2014

100-28 Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy

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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 exam scores, paper, and group work/debate (must attend for points)

**Exams:** Midterm=150 / Final=250  
400

**Paper:** 1 @ 300 points  (Refer to handout for instructions)  
300

Quizzes 10 @ 10 points  
100

**Group Debate:** 4 @ 50 points each (total possible points 200)  
200

**Total points for the course**  
1000

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**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.

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**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**

**Attendance** is taken each class meeting.

**Handouts** are considered part of the day’s lecture. Should you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining handouts that you have missed.

**Turn off (or silence)** and put away cell phones and technological devices. Laptops, phones with e-texts, iPods, and similar devices must be used responsibly.

**There will be frequent groups work sessions** in class, so it is important that you respect the viewpoints of others.

**Group work days/points, and debate days/points** are noted in the Course Grade of this syllabus. In order to receive group work/debate points, you must arrive on time and stay the entire class period.

**Papers** must be turned in on-time. Late papers will result in an automatic point reduction (refer to the paper instruction handout). Papers may be submitted through Turnitin for suspected plagiarism. Refer to Xavier University Policy on student plagiarism.

**If you miss the midterm exam**, you must contact me for a paper topic. A paper topic will be provided in place of the exam. Note: There is no make-up exam for the final exam.

**Note on the Paper**: You must turn in a paper thesis (and approved) before you continue writing your paper. You will be lowered one letter grade without prior thesis approval for your paper.

**Incompletes**: Refer to the university catalog for the policy on incompletes.

**Grading Scale:**

\[
\begin{align*}
930 - 1000 &= A \\
900 - 929 &= A- \\
870 - 899 &= B+ \\
830 - 869 &= B \\
800 - 829 &= B- \\
770 - 799 &= C+ \\
730 - 769 &= C \\
700 - 729 &= C- \\
670 - 699 &= D+ \\
630 - 669 &= D \\
600 - 629 &= D- \\
0 - 599 &= F
\end{align*}
\]
Tentative reading assignments (subject to change at the instructor’s discretion)

**Note: Read assigned readings before coming to class.**

T 8/26: Introduction to philosophy – What’s is all mean?


(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)

T 9/2: Is justice good in itself? Read *Republic* 357a – 362c (pp.36-40)

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

R 9/4: 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)

T 9/9: The parts of the soul: Read *Republic* 439a – 441c (pp.126-129)

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

R 9/11: The first wave: Read *Republic* 449a – 457c (pp.136-146)

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

T 9/16: 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)

R 9/18: The form of the good: Read *Republic* 502d – 511e (pp.197-207) Thesis Approval Due

The allegory of the cave: Read *Republic* 514a – 521c (pp.208-215)
T 9/23: Founding the just city: Read *Republic* 540a – 541b (pp.236-237)

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

R 9/25: 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

T 9/30: Review of Plato

R 10/2: Review for Midterm

T 10/7: Mid-Term Exam

R 10/9: No Class – Fall Holiday

T 10/14: Introduction to Kant’s *Grounding*

R 10/16: Goodwill and duty: Read *Grounding*, First Section, pp.7-12 Individual Paper Due

T 10/21: Maxims and universality: Read *Grounding*, First Section, pp. 13-17 Q-5

R 10/23: The concept of a categorical imperative: Read *Grounding*, Second Section, (page 19 to the top of page 27).

T 10/28: Exploring the categorical imperative: Read *Grounding*, Second Section, (page 27 to the top of page 39) Q-6

R 10/30: Exploring the categorical imperative: Read *Grounding*, Second Section, (page 27 to the top of page 39)
Q-7  
(Groups Assigned)

R 11/6: Introduction to Mill's *Utilitarianism*  
The utilitarian principle: Read *Utilitarianism*, Chapter I

T 11/11: The utilitarian principle: Read *Utilitarianism*, Chapter II  
Q-8

R 11/13: The utilitarian principle: Read *Utilitarianism*, Chapter III  
Q-9

T 11/18: The utilitarian principle: Read *Utilitarianism*, Chapter IV  
Q-10

R 11/20: The utilitarian principle: Read *Utilitarianism*, Chapter V

T 11/25: Group work day for the debates (must attend for points – 50 pts.)  
Group Paper Due

R 11/27: No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday

T 12/2: Debate (Groups 1 & 2) must attend for points

R 12/4: Debate (Groups 3 & 4) must attend for points

T 12/9: Debate (Groups 5 & 6) must attend for points

R 12/11: Review for final exam – Comprehensive / Review for debate – included in the final exam

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 16th (1:00 – 2:50)**