100-02-04-08-11 Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy

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Section 02: Meets MWF 8:00 AM–8:50 AM, Cintas Center 3 (3 credits)
Instructor: Daniel Shields, Ph.D.
Office: Hinkle Hall, Rm. 231
Office Hours: Tu 9:30 AM–11:30 AM; 12:45 PM–1:45 PM, or by appointment
Office Telephone: 513-745-3491
E-Mail: shieldsd@xavier.edu
Mail Location # 4443

Course Description & Objectives:

This course is an introduction to philosophy through the study of ethics, using the original writings of several philosophers from the ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary periods.

We will cover the main schools of thought in ethics or moral philosophy. We will familiarize ourselves with virtue ethics by reading Plato & Aristotle, with natural law theory by reading St. Thomas Aquinas, with utilitarianism by reading Mill, and with Kantianism by reading Kant. This course will give you practice in judging critically between competing theories.

There are two goals for this course. The first is to learn how to philosophize. This requires that one learn how to:

- Ponder deep questions
- Follow and formulate rational arguments
- Read critically the great works of philosophy
- Write carefully reasoned and researched papers
- Dialogue with others

The second goal is to learn the basics of ethics or moral philosophy.

This course is part of Xavier University’s Core Curriculum. In particular it is one of the courses of the Ethics/Religion and Society (E/RS) sequence.
Required Texts:


Requirements:

1. Reading Assignments: The required texts are written by some of the greatest philosophers in the history of the world. They are our primary teachers. Accordingly, reading the assignments carefully is the primary requirement of the course. Please bring the reading assignments to class with you.

   There will be pop quizzes at the beginning of some class periods. The questions will cover basic ideas from the readings. Although you should be in attendance and on time for every class, if you happen to miss a pop quiz, you will have the opportunity of making it up, but you must talk to me about it.

   Some of the readings will be posted/link to on Blackboard (blackboard.xavier.edu). These readings are indicated on the syllabus by the term “e-handout.” Please print them out, read them, and bring them to class. Some of the material posted on Blackboard is copyrighted and only students in this class section may access or print them, and any printed copies must be destroyed at the end of the semester.

2. Attendance: Attending class is required, and I will take roll at the beginning of every class. **Up to 4 classes may be missed without penalty.** For these first three absences, no distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences. Each additional absence beyond 4, however, will result in the reduction of 2 points out of 100 from the final grade if not excused. In general, more than 9 absences of any kind, excused or not, will result in failure of the course.

   If you have a valid reason for missing class, such as an athletic event or an illness, please notify me as soon as possible, so that I may determine whether the absence can be excused and decide what kind of make-up work, if any, should be assigned.

   If there is an extraordinary reason for missing more than 9 classes, such as a serious illness, please discuss it with me as soon as possible so that we may determine
whether the course can be completed or not. Withdrawal from the course may be necessary, but that will be determined on a case by case basis.

Student athletes should be especially careful not to miss any classes except those which their athletic events require. Otherwise, they may quickly find themselves over the allowed number of absences.

Please come to class on time and do not leave until class is over. For every 3 times a student comes in after I have taken roll, or leaves before class is over, 1 absence will be counted.

Anytime class falls on a day when a student is religiously obligated not to attend class (for example, if it is considered work in one’s religion and class falls on a work-restricted day) the student will receive an excused absence if he or she notifies me of the religious obligation. More than 9 absences will still generally not be allowed. Please plan ahead, so that you do not have too many absences already when a work-restricted religious day occurs.

(3) Class Participation: You will be graded on your active participation in class. I will ask you questions in class, and if you have a question about the material, ask about it in class. There will also be time for classroom discussions. Don't be shy, and utilize my office hours. If you come to my office with a real philosophical question, or even just to share some philosophical thought, you will receive points towards your participation grade. Emailing me with questions/comments will also count towards your participation grade.

(4) Papers: Two short papers will be assigned in this class. The primary requirement for this paper is coherence and structure of thought—i.e., having a thesis and supporting it rationally—but you will also be graded for citation of sources, correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style. Please submit a hard copy of your paper in class on the day it is due. In cases of hardship only, if you are unable to attend class that day, you may submit your paper as a Microsoft Word document or PDF to my email address (shieldsd@xavier.edu) by the time the class period in which they are due starts (e.g., if class starts at 8:00 AM and the paper is due that day, email me your paper no later than 8:00 AM.) For every class-period or portion thereof that the paper is late I will subtract one letter grade. For example, if you turn in your paper after it is due but before the next class period, and you turn in a B paper, you will receive a C.

Since you will be graded on grammar, punctuation, and spelling, I recommend you take advantage of the Writing Center. They can help you with the mechanics of writing a paper, although not with the philosophical content. If you have any questions about that, or what it means to have and support a thesis, please see me after class or during my office hours.

Please format your papers according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS).

(5) Final Exam: There will be a final exam. The final exam will be comprehensive. Do not miss the exam. If it is absolutely necessary to miss it, you must talk to me about it ahead of time, and I will make a decision as to whether you can re-schedule. The only exception would be an unexpected emergency. Otherwise, you will receive an F on the exam.

