2016

100-08 Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy

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As long as there have been human beings, justice has been a question—its nature, its forms, and its very possibility. By studying classic works of philosophy, especially Plato’s Republic, you will examine different views on justice and human goodness, tracing them back to the principles on which they depend, and reflect critically on these principles. You will also develop your ability to identify, understand and critique a variety of ethical issues. Finally, you will be introduced to other basic human questions and philosophical ways of thinking about them.

This course is part of the Ethics/Religion and Society focus. Consistent with the mission of Xavier University as a Jesuit, Catholic university rooted in the liberal arts tradition, the Ethics/Religion and Society (E/RS) sequence of courses provides a basis for you to become intellectually, morally and spiritually educated individuals capable of critical reflection on ethical and religious questions of social significance from the perspective of multiple disciplines with unique methods. Through the E/RS elective, you will develop a more proficient and durable ability to reflect critically on ethical and/or religious questions of social significance.

This course is also part of the Xavier Core Curriculum, which aims to develop people of learning and reflection, integrity and achievement, in solidarity for and with others. The course addresses the following core learning objectives at a basic level:

1a: Students recognize and cogently discuss significant questions in the humanities, arts, and the natural and social sciences.
2a: Students find, evaluate, and logically convey information and ideas in written and oral presentations.
3a: Students identify and critically assess multiple dimensions of an ethical issue in an attempt to reach a conclusion.
4a: Students describe and examine the multifaceted character of society and how the inclusion of different perspectives can influence one’s worldview.
4b: Students discuss and evaluate what constitutes human wellness.
5a: Students examine the diverse, complex, and interdependent nature of people in the world.
6a: Students investigate the root causes of injustice with compassion and academic rigor.

Required texts

Only the following editions are acceptable. You must purchase these books in print.

Plato, Five Dialogues, trans. Grube/Cooper (Hackett)
Plato, Republic, trans. Reeve (Hackett)
Immanuel Kant, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, ed. Denis (Broadview)
**Course requirements**

Reading journal: 20%
First essay: 20%
Second essay: 20%
Final exam: 20%
Class participation: 20%

Your *reading journal* contains some of your own thoughts on the reading assignments, written *before* class discussion of the reading. The purpose of the journal is to spur you to keep up with the reading and come to class ready to participate. On any day, I may ask about your journal entry for that day. Each entry should include:

(a) A brief summary of the content of that day’s assigned reading (about 2-3 sentences).

(b) A more focused look at a particular passage in the reading that you think is important or interesting. Interpret that passage in a paragraph: what is it saying, and why is it important or interesting?

(c) A question about the reading—anything from a query about what a particular expression in the text means to a broader philosophical problem suggested by the reading. This should be a genuine question; that is, you should not be sure of the answer. Write enough to clarify what your question means and why you are asking it.

There are a total of 38 days for which you can write a journal entry, but you are allowed to skip a maximum of any five days, so your minimum number of entries is 33. Keep your entries on separate sheets of paper, in chronological order from earliest to latest, in a binder or folder, and bring your entire journal to every class meeting. I may occasionally collect the journals, without prior warning, and give you a tentative grade. If your journal is not up to date and ready to turn in on a day when I choose to collect it, this will detract from your class participation grade; you should turn it in at the next class meeting. The final grade on the journal will be determined at the end of the course. The grade will be based on the clarity and care of your writing—in other words, the journal should show that you are reading the assigned books attentively and working to formulate your thoughts about them. But this is not formal writing as in a paper, and errors in interpretation will not harm your grade as long as you are making an effort. You may consult any sources you like as you write your journal, but they cannot substitute for the assigned text; they can only supplement it. They must also be cited properly in order to avoid plagiarism (see next page). Please note that you *cannot pass the course* without a complete reading journal (at least 33 entries).

The two *essays* (5+ pages each) will ask you to explain some central ideas in our readings and think critically about them. A guide to writing philosophy papers will be handed out with the first essay assignment.

The *final exam* will be a multiple-choice and short-essay test. You may consult two pages of notes during the text. It will cover the whole semester, but will particularly emphasize Kant.

The *class participation* grade is a judgment I make at the end of the semester about the quality of your effort and your contributions to the class as a whole. The judgment is based on your participation in discussions and small-group work, any extra writing you may do (such as a rewritten paper), and your communication with me outside class (office visits, e-mail, phone).

