

2014

100-06 Ethics

Gabriel Gottlieb

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Recommended Citation

Gottlieb, Gabriel, "100-06 Ethics" (2014). *Philosophy Syllabi Fall 2014*. Paper 17.
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Dr. Gabriel Gottlieb
gottliebg@xavier.edu
(513) 745-2017

Xavier University
Office: Hinkle 224
Hours: MW 11-12, 2-2:50
Or by appointment

Ethics (PHIL 100)

This course is an introduction to ethics and philosophy in general. We will read the works of important philosophers who have shaped the way we think about right, wrong, the good, justice, virtue, happiness, and morality. We will address perennial philosophical questions: What is the value of philosophy? What is justice? How should I live? Is the moral life the good life? What are rights? Should wealth be redistributed? We will also examine philosophically a contemporary social issue. The objectives of the course are to gain some sophistication in thinking about these questions and to acquire the critical reasoning and writing skills needed to do philosophical work both inside and outside the classroom.

Required Texts

- 1) Plato, *Republic*, G.R.F. Ferrari (Ed.), Cambridge University Press.
- 2) Michael Sandel (Ed.), *Justice: A Reader*, Oxford University Press.
- 3) Essays available through Canvas.

Online resources: There are few reliable online resources for philosophy, but I do recommend the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>), which is reliable, clear, and scholarly. This is the only online source you are permitted to use either for course preparation or in a paper (unless I have permitted otherwise), and it must be cited appropriately.

Course Requirements:

- 20% Participation and informal writing
- 20% Quizzes (typically 4-5)
- 20% Paper #1
- 20% Paper #2
- 20% Final Exam

All papers and exams must be completed to pass the course.

E/RS: This course is an E/RS course. What is E/RS? Ethics/Religion and Society, or E/RS for short, is part of Xavier's core curriculum, which focuses on the ethical and/or religious analysis of socially significant issues. Each student must take four E/RS courses, Ethics as Introduction to Philosophy, Theological Foundations, Literature and the Moral Imagination, and an elective course that has been approved as an E/RS course. As stated on the program's website, "the goal of this carefully structured sequence of courses is to foster students' understanding of socially significant issues from the perspectives of the humanities."

Course Goals:

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 7 (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

Participation: Participation is required. Participation can take place in a number of ways: asking questions, responding to questions, raising objections, and making points. I strongly encourage students to speak up in class. I do recognize that for some students talking in class and discussing philosophy can be intimidating. Discussing the philosophical content of the readings or class discussion by email or during office hours will count toward your participation grade. Participation is not an automatic 20%—you actually have to take part, and I am very aware of who is doing so.

Quizzes: If you miss a quiz because of an unexcused absence, then you cannot make it up. If the absence is excused, then I will assign you a writing project or quiz that will be graded and carry the same weight as the missed quiz. Unannounced, or pop quizzes, are a possibility.

Papers: You will write two papers. For each paper I will provide a handout detailing the assignment and my expectations. All papers are due at the beginning of class. A late paper will be lowered for each class it is late a +/- . If your paper deserves an A- and you turn it in one class late, then your grade for the paper will be a B+. If your paper deserves a B+ and you turn it in three classes late, then your grade for the paper will be a C+. Papers must be submitted through Turnitin. **All papers should be double spaced in Times New Roman (12pt font).*

Exams: The final exam will be cumulative and will consist of short answer, essay questions, and possibly a few multiple choice questions.

Attendance: You are allowed three unexcused absences. More than three unexcused absences will have a serious effect on your grade. Each unexcused absences after three will result in a lowering of your final grade by a +/- . If your final grade is an A- and you have 4 absences, then your grade for the course will be a B+. If your final grade is a B+ and you have 6 absences, then your grade for the course will be a C+. This policy will be strictly followed. Excused absences require an official note from a doctor or student affairs. If you have more than nine absences, whether excused or unexcused, then you will fail the course. If you do miss a class I strongly suggest that you get notes from another student and that you ask me for

handouts I might have distributed and instructions for the next class. If you are absent, do not assume that you know where we are in the readings, since we will not always follow the syllabus exactly.

Writing Center: Everyone needs help with their writing. Even great authors need an editor or second pair of eyes. I strongly suggest that you visit the writing center before you turn in each paper. Your grammar will improve, your prose will become crisper, and your argument stronger. Overall, your writing skills and course grade will very likely increase. There is really nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

For more information:

<http://www.xavier.edu/writingcenter/>

Where: Conaton Learning Commons, Room 400
Phone: 745-2875

Monday & Wednesday: 9 AM - 8 PM
Tuesday & Thursday: 9:30 AM - 8:30 PM
Friday: 9 AM - 3 PM
Sunday: 1 PM - 9 PM

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will result in the failing of the assignment, and it may result in the failing of the course. The following statement on plagiarism is from Xavier University's website on plagiarism, where you can read more about how to prevent plagiarism:

<http://www.xavier.edu/library/xu-tutor/Preventing-Plagiarism.cfm>

- Plagiarism is using the work of another as if it were your own, without enclosing the words of others in quotations.
- Plagiarism is copying from the Internet, from a web page, or from another person without giving credit.
- Plagiarism is using ideas which are not your own without citing those ideas.
- Plagiarism can be applied to ideas, research, art, music, graphs, diagrams, websites, data, books, newspapers, magazines, plays, movies, photos, and speeches.

