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2020

### 100-25C-ONL Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy

Cheryl McKinley  
*Xavier University*

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**Xavier University**

**Fall Semester (Session 1), 2020**

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

**Xavier Online: PHIL 100 25C (90439)**

**Lecturer:** Cheryl McKinley

Department of Philosophy, Hinkle Hall

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

Or, you may phone or text me on my cell at (567) 203-2062.

If you text, please identify yourself, e.g. Annie at Xavier

I will return your call or reply to your email within 48 hours.

**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.

## **The Philosophy 100 Course:**

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.

The 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 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:

Students recognize and cogently discuss significant questions in the humanities, arts, and the natural and social sciences.

Students identify and critically assess multiple dimensions of an ethical issue in an attempt to reach a conclusion.

## **Electives:**

This course satisfies the Humanities elective requirement in the core curriculum. Study of the humanities has always been at the heart of the Jesuit education. Xavier’s Humanities elective can be fulfilled by taking a course in addition to the designated E/RS Focus course in any of the following disciplines: Classics, Modern Languages, English, History, Philosophy, or Theology. In this course you will encounter significant issues about the broad range of human experience. You will learn to recognize and evaluate various ways in which people understand and express the human experience.

## **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 discussions, assignments, quiz scores, and final exam.

Discussions	30% of your total grade
Assignments	25% of your total grade
Quizzes	20% of your total grade
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>25% of your total grade</u>
Total	100%

### **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**

### **Fall 2020 Session 1: PHIL 100 25C (90439) is 100% Online**

**All course work** must be turned in on-time. Late discussions, quizzes, or papers will result in an automatic 10% - point reduction. All course work must be submitted through the Canvas Module. Papers are checked by Turnitin for plagiarism. Refer to Xavier University Policy on student plagiarism.

**Note on the Term Paper:** You must turn in a paper thesis for approval before you continue writing your paper.

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

While the University is closed during a **holiday**, online course work is still due on the module due date/time. Plan your time accordingly.

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:**

93% - 100% = A	73% - 76.9% = C
90% - 92.9% = A-	70% - 72.9% = C-
87% - 89.9% = B+	67% - 69.9% = D+
83% - 86.9% = B	63% - 66.9% = D
80% - 82.9% = B-	60% - 62.9% = D-
77% - 79.9% = C+	0 – 59.9% = F

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

**Note: Read the Assigned Readings and Weekly Announcements before attempting any work in the week's Module.**

**Review specific instructions for each course task in the week's online Module.**

**Week 1: Start Here (08/17/20 to 08/23/20):** From the Home Page, click the *Module* tab at the bottom and then click **Week 1 Start Here** to read the information, as well as complete the **Introductory Discussion Post** and take the **Syllabus Quiz** (both assignments are graded).

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

The *APA Resource* Module and the *Critical Thinking Information* Module should be viewed routinely throughout the term.

**Week 1: Module 1: (08/17/20 to 08/23/20):** **What is Philosophy? What is Justice?** 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)

### Assignments:

Discussion: What is Philosophy?

Quiz: Critical Thinking

Discussion: What is the difference between knowledge and opinion?

Assignment: Reflection - What is the "Noble Lie"?

**Week 2: Module 2: (08/24/20 to 08/30/20):** **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)

Assignments:

Quiz: The Parts of the Soul

Assignment: Reflection - Our Moral Compass

Discussion: Are Philosopher-Kings the Answer to Just Rule?

**Week 3: Module 3: (08/31/20 to 09/06/20): 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

Assignments:

Assignment: Reflection - Should we return to the Cave?

Discussion: Democracy becomes Tyranny?

Quiz: Intrinsic and Instrumental Value

**Week 4: Module 4: (09/07/20 to 09/13/20): Plato's Conception of Justice**

Readings: None

Assignments:

Discussion: Virtue and Class

Discussion: Plato's Forms as a Foundation for Ethics

Quiz: Plato's Conception of Justice

**Week 5: Module 5: (09/14/20 to 09/20/20): 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).

Assignments:

Discussion: Kant's Good Will

Quiz: Evaluating Immoral Maxims

Assignment: Reflection - Duty vs. Inclination

Discussion: Kant's Highest Purpose

Assignment: Empathy vs. Sympathy

**Week 6: Module 6: (09/21/20 to 09/27/20): 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:

Discussion: The Moral Tests of Non-contradiction and Universality

Quiz: Types of Duties

Assignment: Reflection - The Categorical Imperative at Work

Discussion: A Kingdom of Ends Today?

**Week 7: Module 7: (09/28/20 to 10/04/20): 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 III

The utilitarian principle: Read *Utilitarianism*, Chapter IV

Assignments:

Discussion: Consequences Are All that Matters

Assignment: Reflection - Using the Principle of Utility

Discussion: The Trolley and the Large Man

Quiz: Utilitarian Egoism?

**Week 8: Module 8: (10/05/20 to 10/09/20):** Submit both parts of the Comprehensive Final Exam (Part 1 and Part 2).

**Final exam is due by Friday, October, 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm ET.**

**The final exam will open Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 12:01 am (ET)**