

Skidmore College
Department of Philosophy & Religion

PH 211: Ethics
10:10-11:30

Fall, 2012
Reg Lilly

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to the field of ethics, the branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of one's life and how one chooses to act in one way rather than another. The basic premise of ethics is that everyone concerned with ethics (and even those that aren't!) want to live a good life; the range of understandings about what constitutes a 'good life' is a fundamental issue for ethics. We will be reading original documents in the history of philosophy that have been foundational for the reflection on ethics. Our main objective will be to become familiar with these principle ethical theories developed through the course of history so that we can both use these theories for our own philosophizing, but recognize when they are informing the thought of others. The last section of the course will be spent considering various ethics problems to which one can apply these ethical theories.

LEARNING GOALS

- Think critically, creatively, and independently
- To learn how to recognize, analyze, construct and criticize arguments.
- Become familiar with and learn to use concepts fundamental to ethical and moral reasoning.
- Read, analyze, and apply philosophical texts and their concepts to questions of human existence and morality/ethics.
- Communicate effectively.
- Become conscious of one's own moral and ethical beliefs

REQUIRED TEXTS

- 1) *Ethics: Contemporary Theory, and Contemporary Issues*, ed. Steven M Cahn & Peter Markie
- 2) Handouts

ASSIGNMENTS

9/5 Introduction

VIRTUE ETHICS

9/7 Aristotle, pp 124-134
9/12 Aristotle, pp. 134-146
9/14 Aristotle, pp. 146-157
9/19 Aristotle, pp. 157-169
9/21 Aristotle, pp. 169-177

9/26 **Yom Kippur – No Class**

9/28 Nussbaum, pp. 704-721 **Paper assigned**

DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS

10/3 Kant, pp. 283-289

10/5 Kant, pp. 289-295 (right column) (First paper due)

10/10 Kant, pp. 295-300

10/12 Kant, pp. 300-306

10/17 Korsgaard, pp. 683-696; Nagel, pp. 752-750

10/19 Foot, pp. 556-561; O'Neill, pp. 562-577

10/24 **Midterm**

10/26 **Study Day – No Class**

CONSEQUENTIALIST ETHICS

10/31 Bentham/Mill pp. 319-330

11/2 Mill pp. 330-344

11/7 Mill pp. 344-360

11/9 Baier, 476-491

11/14 Held, pp. 724-39

11/16 Rawls (**Paper Assigned**)

11/21 **Thanksgiving Break**

11/23 **Thanksgiving Break**

APPLIED ETHICS

11/28 Shue, pp. 869-878; Hill, 880-887

11/30 Steinhoff, "Torture – The Case for Dirty Harry and Against Alan Dershowitz; Wolfendale, (Training Torturers: A Critique of the "Ticking Bomb" Argument (handouts)

12/5 Applied Ethics, TBA

12/7 Applied Ethics, TBA

12/12 Applied Ethics, TBA

CAVEAT

This syllabus is well-considered plan for the course of the semester; however, modification may be made should they be called for.

GRADING

There will be two papers and two exams, which will be equally weighted. Each will be worth 22.5% of the final grade. Participation will count 10% of the final grade.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Hours WF 9:00-10:00 TUTH 12:00-2:00 and by appointment.
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