*Extra credit:* 0.1 grade point will be added to your final grade if you attend an Ethics/Religion & Society event and write about two double-spaced pages about it. Sum up what the speaker(s) said, relate it to our course if possible, and develop some of your own thoughts in response. The style of your writing can be informal, but it should be clear. Only one such piece of writing can count for extra credit. However, other pieces can contribute to your class participation grade. See [http://www.xavier.edu/ers/Lecture-Series.cfm](http://www.xavier.edu/ers/Lecture-Series.cfm) for information about E/RS events.
Calculating your grade

I give each element a letter grade, then convert it to a number on a 4-point scale (like the scale for your GPA), with pluses and minuses counting as 0.33 point. I multiply this number by the percentage the element is worth, and add all the results to get your raw grade. This raw grade is adjusted to account for absences (see below) and extra credit, and then rounded to the nearest letter grade to yield the course grade.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading journal</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First essay</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second essay</td>
<td>B–</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>A–</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw grade</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.934</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two missed days with no makeup work</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra credit</td>
<td></td>
<td>+0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course grade</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.834 = B–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policies

No digital devices are to be used during class without my permission.

Absence policy: You do not need an excuse if you miss a class, but you are expected to turn in your journal entry for the day you missed when you return. Getting someone else’s class notes may be a good idea, but it is unacceptable to base your makeup work only on such notes; your work has to show that you read the text yourself. Merely using a secondary source about the assigned reading is also unacceptable, and plagiarism from any source is unacceptable (see below). If you do not turn in acceptable makeup work promptly, I may subtract up to 0.1 grade point from your course grade for each day you missed. Anyone who misses more than 6 classes may fail the course, even if makeup work is turned in.

Late assignments will be penalized by up to one letter grade for each day they are late.

Good English policy: I reserve the right to reject an essay that has extensive flaws in spelling or grammar. It must be corrected before it receives a grade, and it will be counted as late.

Essays may be rewritten. A rewrite will not change your grade on an essay, but it will count as significant class participation. Turn in the rewrite along with the original and my original comments. Rewrites may be turned in as late as the time of the final exam.

Plagiarism is using someone else’s words or ideas, even if you rephrase them, without giving credit to the source (such as a website, book, article, or another student’s writing). According to Xavier’s Academic Honesty Policy (http://xavier.edu/handbook/standards/Academic-Honesty.cfm), “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, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an ‘F’ in the course, and expulsion from Xavier.” Whenever you use sources other than the assigned text, you must cite them in footnotes or by some other standard method. Plagiarism will lead to an F for the assignment or the course, and your dean will be notified of the incident. For more information, a tutorial, and a quiz, see http://xavier.edu/library/xu-tutor/xu-tutor-Use.cfm.

All course requirements must be completed in order to pass the course.

Getting help

1. Stop by Hinkle 202 during my office hours (Monday through Friday 10-10:50) or make an appointment. I’m glad to talk to you about the class and read drafts of essays.
2. Office of Student Success: http://xavier.edu/student-success
3. Learning Assistance Center: http://xavier.edu/learning-assistance-center/index.cfm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 22</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 24</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>What is piety?</td>
<td>Reading assignment #1: Before today’s class read <em>Euthyphro</em>, in <em>Five Dialogues</em>, through section 9b (pp. 2-11) and write a reading journal entry about it (see p. 2 of this syllabus).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 26</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>The gods and justice</td>
<td>Reading assignment #2: Finish <em>Euthyphro</em> (pp. 11-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 29</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Socrates on trial</td>
<td>#3: <em>Apology</em> through 31c (pp. 22-35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 31</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Socrates convicted</td>
<td>#4: Finish <em>Apology</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Socrates in prison</td>
<td>#5: <em>Crito</em> (pp. 45-57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 5</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td><strong>Labor Day</strong>—no class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Philosophy and death</td>
<td>#6: <em>Phaedo</em> 57a-69e (pp. 94-107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Opposites and recollection</td>
<td>#7: <em>Phaedo</em> 69e-77a (pp. 107-115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 12</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>The soul and the body</td>
<td>#8: <em>Phaedo</em> 77a-84b (pp. 115-122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handouts in class: first essay assignment and guide to writing philosophy papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 14</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Is the soul a harmony?</td>
<td>#9: <em>Phaedo</em> 84c-95a (pp. 122-133)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td><strong>No class</strong>—I am attending a conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 19</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Causes and forms</td>
<td>#10: <em>Phaedo</em> 95a-107b (pp. 133-144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>The death of Socrates</td>
<td>#11: Finish <em>Phaedo</em> (pp. 144-154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bring a printed draft of your essay to class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td><strong>First essay due.</strong></td>
<td>No reading assignment, but bring the <em>Republic</em> to class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 26</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>What is justice?</td>
<td>#12: <em>Republic</em> 327a-331d (pp. 1-5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sept. 28 Wed Polemarchus
   #13: Republic 331d-336a (pp. 5-12)

