

2015

# PHIL 100-1S Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy

Cheryl McKinley  
mckinleyc@xavier.edu

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## Recommended Citation

McKinley, Cheryl, "PHIL 100-1S Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy" (2015). *Philosophy Syllabi Summer 2015*. Paper 6.  
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**Xavier University**

**Summer Semester 2015**

**Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy, 3 Cr. Hrs.**

**Xavier Online: PHIL 100 1S (58149)**

**Lecturer:** Cheryl McKinley

Department of Philosophy, Hinkle Hall

**My email:** [mckinleyc@xavier.edu](mailto:mckinleyc@xavier.edu) (best way to contact me)

**Textbooks:**

Plato, *Republic*, trans. Reeve (Hackett), 2004.

Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Ellington, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Hackett), 1993.

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Hackett), 2001.

**Welcome to Ethics!**

The ancient philosopher Socrates once said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." An examination of one's life begins with the pursuit of wisdom. Your journey in ethics will begin with a few fundamental questions: Is there such thing as a moral life? Isn't morality just someone's opinion? What is a good life? Why not just be selfish? and Who decides what is right and wrong? This course will continue your quest for wisdom but will not offer you *the* answer; instead, you will be introduced to the thoughts of others who have asked the same questions throughout the history of Western philosophy. You will find that philosophy is more than mere opinion. The science of philosophy consists of structured arguments and the use of logically coherent premises and conclusions. At the end of the course, you will have discovered a diversity of views and the rigor of argumentation, as well as the ideas of virtue, utilitarianism, deontological ethics and various ways philosophy and ethics can apply to practical current issues.

## **Goals for PHIL 100**

### **GOAL 1: Students will be effective communicators in writing and orally.**

1. Students will organize and express their ideas in writing and orally.
2. Students will formulate clear and arguable theses, supported by evidence drawn from appropriate sources.
3. Students will utilize an effective writing process guided by audience, purpose, cultural context, and disciplinary standards.

### **GOAL 2: Students will be critical thinkers.**

1. Students will analyze and interpret texts.
2. Students will evaluate the strength of an argument or claim and its evidence.
3. Students will discuss fundamental questions that arise from the human condition, such as questions about the grounds of morality, the essence of justice, the nature of reality, the possibility of certainty, the nature of beauty, or the reasonableness of religious faith.

### **GOAL 3: Students will be creators of new knowledge and expression.**

1. Students will utilize their imagination and creativity, individually and collectively, to innovate and generate new perspectives to problems.

### **GOAL 4: Students will be able to understand and appreciate the arts, humanities and science disciplines, and reflect on connections among these studies.**

1. Students will articulate and engage with great ideas in the history of Western thought through the writings of great philosophers.

### **GOAL 5: Students will be integrated individuals who articulate a coherent, ethical perspective on the world and their place in it.**

1. Students will relate their knowledge and skills in a reflective and constructive way to their life experiences and the challenges confronting today's world.
2. Students will use information and resources responsibly in their communication and research.

### **GOAL 6 (E/RS): Students will be intellectually, morally and spiritually educated individuals capable of critical reflection on ethical and/or religious questions of social significance from the perspective of multiple disciplines with unique methods.**

1. Students will analyze rationally competing claims about individual and political justice within foundational philosophical texts.

**Course grade:** determined by discussion, assignment, and quiz scores as well as a paper and final exam.

<b>Discussions:</b> 14 @ 100 points each	1400
<b>Assignments:</b> 11 @ 100 points each	1100
<b>Paper:</b> 1 @ 750 points	750
<b>Quizzes:</b> 10 @ 50 points each	500
<b><u>Final Exam:</u></b> Part I- 120 points; Part II- 130 points	<u>250</u>
<b>Total points for the course</b>	4000

### **Academic Honesty**

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.

### **Students with disabilities**

*Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should contact the Learning Assistance Center at 513-745-3280 on the Fifth Floor of the Conaton Learning Commons, Room 514, to coordinate reasonable accommodations.*

## Policies

The **Course Paper** must be turned in on-time. Late discussions, quizzes or papers will result in an automatic 10% point reduction. Papers may be submitted through the Module and Turnitin for suspected plagiarism. Refer to Xavier University Policy on student plagiarism.

