

PHIL 205: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Instructor: Anne Jeffrey

Email: alanhor@slu.edu

Office Hours: T/Th 11-12 pm or by appt.
first floor common area in Adorjan Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help you:

- learn what ethics is and how philosophers reason about ethical issues
- improve your ability to identify, construct, and critique arguments
- gain understanding of prominent ethical theories

If you participate actively in class and approach readings and course assignments with attentiveness and care, I expect that you will grow as a thinker. If you apply the knowledge you acquire in this course, I hope you will flourish as a human being.

REQUIRED READINGS

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. and ed. Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor, ed. Roger Sullivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Anthony Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2009).

Readings will be made available on SLU Global. I strongly encourage that students use Weston's book as a guide when writing short papers for the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading Assignments. I will post two to three questions on the readings for class each day and ask that you turn in short responses either via email or hard copy by class time. The assignment will be graded on a pass/fail basis. You must pass 75% of the reading question assignments to avoid a point deduction from the final exam grade.

Written Assignments. Throughout the course of the semester, each student will write **4** short papers of no more than 2 ½ pages (12 pt. font, double-spaced) in length. Only one paper may be turned in per week. At least two papers must be turned in by **3/5**.

For each short paper, you must do the following:

(1) Identify a philosophical argument in one of the assigned readings for that week, (2) write out the valid argument in stepwise form, (3) carefully explain the argument in your own words, identifying the philosopher's assumptions and the precise conclusion, and (4) offer an objection/difficulty OR explain what philosophical issue we could make progress on if the argument were successful.

A hard copy of short papers must be turned in by class on the day for which the reading discussed in the paper is assigned. (E.g. If you write on an article assigned for 2/26, then you must hand in your paper before class on 2/26).

Presentation. Each student will be responsible for participating in a group presentation on an issue in applied ethics. The presentation grade will consist of evaluation by the professor (50%), evaluation from fellow group members (40%), and evaluation from audience (10%).

Final paper. A final paper topic will be assigned a month before the due date. The paper must be 4-6 pages (12 pt. font, double-spaced) in length. Students are to turn in a hard copy on the last day of class 5/2.

Exam. There will be one final exam on the course material on 5/9.

Assessment. The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Short papers	40%	*each paper weighing 10%
Presentation	20%	
Final Paper	20%	
Final Exam	20%	

POLICIES

Attendance. Attendance is mandatory. Two unexcused absences are permitted; every additional unexcused absence lowers the final grade one-third of a letter grade. An absence may be excused at my discretion in the case of a documented emergency or university-sanctioned activity. **Failure to attend class may result in failure of the course.**

Electronics. Cell phones must be silenced and stowed during class. Laptops are not permitted in class. If you have special learning considerations that require the use of a laptop for note-taking during class, you may request special permission from me in advance.

Late Submissions. No late papers will be accepted. Extensions on papers are only available if a student makes arrangements with me 48 hours in advance.

Students requiring extra time on assignments and exams should speak with me about arrangements at the beginning of the term.

If there is a special circumstance you think may affect your performance in the course, please let me know; it will be kept in strict confidence. I am more than happy to work with students finding themselves in adverse circumstances, but it is considerably harder to do so if you wait to notify me until after it has already negatively impacted your performance.

Academic Integrity. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by Saint Louis University policies regarding academic integrity and plagiarism. *General guidelines:* If it is a direct quotation, **cite it**. If it is a paraphrase, **cite it**. If it is an idea you got from a particular source — whether a publication or a person — **cite it**. If you are in doubt about whether it should be cited, **cite it**. The only items that are not cited are those that you think up on your own or that belong to general knowledge.* **Plagiarism on any assignment will result in an automatic failure of the course.**

READING AND LECTURE SCHEDULE

Jan. 15 *Syllabus, Intro to Logic (Weston, A Rulebook for Arguments Ch. I)*

PART I: WHAT IS “THE GOOD”?

Jan. 17 *Intro to Logic (Weston, A Rulebook for Arguments Ch. II, III, VI)*

Jan. 22 *Debate: What is the good? (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics I.i-vi, Plato, Republic 357a-367e, 504d3-521c7)*

Jan. 24 *Utilitarianism (Mill, Utilitarianism 6-7, 16-17, Sidgwick “Philosophical Intuitionism” Section 5)*

Jan. 29 *Desire-Theory (Parfit, “What Makes Someone’s Life Go Best,” Nozick, “The Experience Machine”)*

Jan. 31 *Subjectivism (Hume, “Of Virtue and Vice in General,” Lewis, “The Poison of Subjectivism”)*

* I am indebted to Mark Murphy for this suggestion.

- Feb. 5 *The Good Will and Humanity* (Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* 6:218-221, 386-395 [pp. 20-22, 150-157 in Cambridge edition], Kant, *Groundwork* excerpt)
- Feb. 7 *Virtue and Proper Function* (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I, VI.viii-xiii)
- Feb. 12 *Natural Law and Basic Goods* (Murphy, *Natural Law and Practical Rationality* selections, Aquinas ST I-II 1, 4.4, 5.7-8, 18)
- Feb. 14 *God as the Good* (Aquinas, ST I-II 5, Adams *Finite and Infinite Goods*, selections)
- Feb. 19 *Applied Issue* (TBD)
- Feb. 21 *Applied Issue* (TBD)

PART II: MUST IT BE NEUTRAL, AND IF SO IN WHAT WAYS?

- Feb. 26 *Agent-Neutral Goods: Utilitarianism* (Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics* III.xiv, IV.i)
- Feb. 28 *Agent-Neutral Laws* (Kant, TBD)
- Mar. 5 *Hybrid Views* (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* V, Aquinas I.IIae 90.2,4, 93.5-6, 94.4,6) **Two short papers must be submitted by this date.**
- Mar. 7 *Against Agent-Neutrality* (Williams, “Persons, Character, and Morality”)
- Mar. 19 *Agent-Relative Goodness: Friendship* (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.iii, ix-xii, Brink, “Impartiality and Associative Duties” IV-V)
- Mar. 21 *Agent-Relative Goodness: Mind-Dependence* (Schroeder, “Reasons for Action: Internal v. External,” Jeffrey “Mental States and Mental Structures,” Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III.i-v, Aquinas ST I-II 6-8)

Mar. 26 *Moral Skepticism* (Mackie, “The Argument from Relativity” and “The Argument from Queerness”)

Apr. 2 *Applied Issue* (TBD)

Apr. 4 *Applied Issue* (TBD)

PART III: HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO THE GOOD?

Apr. 9 *Maximizing* (Smart, “Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism,” Quinn, “The Puzzle of the Self-Torturer”)

Apr. 11 *Respecting* (Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* 6:408, 429-441, 446-473 [in Cambridge edition pp. 182-191, 196-197, 198-217])

Apr. 16 *Intending* (Anscombe, Murphy, “Intention, Foresight, and Success”)

Apr. 18 *Developing Virtue* (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II)

Apr. 23 *Acting from Virtue* (Swanton, *Virtue Ethics selections*)

Apr. 25 *Participation* (Murphy, Aquinas ST I-II 5.7)

Apr. 30 *Applied Issue* (TBD)

May 2 *Applied Issue*: (TBD) **Final papers due.**