

Spring 2025

Phil 13: Introduction to Philosophy: Ethics

Meeting time: 11:00-12:20 Tue, Thr, MANDE B-202

Instructor: Reuven Brandt

RWAC Arts and Humanities 0497

Office Hours: In-person: Thrs. 2-3PM

Zoom: Mon. 10-11AM

Email: rbrandt@ucsd.edu (put PHIL 13 in subject)

TAs

Noam Tiran Office Hours: Tue & Wed 9AM-10AM RWAC Arts and Humanities: 0439 ntiran@ucsd.edu	Dafna Mark-Ben-Shabat Office hours: Wed 2:30-3:30 & by apt. RWAC Arts and Humanities: 0439 dmarkben@ucsd.edu
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Course description:

The course will be divided into four main sections. In the first section we will discuss arguments that attempt to undermine the possibility of ethics. We will look at general moral scepticism and evolutionary debunking arguments. In the second part of the course we will examine various normative moral theories – that is theories aim tell us what actions are right, and what constitutes our moral obligations and duties. We will look at utilitarianism, Kantian deontology and Ross' pluralistic deontology. Furthermore, we will examine deontic principles like the doctrine of double-effect, and the doing/allowing distinction and how they bear on ethical puzzles. In the third section of the course we will examine different accounts of what makes a life go well. In week 9 we will apply the tools we have learned to an applied question of the class's choosing. We will end the course with a brief discussion about whether we ought to aim for moral perfection.

Course assessment:

Discussion Section: 5% attendance, 5% participation

In-class midterm I: **April 22nd** 20%

In-class midterm II: **May 13th** 30%

In-person final exam: June 10th 11:30-2:30

Readings (All available on the course website)

Week 1	April 1st No readings	April 3rd Shafer-Landau, Ch 1-5, from Shafer-Landau, Russ. <i>Whatever happened to good and evil?</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2004
Week 2	April 8th Shafer-Landau, Ch. 6-9 from <i>Shafer-Landau, Russ. Whatever happened to good and evil?. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.</i>	April 10th David O. Brink, "The Autonomy of Ethics" <i>Euthyphro</i> (recommended)
Week 3	April 15th Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> Ch. 2	April 17th Bernard Williams. "A critique of utilitarianism." <i>Cambridge/UK</i> (1973).

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		Parfit, "The Repugnant Conclusion"
Week 4	April 22nd Midterm I	April 24th Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , ch. 5.
Week 5	April 29th Kant, <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , preface + Section 1	May 1st Kant, <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , Section II
Week 6	May 6th Ross, "What makes Right Actions Right?" from, Ross, David. "The Right and the Good." (1930).	May 8th Foot, Philippa. "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect." <i>Oxford Review</i> 5 (1967): 5-15. Woollard, Fiona. "The doctrine of doing and allowing II: The moral relevance of the doing/allowing distinction." <i>Philosophy Compass</i> 7.7 (2012): 459-469.
Week 7	May 13th Midterm II Bring paper / blue book	May 15th Landau, <i>Fundamentals of Ethics</i> , Ch. 2. Nozick, 'The Experience Machine', from Nozick, Robert. <i>Anarchy, state, and utopia</i> . Vol. 5038. New York: Basic Books, 1974.
Week 8	May 20th Parfit, "What Makes a life Go Well", from Parfit, Derek. <i>Reasons and persons</i> . OUP Oxford, 1984. Wolf, Susan. "Happiness and meaning: Two aspects of the good life." <i>Social Philosophy and Policy</i> 14.1 (1997): 207-225.	May 22nd Cottingham, John. "Partiality, favouritism and morality." <i>The Philosophical Quarterly</i> (1950-) 36.144 (1986): 357-373.
Week 9	May 27th Open topic	May 29th Open topic
Week 10	June 3rd Wolf, S. (1982). Moral saints. <i>The Journal of Philosophy</i> , 79(8), 419-439.	June 5th Review

General Policies:

- **Regrading:** If you would like to dispute the grade you receive, first make an appointment to do so with your TA. As this meeting you'll be asked to provide reasons for why the essay deserves a better grade. If you cannot reach an agreement with your TA, you can have me regrade the paper. Note though that I reserve the right to give assign a lower grade than the one given by the TA (this is rare, but it is a possibility).

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- **Course recordings:** I will strive to record lectures and post them on Canvas. Barring special circumstances (reasons that might justify academic accommodations), recordings will be available for 48 hours after they are posted. ***Downloading, copying, and reproducing lecture recordings without my explicit consent are all strictly prohibited and will be treated as violations of academic integrity.***
- Readings are subject to minor adjustments.
- I am happy to meet outside of office hours – contact me to make an appointment.
- I reserve the right to limit and/or prohibit the use of laptops, mobile phones, and other electronic devices at any point during the term if I judge that such devices are impeding concentration.
- If you require any form of accommodation on the grounds of disability - including access to electronic devices during lecture - please make sure you have registered with the Office for Students with Disabilities and have followed their guidelines for alerting instructors to your particular needs. The university’s policy on the accommodation of disability can be found here: <https://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/3>
- If you require any accommodation on religious grounds, please alert me in writing as soon as possible. The university’s policy on religious accommodation can be found here: <https://senate.ucsd.edu/operating-procedures/educational-policies/courses/epc-policies-on-courses/policy-exams-including-midterms-final-exams-and-religious-accommodations-for-exams/>
- All instances of academic offences including plagiarism, cheating on exams, and multiple submission of work, will be handled in accordance with official UCSD policy, which can be found here: <https://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>. Please read the policy, and ensure that you understand it.

Letter-grade conversion table:

A+	97 - 100
A	93 - 96.99999
A-	90 - 92.99999
B+	87 - 89.99999
B	83 - 86.99999
B-	80 - 82.99999
C+	77 - 79.99999
C	73 - 76.99999
C-	70 - 72.99999
D	55 - 69.99999
F	0 - 54.99999