

Skidmore College
Department of Philosophy & Religion

PH 211: Ethics
11:10-12:30

Fall, 2011
Reg Lilly

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to the field of ethics, that branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of one's life and how one chooses to act in one way rather than another. 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 principle ethical theories developed through the course of history. 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

9/8 Introduction

ETHICS OF VIRTUE

9/13 Aristotle, pp 124-134
9/15 Aristotle, pp. 134-146
9/20 Aristotle, pp. 146-157
9/22 Aristotle, pp. 157-169
9/27 Aristotle, pp. 169-177
9/29 Nussbaum, pp. 704-721 **Paper assigned**

DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS

10/4 Kant, pp. 280-285 (left column)

10/6 Kant, pp. 285-289 (First paper due)
10/11 Kant, pp 289-292 (left column)
10/13 Kant, pp. 292-297
10/18 Kant, pp.297-306
10/20 Korsgaard, pp. 683-696; Nagel, pp. 752-750
10/25 **Midterm**

CONSEQUENTIALIST ETHICS

10/27 Bentham/Mill pp. 319-330
11/1 Mill pp. 330-344
11/3 Mill pp. 344-360
11/8 Baier, 476-491
11/10 Camus/Sartre pp. 397-412
11/15 Held, pp. 724-39
11/17 Rawls (**Paper Assigned**)

APPLIED ETHICS

11/22 Shue, pp. 869-878; Hill, 880-887

Thanksgiving Break

11/29 Steinhoff, “Torture – The Case for Dirty Harry and Against Alan Dershowitz;
Wolfendale, (Training Torturers: A Critique of the “Ticking Bomb” Argument
(handouts)
12/1 Applied Ethics, TBA
12/6 Applied Ethics, TBA
12/8 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 10:00-11:30, TUTH 9:00-10:30 and by appointment.
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