2014

100-17 Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy

Andrew Hill

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Xavier University

Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2014

Philosophy 100-17 (3 credits) - MWF 2:00pm – 2:50pm, McDonald Library 130

Professor: Andrew R. Hill  
Office: 207 Hinkle Hall
Email: hilla7@xavier.edu  
Hours: WF: 12:00-1:00, TR 3:30-4:20  
Phone: 745-2024  
or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives: What do we mean when we say that something is good or bad? How can we live a good life? Why should we care about living a good life? How can we make good decisions? What is justice and how can we pursue it? These questions and others like them belong to the branch of philosophy called ethics, which will be the focus of this course. The course will also serve as a general introduction to the discipline of philosophy. This semester you will discuss ethical questions with others and develop your own thinking about them. You will also improve your skills at interpreting texts, reasoning, articulating your own thoughts, and writing quality academic papers. These skills will assist you in most of your other courses at Xavier.

Required Text Books:

Course Requirements: You will be graded on class participation, pop quizzes, writing assignments, and two exams as follows:

- Class Participation: 15%
- Pop Quizzes: 10%
- Writing Assignments: 40%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Final Exam: 20%

The grade for each of these, as well as your cumulative grade for the course, will be based on a one hundred point scale as follows: A: Exceptional (90-100%), B: Good (80-89%), C: Satisfactory (70-79%), D: Minimum Passing (60-69%), F: Failure (below 60%). The upper 3 points of each range earn a plus and the lower 3 points of each range earn a minus.

Canvas: To access Canvas, go to http://canvas.xavier.edu and log in. Then move your cursor over the Courses link at the top of the page. A dropdown menu will appear, from which you can select this course. You should check this site before each class. At least 24 hours before each session, the Announcements section will tell you what to prepare. The Files section will have copies of all course handouts. Your attendance and grades will also be tracked on Canvas. However, posted grades are not official. All official grades will be calculated and recorded in the instructor’s own files. If you believe that a grade has been incorrectly posted on Canvas, or if you would like to see your official grade sheet, please contact the instructor.
Class Participation: Philosophy is not simply information to be memorized, but rather an activity in which one engages. Therefore, it is important for you to come to each class session well-prepared and ready to participate in an active discussion of the material. This means that before each class, you should review your notes from the previous class, read the new assignment carefully, think it through, and come to class ready to talk about it. To help you prepare for class, the instructor will be providing you with reading questions for each assignment. These will help to get you started with thinking through what you are reading, but they are only a starting point. The more actively you engage the texts, the more rewarding you will find them. Important passages will be read and discussed in class, so you should always bring your book to class sessions.

Your class participation grade will be based primarily, but perhaps not exclusively, on your active contribution to class discussion. Class participation grades begin with the assumption of a C (satisfactory). To receive a higher grade than this, you must regularly volunteer contributions to class discussion. On the other hand, your class participation grade may be lowered if you are sleeping in class, working on other projects in class, or otherwise disengaging from the course.

Pop Quizzes: Quizzes will be unannounced and will focus on the reading assigned for that day and material covered in recent lectures. If you are absent from a quiz, you may not make up the quiz. However, missed quizzes will not count against you in determining your final grade for the course.

Writing Assignments: Writing assignments will come in different forms. Some might only be a paragraph, while others could be papers as long as five pages. The purpose of these assignments is to give you an opportunity to engage actively with the course content, to practice articulating your thoughts, and to improve your skills at writing academic papers. Spelling, grammar and punctuation will be considered in grading on specified assignments. Late assignments will be reduced by 3% for each day they are late. Assignments submitted after class on the due date will be considered one day late. Requests for extensions must be received before the due date. Assignments may be submitted electronically as proof that they have been completed, but a hard copy must also be submitted, since only hard copies will be graded. All writing assignments must be submitted in order for you to pass the course. You will be asked to submit some of the assignments to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection site.

Exams: The exams must be taken at the announced time except when there are extreme and unforeseeable circumstances, as judged by the instructor. The final exam will be cumulative, but weighted more heavily toward material covered since the midterm exam.

