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### PHL 110E.01: Introduction to Ethics

Melodies Velasco Stenger

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# PHIL 110: Introduction to Ethics, Velasco

## Class Info and Office Hours:

- [Dr. Melodie Velasco Stenger](mailto:melodie.velasco@mso.umt.edu), melodie.velasco@mso.umt.edu
- **Office:** Liberal Arts Building Room 147
- **Office Hours:** 1-2pm Monday/Wednesday/Friday and by appointment

## Teaching Assistant:

- [Toryn Rogers](mailto:toryn.rogers@umontana.edu), toryn.rogers@umontana.edu

## 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, 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 and frequent tests 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

- Immanuel Kant, [\*Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals\*](#), ed. Allen W. Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). ISBN 978-0-300-09487-9
- Mill, John Stuart. [\*Utilitarianism\*](#). Edited by George Sher. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002. ISBN 978-0-87220-605-2

Additionally, these two texts are optional:

- Cameron, Julia. [\*The Artist's Way\*](#). 10<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2002. ISBN 978-1-58542-146-6
- Seligman, Martin E. P. [\*Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment\*](#). 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. New York: Atria Books, 2004. ISBN 978-0-7432-2298-3

Finally, 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/Burning Questions (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 the quotation. (The question, "is this what this passage says [restatement in your own words]?" is a valid question, as is "how does this passage compare to this other passage?")

- Additionally, a student may **choose** to post **one** of these three Spark Points on the Burning Question Board (usu. due Monday at 11:55pm). This chosen point should be substantive, i.e., could serve as the basis for further inquiry and examination. (Please also see "The Right to Write" under "Policies.")
- 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. A submission to the Burning Question Board will raise the grade of the assignment by a +. *Also note that the "Introduction" and "Reflection" boards count towards this grade, graded A/0.*

#### **Tests (50% of final grade):**

These 7 closed-note, technology-free Tests will consist of:

- A set of 10 multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank questions along with space to detail or explain your answers if you choose to do so;
- 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 **May 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:10a.m. -12:10pm**, 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 a final 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.

#### **Evaluations (0% of final grade):**

Participating in periodic evaluations will:

- g. Improve your [metacognition](#) of your own progress in the course, thereby improving your experience in the course;
- h. Improve my understanding of how to teach this particular group of individuals, thereby making our course more dynamic and engaging;
- i. Assist you in learning to give quality feedback, which is an important professional skill no matter your profession.

## Policies:

### **The Right to Write:**

Students who have submitted at least one Spark Point on the Burning Question Board may submit a letter of request by April 24<sup>th</sup> petitioning for the chance to write a Philosophical Paper (due 5/12 at 11:55p.m.) instead of taking the Final Exam (5/10). This letter should consist of:

- a. The Spark Point from the Burning Question Board 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 April 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm), and will not be returned unless requested at office hours. This policy was designed out of consideration of you; please employ it in consideration of me, and do not submit all seven Tests on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **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. 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/](http://www.umt.edu/dss/).

## Melodie Velasco Intro to Ethics Spring 2017 Class Schedule

DATE	ASSIGNMENTS
Week #1 (January 23-28):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By WEDNESDAY: Read syllabus, <b><i>buy specific books listed therein</i></b>; post to Introduction Board on Moodle (required; see syllabus)</li> <li>By FRIDAY: Read Woolf, Garcia Marquez (Moodle)</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #1 (Woolf and/or Garcia Marquez)</li> <li>By MONDAY 1/30: Read Camus (Moodle)</li> </ol>
Week #2 (January 30-February 4):	<p><b>WEDNESDAY: Test #1 (Syllabus/Woolf/Garcia Marquez/Camus)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By FRIDAY: Read Descartes (Moodle)</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #2 (on Descartes, <b>not</b> Camus)</li> </ol>
Week #3 (February 6-11):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> </ol> <p><b>WEDNESDAY: Test #2 (Descartes)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By FRIDAY: Read Hegel pages 111-112 and Williams pages 141-152 (Moodle) Warning: Difficult!</li> <li>FRIDAY: Last day to drop without a W on your transcript.</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #3, Hegel/Williams (1<sup>st</sup> set)</li> </ol>
Week #4 (February 13-18):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> <li>By WEDNESDAY: Read Williams pp. 152-160 and pages 180-184 (Moodle) Warning: Still difficult!</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #4, Hegel/Williams (2<sup>nd</sup> set)</li> </ol>
Week #5 (February 20-25):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MONDAY: No class; President's Day.</li> <li>By TUESDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> <li>FRIDAY: Test #3 (Hegel/Williams)</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Read Aristotle (see Moodle for page numbers)</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #5, Aristotle (1<sup>st</sup> set)</li> </ol>
Week #6 (February 27-March 4):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Read Aristotle (see Moodle for page numbers)</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #6, Aristotle (2<sup>nd</sup> set)</li> </ol>
Week #7 (March 6-11):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> <li>FRIDAY: Test #4 (Aristotle)</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Read Kant pages 9-33</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #7, Kant (1<sup>st</sup> set)</li> </ol>
Week #8 (March 13-17):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Read Kant pages 33-62</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #8, Kant (2<sup>nd</sup> set)</li> </ol>
Week #9 (March 20-25)	<p>No reading! Enjoy your vacation. Remember: remaining re-take/make-up Tests are due April 4/29 and requests for the Right to Write are due <b>April 4/24</b>.</p>
Week #10 (March 27-31):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> <li>FRIDAY: Test #5 (Kant)</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Read Mill pp. 1-26</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #9, Mill (1<sup>st</sup> set)</li> </ol>
Week #11 (April 3-8):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Read Mill pp. 27-52</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #10, Mill (2<sup>nd</sup> set)</li> </ol>
Week #12 (April 10-15):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> <li>FRIDAY: Test #6 (Mill)</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Read Gilligan, pp. 1-63</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #11, Gilligan (1<sup>st</sup> set)</li> </ol>
Week #13 (April 17-22):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Read Gilligan, pp. 63-105</li> <li>By SATURDAY: Post Spark Points #12, Gilligan (2<sup>nd</sup> set)</li> </ol>

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS</b>
	4. By <b>MONDAY</b> (4/24): Submit a request for the Right to Write (see syllabus)
Week #14 (April 24-29):	1. By <b>MONDAY</b> : (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board <b>FRIDAY: Test #7 (Gilligan)</b> 2. By <b>SATURDAY</b> : Read Midgley/Adams (Moodle) 3. By <b>SATURDAY</b> : Post Spark Points #13, Midgley/Adams 4. By <b>SATURDAY</b> : Submit any remaining Test re-takes/make-ups via email
Week #15 (May 1-6):	<b>1. By MONDAY: (OPTIONAL) Post to Burning Questions Board</b> <b>2. Review for final</b>
Week #16 (May 8-13):	<b>WEDNESDAY from 10:10-12:10, Final Exam</b> 1. By <b>FRIDAY</b> : Post to Reflections Board on Moodle (graded; see syllabus)