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PHL 110E.02: Introduction to Ethics

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Philosophy 110: Introduction to Ethics
Tu/Th 2:00-3:20 LA 11

'In general, human beings seek not the way of their ancestors, but the good'
—Aristotle, *Politics* 1268a39 ff.

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This course introduces you to the major approaches to the study of ethics within the Western tradition. We'll supplement our philosophical reading with some vital American history and art from the 20th century.

Required Texts

Julia Driver, *Ethics: The Fundamentals*
Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns*

I have placed **optional** readings on Moodle. You will also find a copy of the syllabus there.

How the Course Works

Exams: There are three in-class exams worth, respectively, 25%, 35% and 40% of your final grade. As a rule, I will not offer makeup exams; you will receive a zero for any exams not taken. The exams will be short answer based on the lectures and readings.

Attendance and Etiquette: Attendance is critical, but there are too many of you for me to keep track of it. Come to class regularly, and be sure to get notes from a colleague if you miss one. You'll get much more out of the course, including a better grade.

To avoid disrupting our collective learning space, please make a point to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the meeting unless you have made prior arrangements with me (in which case I'll ask you to sit near the door). Occasional late arrivals will be tolerated, but repeat offenses will lead me to ask you to drop the course. You should ignore your cell phone for the duration of the meeting. We'll sometimes take a five-minute break in the middle of our meeting and you should pay any visits to the restroom or to your cell phone at this time.

I would rather you did not use a laptop in class, but if you need one to take notes, please sit in the back.

Academic Misconduct

In fairness to your classmates, I'll hold you strictly to the UM Student Conduct code (<http://www.umt.edu/SA/>). The exams are closed-note: you are not to consult anything, except your own mind, while taking them. *Absolutely no cell phones or other devices may be used during the taking of exams.* You'll receive a zero for any exam that you cheat on. University sanctions may also be applied.

Special Needs

Let me know at the beginning of the term if you will need accommodations from Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you need to take your exams through DSS, you must arrange this in advance, and you must provide verification of your disability from DSS. You can find more information at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/>

Schedule of Readings and Exams

*This is a provisional schedule. It's your responsibility to keep abreast of any changes to it. (M)=Moodle

January

23 Syllabus

25 *What is Ethics About?* Driver, Introduction (pp. 1-10); Wilkerson, pp. 2-15

Clearing Space

30 *Relativism* Driver, chapter 1

February

1 Driver, ch. 1 cont'd; Wilkerson 16-46

6 Appiah, "Relativism and Cross-Cultural Understanding" (M)

8 *Religion and Ethics* Driver, ch. 2, pp. 22-31; Wilkerson 47-94

13 *Egoism* Driver, ch. 2 pp. 31-39

15 *Nihilism* Driver, ch. 10; Wilkerson 95-122

20 **Exam 1** (Relativism, Religion, Egoism, Nihilism and Wilkerson)

22 TBA

Utilitarianism

27 Hume and Sympathy. Didion, "On Morality" (M);

March

1 *Classical Utilitarianism* Driver, ch. 3, (esp. 40-50); Wilkerson 123-164

6 *Util and Justice* Driver, ch. 4, 61-66

8 Hare, "What's Wrong with Slavery" (M); Wilkerson, 165-204

13 *Util and Demandingness* Driver, ch. 4 66-70; Ian Parker, "The Gift" (M)

15 *Util and Integrity* Driver, ch. 4 71-76; Wilkerson 205-221

20 **Exam 2** (Utilitarianism and its Critics)

22 TBA

27 Spring Break

29 Spring Break

****Please Bear in Mind that the Schedule May Undergo Changes. It is Your Responsibility to Keep Track of These!****

April

Kant's (and Kantian) Ethics

3 *Kant's Ethics* Driver, ch. 5

5 Driver, ch. 5 continued; Wilkerson 222-259

10 Kant continued

12 King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (M); Brown v. Board of Ed. (M); Wilk. 260-301

17 *Eyes on the Prize: "Fighting Back"*; Wilkerson 302-331

Virtue and Aristotle's Ethics

19 *Virtue Ethics* Driver, ch. 8 136-146; Aristotle, NE I (M)

24 continued; Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues" (M)

26 TBA; Wilkerson 332-363

May

1 Bennett, "The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn" (M); Wilkerson 364-412

3 TBA

Final Exam is the afternoon of Monday May 7 from 1:10-3:10 in LA 11.