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is expected of all Xavier students. Conduct such as plagiarism, cheating, submitting the same paper for two courses, or fabrication of source material will not be tolerated. In any case of academic dishonesty, the dean of the student’s college will be notified and the presumed penalty will be failure for the course.

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others without proper acknowledgment. This is wrong because it is an attempt to pass off someone else’s work as your own. Any time that you use someone else’s work (books, articles, web sites, etc.), you must identify the source, even if you are only paraphrasing or borrowing general ideas. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following tutorial on plagiarism: http://www.xavier.edu/library/xututor/plagiarism/
**Attendance Policy:** Only four absences will be tolerated without academic penalty. Each absence after the fourth will result in a reduction of your final grade by two points on the hundred point scale. No distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences. However, this policy is not intended to create a hardship for students who have good reasons for missing a lot of class (illness, athletic commitments, family concerns, etc.). So, if you have good reasons for more than four absences, please contact the instructor within a day or two of each absence after the fourth to ask whether there is a way to earn attendance credit for that session.

Students are generally expected to be on time for class and to remain until the session has ended. (It’s only a 50 minute commitment!) Arriving late or stepping out during class can be a distraction to others and also means that you will miss out on part of the discussion. Therefore, every four times that you arrive late, leave early, or step out in the middle of class, this will be counted as an absence. If you come to class after the roll has been called, it is your responsibility to see the instructor after class to make sure that your attendance has been counted.

**Special Accommodations:** Accommodations will be made for students with learning disabilities according to the needs specified for each student by Xavier’s Learning Assistance Center (745-3280, http://www.xavier.edu/lac/), provided that the instructor has received this information in sufficient time to make the accommodation.

**Calendar:** The following calendar is tentative and subject to change. If you miss a session of class, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor or another student to find out what preparation is expected for the following session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 8/25</td>
<td>Introduction and Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 8/27</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 8/29</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Sun. 8/31)</td>
<td>Last day to add or drop courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Mon. 9/1)</td>
<td>NO CLASS: Labor Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. 9/2</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 9/4</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 1</td>
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<td>Mon. 9/8</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. 9/10</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 9/12</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. 9/15</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 3</td>
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<td>Wed. 9/17</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 4</td>
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<td>Fri. 9/19</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Books 4</td>
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<td>Mon. 9/22</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. 9/24</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 9/26</td>
<td><em>Republic</em>, Book 5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mon.  9/29  Republic, Book 6  
Wed.  10/1  Republic, Book 6  
Fri.  10/3  Republic, Book 6  

Mon.  10/6  Republic, Book 7  
Wed.  10/8  Discussion  
(Fri.  10/10) NO CLASS – Fall Holiday  

Mon.  10/13  Midterm Exam  
Wed.  10/15  Republic, Book 8  
 Fri.  10/17  Republic, Book 9  

Mon.  10/20  Republic, Book 10  
Wed.  10/22  Republic, Book 10  
Fri.  10/24  Discussion  

Mon.  10/27  Utilitarianism, Chapter 2  
Wed.  10/29  Utilitarianism, Chapter 2  
Fri.  10/31  Utilitarianism, Chapter 2  

Mon.  11/3  Utilitarianism, Chapter 3  
Wed.  11/5  Utilitarianism, Chapters 3&4  
Fri.  11/7  Utilitarianism, Chapter 4  

Mon.  11/10  Utilitarianism, Chapter 5  
Wed.  11/12  Discussion  
Fri.  11/14  1868 Speech on Capital Punishment  

Mon.  11/17  Discussion  
Wed.  11/19  Genealogy of Morality, Preface  
Fri.  11/21  Genealogy of Morality, First Treatise  

Mon.  11/24  Genealogy of Morality, First Treatise  
Last day to withdraw from course with W as grade  
(Wed.  11/26) NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break  
(Fri.  11/28) NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break  

Mon.  12/1  Genealogy of Morality, First Treatise  
Wed.  12/3  Genealogy of Morality, First Treatise  
Fri.  12/5  Genealogy of Morality, Second Treatise  

Mon.  12/8  Genealogy of Morality, Second Treatise  
Wed.  12/10  Discussion  
Fri.  12/12  Discussion  

Wed.  12/17  Final Exam: 2:00 p.m. - 2:50 p.m. (in our usual classroom)