

Syllabus
Philosophy 13: Introduction to Ethics

Spring 2012
MWF: 11-11:50
E-mail: ejramirez@ucsd.edu

Instructor: Erick Ramirez
Office Hours: M/W 12-1
Office location: HSS 8089

Teaching Assistants:

Andrew Wong
andrewwong@ucsd.edu

Danny Weltman
dweltman@ucsd.edu

Nathan Rockwood
nrockwood@ucsd.edu

Course Description

Ethics is the branch of philosophy dealing with questions about goodness, badness, rightness, and wrongness. Normative ethics offers answers to the question: what is the good? Ethics is also as an *action-guiding* discipline. What this means is that a study of ethics should help you *apply* your normative theories make real world ethical decisions and give you the resources and tools to justify your ethical claims to others.

This course should be understood as an introduction to the practice of engaging in ethical deliberation (and not a course in the history of ethics) and so we will focus on and read about normative ethics. We'll also poke our heads into two other branches of ethics: meta-ethics and applied ethics.

Meta-ethics deals with questions about the nature of morality itself. Is morality dependent on a religious foundation? Why/why not? Is there an objective basis for our moral claims or are all moral claims subjective? Are all moral claims false? Is subjectivism a problem for ethics? We'll begin the course looking at some of these questions and look at how, and to what degree, these challenges to ethical theory can be met.

'Applied ethics,' makes use of the theories of goodness and rightness and applies them to contemporary moral problems. We will end the quarter looking at two important issues in applied ethics: whether non-human animals have moral status/rights and whether (and to what degree) we have moral obligations to aid the distant needy. We will look at a variety of readings on both of these issues.

Requirements

Students **MUST** complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade in the course (even if you're taking the course P/NP).

Grade Breakdown:

Section Attendance and Participation	15%
Reading Quizzes	15%
Short Paper (~800-900 words)	10%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Paper (~2400 words)	30%

Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted without prior notification to and an okay from me. This means giving us at least **24** hours notice that you will not be able to turn in a paper on time. You will be given each assignment far in advance of its due date so be prepared to explain why you couldn't complete an assignment within the allotted time frame.

If a paper will be turned in late it is subject to a penalty (out of fairness to students that do turn their papers in on time) unless evidence of significant illness or other hardship is presented. Please come see me or your teaching assistant if you have any questions regarding the policy over late papers.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office. I am requiring that all students submit their assignments to turnitin in order to minimize the temptation to plagiarize. Papers not submitted to turnitin will **not** be graded:

Class ID: TBA

Password: TBA

You will need to create an account in order to be able to submit assignments. If you aren't familiar with the policy on plagiarism please take a few minutes to read what UCSD has to say about it:

<http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>

Course Materials

In the interest of saving you money, and to make sure everyone has access to course materials, all course texts will be available online via the library course reserves website or on the web-page I will create for our course:

UCSD E-Reserves website: reserves.ucsd.edu

My name is listed under the Philosophy department on the course reserves site. Please make sure to download and read materials **before** they're discussed in lecture.

Powerpoint lectures will be available from my course website under the 'teaching - resources' tab:
<www.erickjramirez.weebly.com>

Office Hours

I will hold office hours every week and am available by appointment also. Please don't hesitate to ask for other meeting times if you can't make my office hours. Your TA will also hold office hours. Spending time in office hours is a great way to get your questions answered and practice real time moral deliberation!

Tentative Schedule

Below you will find a tentative reading schedule. All readings listed under (A) are required reading; those listed under (B) are recommended but not required. I will try to make recommended readings available on course reserves but feel free to ask me for copies if they aren't available online. I've tried to keep readings short and accessible; this reading list is subject to modification.

Week 1

Challenges to Moral Theory in general: Does Morality Require a Religious Foundation? Is Morality possible?

M Introductions to the course, Reflective Equilibrium

W **Classes Canceled**

F Claims, Arguments, and Validity; Plato, *Euthyphro*

Week 2

M David Brink, “The Autonomy of Ethics”

W Gilbert Harman, “Ethics and Observation”

F John Mackie “The Subjectivity of Values” (selections)

[B] Optional Reading: Friedrich Nietzsche “On the Genealogy of Morals,” (selections); David Sloan Wilson, Eric Dietrich and Anne B. Clark “On the inappropriate use of the naturalistic fallacy in evolutionary psychology”

Assigned: **Short Paper Assignment**

Week 3

Challenges to objective moral theories: Egoism, Subjectivism, and Relativism

M. James Rachels “Egoism”

W Simon Blackburn, “Subjectivism” this is an audio interview available here: http://www.philosophybites.libsyn.com/simon_blackburn_on_moral_relativism and also on our course web-page

F Jesse Prinz, “The Genealogy of Morals” from *The Emotional Construction of Morals*. (215-243)

[B] Optional Readings: David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*. “Of Virtue and Vice in General” [3.1.1], Joel Feinberg, “Psychological Egoism”

DUE: **Short Paper Assignment**

Week 4

An Introduction to Objective Moral Theories: Consequentialism
Bentham, Mill, and Criticisms of Utilitarianism

M Jeremy Bentham, selections from *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (8-22); Jeremy

Bentham, selections from *The Rationale of Reward* (94);

W John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*. “What Utilitarianism Is” (135-158)

F John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*. Ch 2

[B] Optional Reading: David Brink, “Mill's Deliberative Utilitarianism” ; West, “Mill's 'Proof' of the Principle of Utility;” John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*. “Of What Sort of Proof the Principle of Utility is Susceptible” (168-175)

Week 5

M Bernard Williams: “A Critique of Utilitarianism”

W John Rawls “Classical Utilitarianism;” Robert Nozick “The Experience Machine”

F Richard Arneson "Consequentialism versus Special-Ties Partiality," pp. 382-401.

[B] Optional Reading: Richard Arneson “Rawls Versus Utilitarianism In The Light Of Political Liberalism”

Midterm Study Guide

Week 6

The Legacy of Kant: Reason as the ground of all morality

Kant and Rawls

M Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Section 1, 2 excerpts

W John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. Selections from Chapters 2 and 3

F **MIDTERM**

[B] Optional Readings: David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*. [2.3.3-4]; David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. “Appendix 1: Concerning Moral Sentiment”

Week 7

Reflective Equilibrium: Testing our intuitions and theories

Case Study: The Moral Status of Non-Human Animals

M Gregory Pence “Moral Reasoning”

W Peter Singer “All Animals Are Equal”

F Tom Regan "Utilitarianism, Vegetarianism, and Animal Rights"

Week 8

M Ingmar Persson, "A Basis for (Interspecies) Equality"

W Immanuel Kant "We have only indirect duties to animals"

F Elizabeth Anderson "Animal Rights and the Values of Nonhuman Life"

Week 9

Case Study: Altruism, Beneficence, and the Severe Demand

M **Memorial Day Observance –Classes Canceled**

W Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality"

F Garrett Cullity, "Asking Too Much"

Week 10

M Liam Murphy "The Demands of Beneficence"

W Jan Narveson "Is World Poverty A Moral Problem for the Wealthy?"

F Thomas Pogge "'Assisting' the Global Poor"

Final Paper Assignment Handed Out (due Finals week)