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PHL 110E.03: Introduction to Ethics

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PHIL 110: Introduction to Ethics, Velasco

Class Info and Office Hours:

- Dr. Melodie Velasco Stenger, melodie.stenger@mso.umt.edu (Please call me Dr. Velasco or Dr. V)
- **Office:** Liberal Arts Building, Room 157
- **Office Hours:** 10:30am-11:30am MW (no appointment needed) and by appointment (most usually during evenings at Break Espresso, and occasionally 9:30-10:30 MWF on campus.)
- Teaching Assistant: Toryn Rogers, toryn.rogers@umconnect.umt.edu (Toryn)
- **Office Hours:** Fridays 9:50-11:50 Liberal Arts Building, Room 138a; Fridays 1-3, Liberal Arts Building Room 101

Course Description:

This course begins with the meta-ethical task of defining and situating the Self via the work of various essayists, creative writers, philosophers, and psychologists (including Virginia Woolf, Garcia Marquez, Camus, Erik Erikson, William Perry, Descartes, Hegel, and Lawrence Kohlberg). It then takes up four major ethical theories (virtue, deontological, consequentialist, and care ethics) as presented by Carol Gilligan, Aristotle, Kant, and J.S. Mill. The central line of questioning connecting both halves of the course is how one's ethical outlook relates to one's understanding of both Self and Other. Limited consideration will be given to contemporary ethical debates, though there will be some focus on animal and environmental ethics. This is a lecture course with a conversational tone that makes considerable use of Moodle. Weekly reading journal assignments ("Spark Points") and tests on alternating weeks are required.

Learning Outcomes:

As an introductory *philosophy* course, this course will coach students to attain, at minimum, an ability to *read* exceedingly complicated and nuanced texts; this ability is not presupposed. The excellent student, however, will surpass this skill if she attains the ability to *write* in such a way that her complicated and nuanced understanding—her *reading* of the text—is communicated in a clear and persuasive fashion.

As an introductory *ethics* course, this course uses the self-development of the traditional college-aged student within broader society as its touchstone. The excellent student will discover that the sensitivity and responsibility required by successful reading and writing is also required by successful ethical exchange between self and society.

At the conclusion of this course, the successful student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate habits of a successful reader (vocabulary, marginalia, Spark Points).
2. List and define the chief parts of a Problem Synopsis and an Argument Analysis;
3. Define each of the Key Terms identified in each lesson's Text Map;
4. Recognize and identify the outline of an argument within a text;

The excellent student will, in addition, be able to:

1. Critique the argument or a sub-argument in a given portion of text;
2. Formulate a counter-argument in response to a given text's argument;
3. Construct a clean and organized prose presentation of a counter-argument, once formulated.

Texts:

I **require** the following editions so that everyone has the same text. **Do not wait to purchase these;** do it now.

- Aristotle, and Joe Sachs. [*Nicomachean Ethics*](#). Newburyport, Mass.; Cardiff: Focus ; Drake, 2003. ISBN 978-1-58510-035-4

- Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Reissue edition. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993. ISBN 978-0-674-44544-4
- Kant, Immanuel. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: With On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns*. Translated by James W. Ellington. 3rd edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993.
- Mill, J.S. *On Liberty*. Edited by Elizabeth Rapaport. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1978.

PDFs of additional individual readings will be made available on Moodle. ***I require that you print these pdfs instead of trying to read them on the computer.*** To facilitate this, I have compiled all readings into one file that you can easily print all at once.

Requirements:

Spark Points (25% of final grade):

Upon completing each reading assignment, each student shall post at least one and not more than three Points on the appropriate Moodle discussion board, usually before Saturday at 11:55pm. In no more text than will fit on one side of a 3x5 card, each SP should contain three parts: A **quotation** from the reading assignment that grabbed the student's attention, typed in full; a specific **citation** that allows that quotation to be located in the text, and a **question** about or **response** to the quotation.

Grading: Only Points with 3 parts (quotation, citation, response) will be graded. One Point per assignment earns a C; 2, a B; 3, an A. *Please note that these are graded not on intellectual brilliance, but on completion as per the directions.* Those who wish to pass the class must, at the very least, (a) complete their reading, and (b) post their Spark Points. Those who wish to write a final paper in lieu of a final exam should take care with this assignment, since every good paper is founded upon a solid Spark Point.

Tests (50% of final grade):

These closed-note, technology-free Tests will consist of:

- a. Five to ten multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank questions along with space to detail or explain your answers.
- b. An essay question about the current reading assignment, to be answered in ~200 words.

Grading: Part (a) will together receive a stepped letter grade (A, A-, B+...); part (b) will be graded as **P** (increasing the grade of part (a) by one step, e.g. from a B to a B+), **U** (decreasing the grade of part (a) by one step, e.g. from a B to a B-), or **E** (increasing the grade of part (a) by two steps, or one full letter.)

Final Exam (25% of final grade):

During Final Exam week, on *December 19th from 8-10am*, a Final Exam will be administered. The Final Exam will consist of approximately 75% questions taken from previous exams and/or study guides. The remaining questions, including questions drawn from the last week of reading assignments and a final, comprehensive essay question, will be new.

Grading: The Final Exam will receive a traditional stepped letter grade with the final essay question raising or lowering that grade as on the Tests.

Policies:

The Right to Write:

Students may submit a letter of request by *November 27th* petitioning for the chance to write a Philosophical Paper (due *December 17th* at 11:55p.m.) instead of taking the Final Exam. This letter should consist of:

- a. The Spark Point upon which the paper shall be based, presented in full;

- b. A brief and tentative Problem Synopsis and Argument Analysis of the proposed paper;
- c. A self-assessment wherein the student evaluates him or herself against the Learning Outcomes enumerated on page 1 of this syllabus.