**Note on the Term Paper:** You must turn in a paper thesis (and be approved) before you continue writing your paper. Late submission will result in a 10% point deduction.

**Incompletes:** Are only given for rare extreme medical emergencies. Refer to the university catalog for the policy on incompletes.

Be sure to refer to the Resource Module for additional information on course policy, grading criteria and helpful tips on completing writing and discussion assignments.

## Grading Scale:

3720 – 4000 = A	2920 – 3079 = C	93% > A	73% > C
3600 – 3719 = A-	2800 – 2919 = C-	90% > A-	70% > C-
3480 – 3599 = B+	2680 – 2799 = D+	87% > B+	67% > D+
3320 – 3479 = B	2520 – 2679 = D	83 % > B	63% > D
3200 – 3319 = B-	2400 – 2519 = D-	80% > B-	60% > D-
3080 – 3199 = C+	0 – 2399 = F	77% > C+	0% > F

**Tentative reading assignments (subject to change at the instructor’s discretion)**

**Note: Read assigned readings before attempting any work in the Module.**

**Review specific instructions for each activity in the Module.**

## **Week 1: (05/18/15 – 05/24/15)**

**Module 0:** Go to Start Here of the Canvas Home Page

Review the information contained in the Resource Module, including the Course Policy document and the Syllabus.

### **Activities for Module 0:**

**Module 0: Discussion:** Post the Introductory Discussion

**Module 0: Syllabus Quiz:** Read the syllabus and then submit the Syllabus Quiz

## **Module 1: What is Philosophy? What is Justice?**

Readings:

Introduction to Plato's *Republic* (trans. Reeve, 2004)

(The marginal numbers and letters are called "Stephanus numbers" and are based on an early printed edition of Plato's works.)

(Throughout our study of Plato, I recommend checking the translator's synopsis (pp. xxx-xxxiii) to review and fill in gaps between assigned readings.)

What is justice? Read *Republic* 327a – 331d (pp.1-5)

Justice as what is advantageous for the stronger: Read *Republic* 336b – 344d (pp.12-22)

Is justice good in itself? Read *Republic* 357a – 362c (pp.36-40)

A city comes into being: Read *Republic* 367e – 376c (pp.45-56)

The guardians of the city and the noble lie: Read *Republic* 412b – 421c (pp.96-104)

The virtues of the city: Read *Republic* 427d – 435a (pp.112-121)

### **Activities for Module 1:**

Module 1 (1.1): Discussion – What is Philosophy?

Module 1 (1.2): Quiz – Who is Socrates?

Module 1 (1.3): Quiz – Critical Thinking

Module 1 (1.4): Paper Assignment – What is Justice?

Module 1 (1.5): Discussion – What is the difference between knowledge and opinion?

## Week 2: (05/25/15 – 05/31/15)

### Module 1 (Continued) What is Philosophy? What is Justice?

#### Activities for Module 1:

Module 1 (1.6): Paper Assignment – What is the “Noble Lie”?

Module 1 (1.7): Quiz – Ethical Egoism

### Module 2: Parts of the Soul; Philosophers as Rulers

Readings:

The parts of the soul: Read *Republic* 439a – 441c (pp.126-129)

The virtues of the soul: Read *Republic* 441c – 445d (pp.129-135)

The first wave: Read *Republic* 449a – 457c (pp.136-146)

The second wave: Read *Republic* 457c – 466d (pp.147-158)

The third wave: Read *Republic* 472a – 480a (pp.164-175)

Philosophers as rulers: Read *Republic* 487b – 489a; 496a-501c (pp.180-182, and 190-195)

#### Activities for Module 2:

Module 2 (2.1): Quiz – The Parts of the Soul

Module 2 (2.2): Paper Assignment – Our Moral Compass

Module 2 (2.3): Term Paper Approval – Plato on Raising Children (Due in Module 4)

Module 2 (2.4): Discussion – Are Philosopher-Kings the Answer to Just Rule?