****Students must keep their cell phones off during class, not on vibrate or silence. No texting at all!!**

*****Laptops are not allowed in class, unless you have a note from an office like the LAC.**

Schedule

The Value of Philosophy

- 8/25 Syllabus, What is Philosophy? Why Ethics?
8/27 The Value of Philosophy
Reading: Russell, "The Value of Philosophy" (Canvas)

Is Everything Relative

- 8/29 Understanding Relativism
Reading: James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" (Canvas)

Logic Handout

9/1 Labor Day Holiday

- 9/3 Rachels Continued (Reread and Review "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism")
9/5 Rachels Continued (Reread and Review "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism")

Plato's *Republic* and the Question of Justice

- 9/8 Introduction to Plato's *Republic*
Reading: Editor's "Introduction" (pp. xi-xviii) and Plato, *Republic*, Book 1 (327a-336e)
- 9/10 Cephalus and Polemarchus's Definitions
Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Book 1 (327a-336e)
- 9/12 Thrasymachus's Definition
Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Book 1 (337a-349a)
- 9/22 Thrasymachus's Definition Continued (Reread and Review Book 1 (337a-349a)
- 9/24 Plato's Function Argument
Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Book 1 (349a-354c)
- 9/26 Plato's Function Argument Continued (Reread and Review Book 1 349a-354c)
- 9/29 Glaucon's Challenge
Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Book 2 (357a-367e)
Reading: Locke, *Justice: A Reader*: Chapter IV (Locke, pp. 84-90)
- 10/1 The City in Speech
Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Book 2 (368a-383c)
- 10/3 No Class
- 10/6 The Guardians
Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Book 3 (386a-417b)

- 10/8 The Guardians Continued (Reread and Review 386a-417b)
- 10/10 Fall Holiday
- 10/13 Soul and City
Reading: Plato, Republic, Book 4 (419a-434e)
- 10/15 Soul and City
Reading: Plato, Republic, Book 4 (435a-445e)
- 10/17 Soul and City Continued (Reread and Review Book 4)
- 10/20 The Cave
Reading: Plato, Republic, Selections from Books 6 and 7 (502c-531e)

Utilitarianism and Justice

- 10/22 Bentham's Utilitarianism
Reading: Justice: A Reader: Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 3-14)
- 10/24 Mill's Defense of Utilitarianism
Reading: Justice: A Reader: Chapter 2 (pp. 14-27)
- 10/27 Mill's Utilitarianism Continued
- 10/29 Mill on Rights
Reading: Justice: A Reader: Chapter 2 (pp. 35-47)
- 10/31 Mill on Rights Continued

Rawls's *Theory of Justice*

- 11/3 Rawls's Critique of Utilitarianism
Reading: Justice: A Reader, Chapter 7 (pp. 203, 209-214)
- 11/5 Rawls's Critique of Utilitarianism Continued
- 11/7 Rawls's *Theory of Justice*
Reading: Justice: A Reader, Chapter 7 (pp. 203-209, 219-221)
- 11/10 Rawls's *Theory of Justice* Continued

The Libertarian Critique

- 11/12 Nozick's Critique of Rawls
Reading: Justice: A Reader, Chapter 8 (pp. 231-235)
- 11/14 Nozick's Entitlement Theory of Justice
Reading: Justice: A Reader, Chapter 3 (pp. 60-66)
- 11/17 Nozick on Liberty and Locke's Theory of Property
Reading: Justice: A Reader, Chapter 3 (Nozick, pp. 66-73, and Locke, pp. 90-96)

- 11/19 Nozick's Theory of Justice Continued
- 11/21 Debating Nozick and Rawls
- 11/24 Debating Nozick and Rawls
- 11/26 Thanksgiving Holiday
- 11/28 Thanksgiving Holiday
- 12/1 Equality of Opportunity (TBD)
- 12/3 Equality of Opportunity (TBD)
- 12/5 Equality of Opportunity (TBD)
- 12/8 Equality of Opportunity (TBD)
- 12/10 Equality of Opportunity (TBD)
- 12/12 Equality of Opportunity (TBD)
- 12/15 Study Day
- 12/17 **Final Exam:** Class Time: MWF 10:00-10:50; **Exam Time:** 10:00-12:50
- 12/19 **Final Exam:** Class Time: MWF 1:00-1:50; **Exam Time:** 12:00-1:50