQtGtd_0)
- Kant on lying (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_uUEaeqFog)

Week 10 10/30-11/3

- Film: *Dead Man Walking*
- Pojman (on Moodle)

Week 11 11/6-11/8

- Death Penalty: Fact Sheet
(<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/FactSheet.pdf>)
- DP in the world
(<http://www.law.columbia.edu/magazine/interactive/1888/interactive-map-death-penalty-stances-around-the-world>)
- Eye Witness Mis-identification
(<http://www.innocenceproject.org/causes/eyewitness-misidentification/>)

- Informants (<http://www.innocenceproject.org/causes/incentivized-informants/>)
- Defense (<http://www.innocenceproject.org/causes/inadequate-defense/>)
- Improper Forensic Science (<http://www.innocenceproject.org/causes/unvalidated-or-improper-forensic-science/>)
- False Confessions (<http://www.innocenceproject.org/causes/eyewitness-misidentification/>)
- Government misconduct (<http://www.innocenceproject.org/causes/government-misconduct/>)
- Bright (on Moodle)
- **Synthesis 3**

Week 12 11/13-11/17

- The Courage to Care (<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/courage-care>)
- The Trolley Problem (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOpf6KcWYyw>)
- EMP 11: Feminism and the ethics of care
- EMP 12: The ethics of virtue

Week 13 11/20

- **Exam 3 Monday 11/20**
- No class on Wednesday or Friday (Thanksgiving).

Week 14 11/27-12/1

- Is Race Real? (<https://vimeo.com/107631714>)
- Everyday Racism (<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/video/2015/mar/18/everyday-racism-what-should-we-do>)
- EMP 6: The idea of a social contract
- King, Letter from the Birmingham city jail (on Moodle)

Week 15 12/4-12/8

- Thomson and Marquis (on Moodle)
- Dixon (on Moodle)
- Superbad clip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vG0mf6UYO4g>)
- Tea Consent (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8>)

Week 16 12/11

- Review

Week 17 12/14

- **Final Exam on 8:00-10:00 on Monday 12/18**