Sept. 30 Fri Thrasymachus
   #14: Republic 336b-344e (pp. 12-22)

Oct. 3 Mon Socrates defeats Thrasymachus
   #15: Republic 344e-354c (pp. 22-35)

Oct. 5 Wed Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenges
   #16: Republic 357a-369a (pp. 36-47)

Oct. 7 Fri Fall holiday—no class

Oct. 10 Mon A city comes into being
   #17: Republic 369b-376c (pp. 47-56)

Oct. 12 Wed The guardians of the city
   Optional reading: 376c-412a
   #18: Republic 412b-421c (pp. 96-104)

Oct. 14 Fri The virtues of the city
   Optional reading: 421c-427c
   #19: Republic 427d-435a (pp. 112-121)

Oct. 17 Mon The parts and virtues of the soul
   Optional reading: 435a-439a
   #20: Republic 439b-445b (pp. 126-134)

Oct. 19 Wed The first wave
   #21: Republic 445c-457c (pp. 134-146)

Oct. 21 Fri The second wave
   #22: Republic 457c-466d (pp. 146-158)

Oct. 24 Mon The third wave
   Optional reading: 466e-471e
   #23: Republic 472a-480a (pp. 164-175)

Oct. 26 Wed Philosophers as rulers
   #24: Republic 487b-489a, 496a-501c (pp. 180-182, 190-195)
   Optional reading: 484a-487a, 489b-496a

Oct. 28 Fri The form of the good
   #25: Republic 501d-511e (pp. 195-207)
   Handout: second essay assignment

Oct. 31 Mon The allegory of the cave; founding the just city
   #26: Republic 514a-521c, 540a-541b (pp. 208-215, 236-237)
   Optional reading: 521d-539e
Nov. 2  Wed  Democracy
   #27: *Republic* 543a-545c, 557a-558c (pp. 238-240, 253-255)
   Optional reading: 545c-556d

Nov. 4  Fri  The tyrannical soul
   Optional reading: 558c-569c
   #28: *Republic* 571a-578c (pp. 270-278)

Nov. 7  Mon  The myth of Er
   Optional reading: 578d-608b
   #29: *Republic* 608c-621d (pp. 313-326)

Nov. 9  Wed  No reading assignment; bring a printed draft of
   your essay to class along with the *Republic.*

Nov. 11 Fri  Second essay due. No reading assignment, but bring Kant.

Nov. 14 Mon  Daring to know
   #30: Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” (pp. 119-125)

Nov. 16 Wed  Good will and duty
   #31: Kant, *Groundwork,* pp. 55-61

Nov. 18 Fri  Universal law
   #32: Kant, *Groundwork,* pp. 61-66

Nov. 21 Mon  Reason and morality
   #33: Kant, *Groundwork,* pp. 67-72

Nov. 23, 25 Thanksgiving holiday—no class

Nov. 28 Mon  The categorical imperative
   #34: Kant, *Groundwork,* pp. 72-top of 81

Nov. 30 Wed  The formula of the law of nature
   #35: Kant, *Groundwork,* pp. 81-85; on suicide, pp. 168-bottom of 170

Dec. 2  Fri  Rational beings as ends in themselves
   #36: Kant, *Groundwork,* pp. 85-91

Dec. 5  Mon  The kingdom of ends; autonomy and heteronomy
   #37: Kant, *Groundwork,* pp. 91-102

Dec. 7  Wed  Theory and practice

Dec. 9  Fri  Review session
   Reading journal due.

Dec. 14 Wed  Final exam, 12:00-1:50, in our usual classroom.
   Please bring a bluebook (available at the bookstore).