## **Week 3: (06/01/15 – 06/07/15)**

### **Module 3: Form of the Good; Allegory of the Cave**

Readings:

The form of the good: Read Republic 502d – 511e (pp.197-207)

The allegory of the cave: Read Republic 514a – 521c (pp.208-215)

Founding the just city: Read Republic 540a – 541b (pp.236-237)

Democracy: Read Republic 543a – 545c, 557a – 558c (pp.238-240, and 253-255)

The tyrannical soul: Read Republic 571a – 578c (pp.270-278)

The myth of Er: Read Republic 611b – 621c (pp.316-326) Focus on pp.323-4

#### **Activities for Module 3:**

Module 3 (3.1): Paper Assignment – Thesis Statement for Term Paper

Module 3 (3.2): Paper Assignment – Should we return to the Cave?

Module 3 (3.3): Discussion – Democracy becomes Tyranny?

Module 3 (3.4): Quiz – Intrinsic and Instrumental Value

Module 3 (3.5): Discussion – Responsibility to Others?

Module 3 (3.6): Paper Assignment – Myth of Er: How to avoid drinking the water

### **Module 4: Plato's Conception of Justice**

Readings: None

#### **Activities for Module 4:**

Module 4 (4.1): Discussion – Virtue and Class

Module 4 (4.2): Term Paper Assignment – Plato on Raising Children

Module 4 (4.3): Discussion: Plato's Forms as a Foundation for Ethics

## Week 4: (06/08/15 – 06/14/15)

### Module 5: Kant: Goodwill and Duty – The Categorical Imperative

Readings:

Introduction to Kant's *Grounding*, v-xiii

Goodwill and duty: Read *Grounding*, First Section, pp.7-12

Maxims and universality: Read *Grounding*, First Section, pp. 13-17

The concept of a categorical imperative: Read *Grounding*, Second Section, (page 19 to the top of page 27).

#### Activities for Module 5:

Module 5 (5.1): Discussion – Kant's Good Will

Module 5 (5.2): Quiz – Immoral Maxims

Module 5 (5.3): Paper Assignment – Duty vs. Inclination

Module 5 (5.4): Discussion – Kant's Highest Purpose

Module 5 (5.5): Paper Assignment – What is a Categorical Imperative?

### Module 6: The Categorical Imperative and The Kingdom of Ends

Readings:

Exploring the categorical imperative: Read *Grounding*, Second Section, (page 27 to the top of page 39)

The kingdom of ends; heteronomy and autonomy: Read *Grounding*, finish Second Section, pp.39-48.

#### Assignments for Module 6:

Module 6 (6.1): Discussion – The Moral Tests of Non-contradiction and Universality

Module 6 (6.2): Quiz – Types of Duties

Module 6 (6.3): Paper Assignment – The Categorical Imperative at Work

Module 6 (6.4): Discussion – A Kingdom of Ends Today?

Module 6 (6.5): Quiz – What’s the better moral view?

Module 6 (6.6): Paper Assignment – The Autonomous Will

## **Week 5 (06/15/15 – 06/21/15)**

### **Module 7: Mill: Utilitarianism and the Greater Good**

Readings:

Introduction to Mill’s *Utilitarianism*, vii-xiv

The utilitarian principle: Read *Utilitarianism*, Chapter I

The utilitarian principle: Read *Utilitarianism*, Chapter II

The utilitarian principle: Read *Utilitarianism*, Chapter IV

### **Assignments for Module 7:**

Module 7 (7.1): Discussion – Consequences Are All that Matters

Module 7 (7.2): Paper Assignment – Using the Principle of Utility

Module 7 (7.3): Discussion – The Trolley and the Fat Man

Module 7 (7.4): Quiz – Utilitarian Egoism?

Module 7 (7.5): Paper Assignment – Rule Utilitarianism

## **Week 6 (06/22/15 – 06/28/15)**

### **Module 8: Final Comprehensive Exam, Part I and Part II**