

2015

# PHIL 100-01 Ethics as Introduction to Philosophy

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## Recommended Citation

Colella, E. Paul, "PHIL 100-01 Ethics as Introduction to Philosophy" (2015). *Philosophy Syllabi Summer 2015*. Paper 2.  
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**PHIL 100.10 ETHICS AS INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

**MTWRF 8:30 am-12:15pm -- Smith 349**

**Dr. E. Paul Colella -- Hinkle Hall 210**

**745-3629 (office)**

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**DESCRIPTION:**

This course is an introduction to philosophy through the special problems of ethics. The material that we will discuss together will be, by necessity, selective, but will give you a firm grounding for your subsequent philosophy requirements. We shall concentrate our attention upon two great philosophical minds: one from ancient Greece and the other from America. Some of the themes we shall address include the relationship between myth and philosophy, the nature of justice, the definition of the highest good, as well as the intersection of the areas of religion and ethics, as well as politics and ethics. All of this will be done by means of our entering into conversation with such writers as Plato (428-347BCE) and William James (1842-1910). We too shall be partners in that conversation, not only with these thinkers who have helped make our world, but with each other as well. This course is meant to be a beginning in philosophy, and it is designed to arrange some of the materials relevant to the Ethics, Religion & Society Focus in Xavier's core.

**PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE:**

**Active participation in our daily discussions is integral to the success of this course.** This is an intensive course that will demand much from all of us in order for it to succeed. I can assure you that the more you speak up in class, the more you will get out of our time together. Similarly, while I do not regularly take attendance, I am very much aware of students who miss an excessive number of classes. Given the compressed nature of the summer session schedule, I reserve the right to lower your final grade for excessive non-attendance and /or excessive lateness to class.

**BOOKS:**

The following are required for the course and are listed in the order in which we shall read them:

Plato,	<i>The Republic</i> (Hackett edition)
James,	<i>The Will to Believe &amp; Other Essays in Popular Philosophy</i>

In addition, I will distribute short selections from other thinkers as well.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

The daily class procedure will be as follows (approximately):

8:30-9:00	Small Group Discussion
9:00-10:15	New Material
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:00	writing

11:00 -12:15 New Material

The time devoted to writing will constitute the material that will form the major part of your grade for the course. You will need a special notebook in which to complete these short written assignments each day. I will identify a very general theme for you to address and will collect the notebooks for grading each weekend during the course. Your final grade will reflect the quality of this written work as well as your class participation. The Philosophy Department's grading policy appears at the end of the syllabus.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

The Xavier University policy on academic honesty as it appears on Xavier's website is in effect for this course:

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own. Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an "F" in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course. If disputes of interpretation arise, the student, faculty member, and chair should attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this is unsatisfactory, the dean will rule in the matter. As a final appeal, the academic vice president will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of making a final determination.

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**OFFICE HOURS:** My office is located in Hinkle Hall, 210. I can be reached my phone or email as listed on the front page of this syllabus. I am available each day after class for conferences. Please let me know when you wish to see me.

### ***SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS***

PLEASE NOTE ~ The following schedule is tentative only. The content and rhythm of class discussion may require that we make adjustments as the semester moves along. Such adjustments will be announced in class.

#### **WEEK ONE: Plato, *The Republic***

MONDAY MAY 11

8:30 Introduction to the Course – What is ethics?; What is a philosophical approach to ethics?; Greek Philosophy and Plato

TUESDAY MAY 12

8:30-9:00 Small Group Discussion

9:00-10:15 New Material – Plato, Book I  
10:15-10:30 Break  
10:30-11:00 writing  
11:00 -12:15 New Material – Plato, Book II

WEDNESDAY MAY 13

8:30-9:00 Small Group Discussion  
9:00-10:15 New Material – Plato, Book III  
10:15-10:30 Break  
10:30-11:00 writing  
11:00 -12:15 New Material – Plato, Book V

THURSDAY MAY 14

8:30-9:00 Small Group Discussion  
9:00-10:15 New Material – Plato, Book VI  
10:15-10:30 Break  
10:30-11:00 writing  
11:00 -12:15 New Material – Plato, Book VII

FRIDAY MAY 15

8:30-9:45 New Material – Aristotle’s Ethics  
9:45-10:00 BREAK  
10:00-12:15 writing – Summary critical essay evaluating Plato

**WEEK TWO: William James, *The Will to Believe & Other Essays***

MONDAY MAY 18

8:30-9:00 Small Group Discussion  
9:00-10:15 New Material – Kant’s Deontological Ethics  
10:15-10:30 Break  
10:30-11:00 writing  
11:00 -12:15 New Material – Mill’s Utilitarian Ethics

TUESDAY MAY 19

8:30-9:00 Small Group Discussion  
9:00-10:15 New Material – William James: The Frontier & American philosophy  
10:15-10:30 Break  
10:30-11:00 writing  
11:00 -12:15 New Material – James, “Reflex Action & Theism”

WEDNESDAY MAY 20

8:30-9:00 Small Group Discussion

9:00-10:15 New Material – James, “The Sentiment of Rationality”  
10:15-10:30 Break  
10:30-11:00 writing  
11:00 -12:15 New Material – James, “The Moral Philosopher & The Moral Life”

THURSDAY MAY 21

8:30-9:00 Small Group Discussion  
9:00-10:15 New Material – James, “The Will to Believe”  
10:15-10:30 Break  
10:30-11:00 writing  
11:00 -12:15 New Material – James, “Is Life Worth Living?”

FRIDAY MAY 22

8:30-9:45 New Material – James, “The Energies of Men”  
9:45-10:00 BREAK  
10:00-12:15 writing – Summary critical essay evaluating James

**PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT GRADING STANDARDS**

According to the Xavier University 2000-02 Catalog, the undergraduate grades of A, B, C, D, F signify the following:

A = Exceptional  
B = Good  
C = Satisfactory  
D = Minimum Passing  
F = Failure

The Philosophy Department further agrees that these letter grades signify the following level of accomplishment by students when given for discursive, written work:

A = work that not merely fully and accurately reproduces class discussion, the main thread in an argument or the main philosophical significance of a text under discussion, but which, having considered arguments and counter-arguments, goes beyond these and indicates a contribution of the student herself or himself, giving evidence of an individual and hence deeper understanding of the material in question.

B = work that shows a more or less complete and exact understanding of the issues, texts, and/or arguments as explained in class, clearly and logically formulated without going beyond such explanations.

C = work that shows basic understanding of the material but with errors, omissions and confusions of either a formal or material nature.

D = work that shows a minimal acquaintance with the material or serious logical and conceptual flaws in formulating responses to the question raised, the argument at issue, or to the philosophical text under discussion.

F = work that shows inadequate acquaintance with texts, issues, or ideas with little or no valid logical argumentation; or, the work is a plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism, which involve the use of published or others' written work without giving credit, must be given F.

The department does not mandate grade distributions or curves. The final goal of all of our grading must be fairness to all students and the encouragement of the highest level of achievement possible in each student.

Approved by Philosophy Department - April 15, 2002/Revised by Philosophy Department - January 12, 2005