Accommodations will be made for students with learning disabilities. Please visit the Learning Assistance Center (Suite 514 in the Conaton Learning Commons, phone:
Policies:

The use of any electronic devices, such as smart phones, cell phones, laptops, e-readers, iPod’s, tablets, etc., is not allowed in this class, unless there is a documented need, such as a learning disability. (Learning disabilities will be fully accommodated as long as I have the proper documentation.) Please turn all electronic devices completely off; do not put them on vibrate. Do not let your phone ring in class, and do not text. The use of electronic devices in the classroom is distracting to oneself and others, and hinders one from learning. **If a phone rings or vibrates in class, or if I see a student texting, surfing, or otherwise using an electronic device, I may subtract 1 point out of 100 from his grade for each offense.** If you have any questions about what is acceptable, ask.

Please obtain physical copies of the required books. Do not bring e-books to class.

Campus Resources:

When needed, be sure to take advantage of some of the student support services offered by Xavier (this list is far from exhaustive):

The Writing Center: Room 400 in the Conaton Learning Commons (Phone: 513-745-2875, Online: http://www.xavier.edu/writing_center/)

Learning Assistance Center (tutoring or disability services): Suite 514 in the Conaton Learning Commons (Phone: 513-745-3280, Online: http://www.xavier.edu/lac/)

Psychological Services Center: Sycamore House, at 3818 Winding Way, next to Schmidt Fieldhouse (Phone: 513-745-3531, Online: http://www.xavier.edu/psychologicalservices/services-to-xavier-students.cfm)

Grading Policies:

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pop Quizzes</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
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<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Paper</td>
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<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Paper</td>
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<td>93-100</td>
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<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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</table>
C  73-76  2.00  Satisfactory  
C-  70-72  1.67  
D+  67–69  1.33  
D   60-66  1.00  Passing  
F   < 60   0.00  Failure

Academic Dishonesty:

“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.”

Please be aware that you also may not resubmit work, or parts of work, that you have submitted for another class without explicit permission from me to do so. In other words, do not cut and paste from papers you have written in the past. This is sometimes referred to as “self-plagiarism” and sometimes as “inappropriate use of one’s own work.” It is considered a form of academic dishonesty, and will be treated as such.

Class Schedule:

8/26 – Introduction; Syllabus; 
8/28 – Plato, Republic, beginning to 332c4 (p. 1–6) 
8/30 – Plato, Republic, I, 332c4–342e10 (p. 6–20)

9/2 – Labor Day – No Class  
9/4 – Plato, Republic, I, 343a1–354c3 (p. 20–35) 
9/6 – Plato, Republic, II, 357a1–367e5 (p. 36–45)

9/11 – Plato, *Republic*, II, 376c7–III, 392c6 (p. 56–73)
9/13 – Plato, *Republic*, III, 392c7–403c12; 410a11–412b7 (p. 73–86, 94–96); 1st Paper Assigned
9/18 – Plato, *Republic*, IV, 427c5–434d1 (p. 112–121)
9/20 – Plato, *Republic*, IV, 434d2–445e3 (p. 121–135)
10/2 – Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I. ch. 1–4 (p. 1–4)
10/4 – Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I. ch. 5, ch. 7–8 (p. 4–5, 7–11); 1st Paper Due
10/7 – Fall Holiday – No Classes
10/11 – Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, ch. 5–9 (p. 23–30)
10/18 – Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. 2, p. 12–21
10/21 – Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. 2, p. 21–26; (possible e-handout in addition (Anscombe))
10/28 – Brian Davies, “Why is There Anything at All?” (e-handout); David Albert, “On the Origin of Everything” (e-handout); How to Read Aquinas (e-handout)
10/30 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 1, a. 6–8; q. 2, a. 1–3 (p. 587–591)
11/1 – Catch-Up Day; All Saint’s Day (Catholic Holy Day of Obligation)
11/4 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 2, a. 4–6 (p. 591–593)
11/6 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 4, a. 2 (e-handout); I-II, q. 2, a. 7–8; q. 3, a. 1–2, 8 (p. 594–597, 601–602)
11/8 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 3, a. 4; q. 4, a. 2, 4; q. 5, a. 3, 5, 8 (p. 598–599, 603, 604–605, 610–611, 612–613, 614–615)
11/11 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 90, a. 1–4 (p. 993–995)
11/13 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 91, a. 1–4 (p. 996–999)
11/15 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 94, a. 2 (p. 1009–1010)
11/18 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 94, a. 3–4, 6 (p. 1010–1011, 1012–1013); 
2nd Paper Due

11/20 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 98, a. 5; q. 99, a. 1–2; q. 100, a. 2–3 (p. 1029, 1031–1033, 1038–1039)

11/22 – Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I-II, q. 100, a. 5, 6, & 9 (p. 1038–1039, 1040–1043)


11/27 – Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class

11/29 – Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class

12/2 – Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 12–17


12/6 – Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 27–33


12/11 – Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 38–45

12/13 – Study Day – No Class

12/16–12/19 – Final Examination

This schedule is subject to change, as circumstances warrant. Any changes will be announced in class prior to the day of the assigned reading and on Blackboard.