

Philosophy 222: Ethics

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Course Description

Ethics is the philosophical study of morality, which focuses on the question of how one should go about making morally informed choices. Initially, such questions are easy to ask, and equally easy to answer. One should not break promises; one should not hurt the feelings of one's friends; and so on. Yet closer examination reveals that such questions are not as easily settled as we might like. If, for instance, we know that it is wrong to break a promise to a friend, and we also know it is wrong to hurt a friend's feelings, what should we do when keeping a promise requires hurting a friend's feelings? This course will focus on these and other ethical puzzles, with an eye to the theories that underlie their solutions. By the end of the semester, students should be sufficiently well-equipped with the concepts of *utilitarianism*, *deontology*, and *virtue* to engage with professionally-written journal articles on ethics, as well as to pursue professional research of their own.

Texts

In addition to the three written texts required for this course (Mill's *Utilitarianism*, Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*), a copy of Plato's *Republic* (translated by C.D.C. Reeve) is required for the course, and is available **for free** on Blackboard. You **must** use this translation when we read the *Republic*. Permission to use alternative translations of Kant and Aristotle are contingent on my approval.

Work and Grading

There will be three unit-based exams, each of which is worth 15% of your final grade, one final exam, which is worth 15% of your final grade, and two papers, which are each worth 15% of your final grade. The remaining 10% of your final grade will be determined by class participation, which includes not only attendance but also discussion and *impromptu* writing assignments.

Group Work Policy

There will be no group work assigned for this course. Any collaboration on papers or exams will be counted as plagiarism.

Late Work Policy

No late work will be accepted without a medical excuse. All medical excuses require documentation from Student Health Services.

Academic Honesty

Moravian College adheres to an Academic Honor Code, which contains the following summary paragraph in the Moravian College Student Handbook:

“Students may not submit homework, computer solutions, lab reports, or any other coursework prepared by, copied from, or dictated by others. If the student is employing the services of a tutor (whether from the campus community or elsewhere), the tutor may not prepare the student's work for class. ... Students may not provide or receive unauthorized help in taking examinations, tests, or quizzes, or in preparing any other requirements for a course. Such restrictions are illustrated by but not limited to the following:

- *Using unauthorized material in an examination, test, or quiz.*
- *Using crib notes in any form, regardless of who prepared them.*
- *Using calculators or any other hand-held electronic devices unless authorized by the instructor.*
- *Using e-mail or text-messaging during any exam without the permission of the instructor.*
- *Stealing, using, or transmitting in writing, electronically, or verbally, actual examinations, tests, quizzes, or portions thereof prior to, during, or following an exam.*
- *Reading or observing another's work without the person's consent, whether it be on paper, in electronic form, or in any other medium.*
- *Soliciting or using a proxy test-taker or acting in that capacity.”*

You are responsible for knowing what counts as academic dishonesty. If you do not understand these guidelines, or are not sure how to apply them, see me immediately.

Cell Phones and Other Class Disruptions

Turn off your cell phones and stow them when you enter class. Do not check your cell phone, or send text messages, during class. Do not listen to an iPod, MP3 player, or any similar device while in class. You may take notes on a laptop computer, but do not surf the web, play games, or check email during class. Drinks of water, trips to the bathroom, and the like should all be handled before class begins, or else after class ends.

Absence Policy

By signing up for this course you undertake to attend all classes and lectures. Excused absences require documentation. Classes missed for athletic or religious reasons must have similar documentation, and must be discussed with me at the start of the semester. **Five or more unexcused absences will result in an F for the course.**

Religious Observance Policy

You must inform me in writing the first week of class if you will be missing any classes due to religious observances. Any absence for religious purposes will be considered unexcused unless you submit the request in writing the first week to both myself and the Registrar.

Learning Disabilities and Classroom Accommodations

Students who wish to receive special accommodations in class or during exams are required to provide me with a written statement from the Director of Learning Services, Laurie Roth. This information is confidential, and will not be shared with any other faculty, staff, or student. If you have questions about this, contact the Office of Learning Services at 610-861-1510.

Tentative Schedule of Readings (Subject to Change)

NOTE: Reading is to be done *before* you come to class. Students are expected to bring copies of readings to class on the days that they are discussed. Anything that directly affects your grade, other than participation, is written in **bold** among the dates in the following schedule.

Unit One - Utilitarianism

Tues, Aug 28: Introductions and course overview

Thurs, Aug 30: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 1-16

Tues, Sept 4: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 16-30

Thurs, Sept 6: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 30-45

Tues, Sept 11: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 45-55

Thurs, Sept 13: **Exam 1**

Unit Two - Deontological Ethics

Tues, Sept 18: Kant, *Groundwork*, 3-20

Thurs, Sept 20: Kant, *Groundwork*, 21-51

Tues, Sept 25: Kant, *Groundwork*, 51-62

Thurs, Sept 27: Kant, *Groundwork*, 62-72

Tues, Oct 2: **Exam 2, First Paper Due**

Unit Three - Divine Command Theory

Thurs, Oct 4: Plato, *Euthyphro*

Tues, Oct 9: FALL RECESS - NO CLASS

Unit Four - Virtue Ethics

Thurs, Oct 11: Plato, *Republic I*

Tues, Oct 16: Plato, *Republic I*

Thurs, Oct 18: Plato, *Republic II*

Tues, Oct 23: Plato, *Republic II*

Thurs, Oct 25: Plato, *Republic III*

Tues, Oct. 30: Plato, *Republic IV*

Thurs, Nov 1: Plato, *Republic IV*

Tues, Nov 6: Plato, *Republic V*

Thurs, Nov 8: Plato, *Republic VI-VII*

Tues, Nov 13: Plato, *Republic VI-VII*

Thurs, Nov 15: Plato, *Republic IX-X*

Tues, Nov 20: **Exam 3, Second Paper Due**

Thurs, Nov 22: THANKSGIVING RECESS - NO CLASS

Tues, Nov 27: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, TBA

Thurs, Nov 29: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, TBA

Tuesday, Dec 4: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, TBA

Thursday, Dec 6: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, TBA

The **FINAL EXAM** date and time will be announced in class.