Course Description:

This course will offer a historical survey of various positions taken by western philosophers concerning the nature and justification of ethics. Special attention will be paid to the relation of differing metaphysical perspectives to the development of moral concepts. Some of the issues that will be covered include theories of the self in relation to moral responsibility, the relation of the individual to society, different concepts of justice, the relation of ethics to specific cultural contexts such as ethnic and religious perspectives, the experience of personal alienation including the need to understand and achieve workable moral positions, and the place of ethics in political debates. A comprehensive understanding of the historical development of various ethical theories will cultivate appreciation of a range of perspectives and develop an sensitivity for the complexities inherent in attempts to come to terms with nature of moral dilemmas. Written assignments, oral presentations, and class discussions will encourage critical thinking concerning the different ways of conceptualizing approaches to the negotiation of moral conflicts.

Ann Hoffman, Ph.D., Dept. of Philosophy
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                   EX -5868  Tues. & Thurs. 12:00-3:00
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January 13

Introduction to Ethics


January 15, 20, 22, 27, 29

Greek Ethical Theory: Plato and Aristotle


Denise, "Epictetus, Self-Discipline," pp. 54-68.
February 3, 5  Judeo-Christian Ethical Traditions


February 10  Early Modern Ethical Theory: Part One
QUIZ # 1
   (Includes Ayn Rand)


Blackboard: John Locke

February 12  Lincoln's Birthday  School Holiday  No Class

February 17, 19  Deontological Ethical Theory: Immanuel Kant
Paper Summary Due


February 24, 25  Utilitarianism


Blackboard: Singer, Peter: Handout
March 2
Quiz #2

Hegelian and Marxist Ethical Theories


Optional

March 4, 8, 11

Existentialist Ethical Theory


Optional

March 16, 18

Science and Ethics


Sociobiology: Blackboard
John Dewey: Blackboard

March 22-26
Spring Break No Classes

March 30
Quiz #3

Rights Theory


Blackboard: Examples of Contemporary Rights Issues, including Human Rights, Environmental Rights, Workers' Rights, and Animal Rights.
March 30,  
April 1, 8, 9  

Rights and Justice Theory


Blackboard: Excerpts from Writings of Sandel, Taylor, and Nozick.

April 13, 15, 20, 22  

Ethical Pluralism and Communitarian Moral Theory

MAJOR PAPERS DUE (13th or 18th)


Blackboards: Excerpts Sandel, Taylor, and Machiavre


April 27, 29  

Class presentations on paper topics

May 4  
Quiz #4

EXAM PERIOD Tuesday (NB) 2:00-3:50 PM
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Two short papers or one long paper (40% of the final grade)

The long paper (9-10 pages in length) or the short papers (5-6 pages in length) are to be based on readings listed in the syllabus or on topics approved by the instructor. The paper topics must be related to issues and/or theories covered in this course. Students are encouraged to select problem areas that have special interest for them. The instructor must be consulted about the topics before the papers are written. Drafts or outlines may be turned in for evaluation before the final drafts are submitted. At least two meetings with the instructor are recommended. Please make appointments at class time so we can discuss special interests and paper topics. A bibliography and footnotes are required.

Major papers are due during the third week of April 13-15.

2. A written summary of the student’s paper topic (10% of the final grade) Summary papers are due on or before the end of the third week in February 26th.

3. Four in-class quizzes (40% of the final grade)

These quizzes will include definitions, identification of terms, and short answer questions. There will be a make-up quiz in May during the final exam period for those who have not handed a previous quiz.

4. Class participation / including attendance (10% of the final grade)

Students are expected to attend class regularly. Attendance will be taken at each class and absences exceeding 3 classes during the semester could lead to a lowering of the student’s overall grade. If the student knows he or she will have to miss classes due to business travel or personal emergencies, the instructor should be contacted as soon as possible. Extended excused absences will require a letter of explanation as well as approval by the instructor. Respect for others in the classroom is a major factor in class participation. Discourteous or disruptive behavior, in class or before class, could also lead to a lowering of a student’s grade.
S. Policy concerning academic integrity

a) Cheating. Use or attempted use of any unauthorized assistance in taking an exam, test, quiz, or other assignment.

b) Encouraging Academic Dishonesty. Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to persuade and/or influence another to violate the University's rules, policies, and regulations governing academic integrity.

c) Fabrication. Deliberate falsification or design of any material or excerpt in an academic assignment or exercise.

d) Plagiarism. Appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's own work. This includes (1) paraphrasing another's ideas or conclusions without acknowledgment; (2) lifting entire paragraphs, chapters, etc. from another's work; and (3) submission as one's own work, any work prepared by another person or agency.

Violation of these policies will result in failure of the course.