Tests (make-ups and re-takes):

If you miss or do poorly on a Test, you may design and take your own version of the Test (using questions from the actual Test is not allowed.) The burden is on you to demonstrate that you have understood the material; you will be graded not only on what you present, but also on any glaring omissions. These make-ups/re-takes must be submitted via email as soon as possible (definitely before *December 2nd at 11:55pm*), and will not be returned unless requested at office hours. This policy was designed out of consideration for you; please employ it in consideration for me, and do not submit all seven Tests on the deadline. (Please note: re-takes or make-ups from the last of the Tests may be submitted by *December 11th at 11:55pm*).

Academic Honesty:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by myself (which often becomes its own lesson about the ethics of plagiarism) and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. Make-up and re-take Tests may be screened by various plagiarism-screening websites. Plagiarism of any kind will result in a grade of “F” for the course. For more, please review the University of Montana [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php): (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php).

Technology:

The use of mobile phones is not permitted in class. Students using phones will be asked to leave. I strongly discourage students from [using laptops or tablets to take notes](#). If you would like to hear more about [why](#), please visit me in office hours. If you feel strongly about using a laptop to take notes, please be courteous by sitting in the very back of the classroom.

Accessibility:

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations. Please place your request with sufficient advance notice and be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services. If you are going to take the Final Exam at DSS, please schedule it well in advance. As [Disability Services for Students](#) website at www.umt.edu/dss/.

Melodie Stenger Velasco Intro to Ethics Spring 2017 Class Schedule

DATE	ASSIGNMENTS
<p>WEEK 1 (September 1-9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY (9/2): Post to Introduction Board on Moodle by Saturday at 11:55pm (this is a graded activity.) <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS ON FRIDAY (9/8): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read Syllabus, <u><i>buy specific books listed therein</i></u> <input type="checkbox"/> Read Woolf, Garcia Marquez (Moodle) (Also see Moodle for an associated Study Guide.) <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY (9/9): Post Spark Points #1 (Woolf and/or Garcia Marquez) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS NEXT MONDAY (9/11): Read Camus (Moodle)
<p>WEEK 2 (September 11-16)</p>	<p><i>WEDNESDAY, 9/13: TEST #1 (Syllabus, Woolf, Garcia Marquez, Camus, Perry)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS ON FRIDAY: Read Descartes (Moodle) <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #2 (Descartes) by 11:55pm

<p>WEEK 3 (September 18-23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS ON WEDNESDAY: Read Hegel/Williams, “Part One” (pp. 111-112 and Williams pp. 141-152) (Moodle) Warning: Difficult! <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #3 (Hegel/Williams Part One) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS NEXT MONDAY (9/25): Read Hegel/Williams, “Part Two” (pp. 152-160 and pp. 180-184) (Moodle) Warning: Still difficult!
<p>WEEK 4 (September 25-30)</p>	<p><i>FRIDAY, 9/29: TEST #2 (Hegel/Williams)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #4 (Hegel/Williams Part Two) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS NEXT MONDAY (10/2): Read Aristotle/Sachs, using Study Guide Part One (covering Book I, II and part of Sachs’ introduction) on Moodle (text needs to be purchased)
<p>WEEK 5 (October 2-7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #5 (Aristotle 1st set) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS NEXT MONDAY: Read Aristotle/Sachs, using Study Guide Part Two (covering the rest of the book and the rest of Sachs’ introduction) on Moodle.
<p>WEEK 6 (October 9-14)</p>	<p><i>FRIDAY, 10/13: TEST #3 (Aristotle)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #6 (Aristotle 2nd set) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY NEXT MONDAY: Read Kant pp. 7-27
<p>WEEK 7 (October 16-21)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #7 (Kant 1st set) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS NEXT MONDAY: Read Kant pp. 32 (margin number 424)-48
<p>WEEK 8 (October 23-28)</p>	<p><i>FRIDAY, 10/27: TEST #4 (Kant)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #8 (Kant 2nd set) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS NEXT MONDAY: Read Mill pages TBD
<p>WEEK 9 (October 30-November 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #9 (Mill 1st set) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS NEXT MONDAY: Read Mill pages TBD
<p>WEEK 10 (November 6-9)</p>	<p><i>WEDNESDAY, 11/8: TEST #5 (Mill)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #10 (Mill 2nd set) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS NEXT MONDAY: Read Gilligan pp. 1-63
<p>WEEK 11 (November 13-18)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #11 (Gilligan 1st set) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS NEXT MONDAY: Read Gilligan pp. 63-105

<p>WEEK 12 (November 20-29)</p>	<p><i>WEDNESDAY, 11/29: TEST #6 (Gilligan)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #12 (Gilligan 2nd set) by 11:55pm (on vacation? Post them before you leave!) <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS MONDAY (11/27): Submit a request for the Right to Write (see syllabus) <input type="checkbox"/> BY CLASS the NEXT FRIDAY (12/1): Read Midgley/Adams (Moodle)
<p>WEEK 13 (December 1-11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY (12/2): Post Spark Points #13 (Midgley/Adams) by 11:55pm <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY (12/2): Submit any remaining Test re-takes/make-ups. These will not be returned and will be graded in the order received. <i>Gilligan Test re-taes/make-ups may be submitted by 11:55 on 12/11.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> BY SATURDAY (12/9): Post to Reflection Board on Moodle by 11:55pm (this is a graded activity). <p><i>TUESDAY, 12/19, 8-10am: FINAL EXAM (consisting mostly of questions from previous tests—a few new questions will cover the Midgley/Adams reading, and the essay will be new.)</i></p>