

PHIL 13: Introduction to Philosophy: Ethics
Center Hall 217B, Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-1:50

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Office Hours: Thursdays 3:00-5:00 (or by appointment)

Course Overview

This course is an introduction to ethics. Here, we'll discuss some of the most complicated, difficult, and important questions philosophers have ever thought about:

- **How do we know what's right and wrong?** We'll start with normative ethics, the subfield of ethics concerned with developing theories to explain right and wrong action: consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics/the ethics of care.
- **What's right or wrong in a specific situation?** Next, we'll look at applied ethics, the subfield of ethics that applies ethical theories to particular problems we face. We will look at three: oppression and privilege, climate change, and abortion.
- **Do rightness and wrongness even exist?** We'll end the course with metaethics, the subfield of ethics that looks at the high-level questions of ethics: the role of God in morality and whether right and wrong are the same for everyone.

Course Requirements and Policies

You will need: Ted access. I will post readings, assignments, the syllabus, and other information on Ted. Complete all assigned reading before you come to class.

Assignments: There are three assignments due in this course. There are two take-home exams: a 2-3 page exam due on July 16 (Thursday of week 3) and a 3-4 page exam due on July 28 (Tuesday of week 5). The third assignment is a 4-5 page final paper, due by 2:30 pm on Saturday, August 1. All assignments must be submitted **both** through Ted and in hard-copy form by the start of class. Your papers will be graded anonymously and checked for academic honesty using Turnitin. **Assignments will cover material from the assigned reading and from class.** If you do not attend class, you will not have the information you need to complete the assignments.

Participation: This is a small course, and three hours is a long time to sit and listen to a lecture. For these reasons, I will do as little lecturing as possible, and I will expect you to participate by asking questions, making comments, and engaging with other members of the class.

The grade breakdown is:

- **Take-home assignment 1:** 20%
- **Take-home assignment 2:** 30%
- **Final paper:** 40%
- **Participation:** 10%

The grade scale is:

A+: 98% or above and at my discretion	A: 93-100%	A-: 90-92%
B+: 87-89%	B: 83-86%	B-: 80-82%
C+: 77-79%	C: 73-76%	C-: 70-72%
D+: 67-69%	D: 63-66%	D-: 60-62%
F: below 60%		

Lateness policy: Your exam must be turned in at the start of class on the day it is due. **There are no exceptions unless you make prior arrangements with me.** I will deduct one-third of a grade if the exam is turned in the day it's due any time after the start of class and one-third of a grade for each day after that that the exam is late (so, for example, an exam that would have gotten an A if it were turned in on time on Tuesday would get a B if turned in on Thursday).

On writing: Your success in this class depends on the ability to express yourself clearly. Here are some writing resources I recommend:

- **Style**, by Joseph M. Williams (University of Chicago Press, 1990) is an excellent guide to clear and forceful writing. It's widely and cheaply available at bookstores and through Amazon.
- **Me.** I will be happy to discuss drafts of your exams and final paper in my office hours or by appointment.

Other policies

- **Laptops and other electronic devices are not allowed in class**, except with written permission from, for example, the Office for Students with Disabilities.
- **You must observe UCSD's academic integrity policies.** If you violate the Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, you will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office, and I will penalize you as severely as UCSD allows. If you're concerned you may be in violation of the Policy, you can visit the Academic Integrity Office's website (<http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>) or the Writing Center, or you can talk to me about the assignment.
- If you need an accommodation for a disability or for athletic, religious, or personal reasons, please let me know during the first week of the course.
- You are welcome and encouraged to come to my office hours or make an appointment with me whenever you want to talk about the course material, your assignments, or any other philosophy-related concerns you have.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week 1

Tuesday, June 30: Course introduction; logic and arguments

Reading: None

Thursday, July 2: Normative ethics: consequentialism

Reading: Mill, *Utilitarianism*

Week 2: Take-home exam 1 distributed on Tuesday

Tuesday, July 7: Normative ethics: deontology

Reading: Kant, *The Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*;

Shafer-Landau, "The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice"; OPTIONAL: Shafer-Landau, "The Kantian Perspective: Autonomy and Respect"

Thursday, July 9: Normative ethics: virtue ethics

Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Week 3: Take-home exam 1 due and take-home exam 2 distributed on Thursday

Tuesday, July 14: Applied ethics: oppression and privilege

Reading: Johnson, *The Gender Knot*; hooks, *Feminism Is for Everybody*

Thursday, July 16: Applied ethics: climate change

Reading: Pope, "Ethics as if Tomorrow Mattered"

Week 4: Final paper distributed on Tuesday

Tuesday, July 21: Applied ethics: abortion

Reading: Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

Thursday, July 23: Metaethics: ethics and religion

Reading: Plato, *Euthyphro*

Week 5: Take-home exam 2 due on Tuesday

Tuesday, July 28: Metaethics: moral relativism

Reading: Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"; Prinz, "Morality is a Culturally Conditioned Response"

Thursday, July 30: Metaethics: what good is moral theory?

Reading: Wolf, "Moral Saints"

Final paper due on Saturday, August 1, by 2:30 pm