

MORAVIAN COLLEGE
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2016

PHI 355 Meta-Ethics

Instructor: Dr. Bernie Cantens

Online Course

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Office: Comenius Hall 107

Office Hours: Through Hangout or Blue Jeans with appointment

Course Catalogue Description:

A study of the fundamental concepts of morality from metaphysical, epistemological, semantic, and psychological perspectives.

Required Text:

- *Metaethics: An Introduction*, Andrew Fisher, Acumen Publishing, 2011.
- *Foundations of Ethics: An Anthology*, edited by Russ Shafer-Landau and Terence Cuneo, Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Required Technologies: Google Apps

- **Google Community** will serve as the course's central portals for the course and for the discussion board.
- **Google Drive** will be used as the vehicle to share documents among students and between the students and professor.
- **Notability** will be used to grade students' assignments.
- **Google Hangout** will be used to hold face-to-face office hours with students and group discussions sessions.

Helpful Websites:

- Google Plus: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hC_M6PzXS9g
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OarvK5w_7gc
- Google Drive: Part 1:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0ZvYRU1Y5Y>
Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdtHjhJ_350
There are 4 more parts.
- Google Hangout: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6bLIPnAEiA
- Google Circles and Communities:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUCu5e_fyeg

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who complete this course should be able to do the following:

- To explain the nature of meta-ethics and how it differs from normative and applied ethics.
- To demonstrate an understanding through clear writing about the ontological views concerning morality (e.g., error theory, emotivism, constructivism, sensibility theories and realism).
- To demonstrate an understanding through clear writing about some of the most prominent issues in contemporary meta-ethics, such as moral disagreements, moral knowledge, and the relationship between the moral and nonmoral.
- To develop skills of analyzing and evaluating arguments for and against different views in the study of meta-ethics.
- To critically analyze and write about prominent primary texts in the field of metaethics.
- To exercise scholarly creativity, fairness and tolerance toward different conflicting views.

Grading:

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| 7 Assignments | 40% |
| Final Exam | 25% |
| Paper | 25% |
| Lecture Presentation | 10 % |

Course Requirements

(1) Assignments 40%

(2) Final Exam (25% of the final grade)

(3) Paper (25% of the final grade)

Students will complete one philosophical writing assignment on a topic *directly* related to this course and assigned readings. The writing assignment is a *top-down, thesis-governed paper* approximately 7 pages long, double-spaced and 12-Times New Roman font. A thesis-governed paper is a more formal academic style paper – “the prototypical structure of academic prose. Such writing begins with the presentation of a problem to be addressed; near the end of the introduction, after the writer has presented the problem, the writer states his or her thesis, often accompanied by a purpose statement or a blueprint statement that gives the reader an overview of the whole essay. The body of the paper then supports the thesis with appropriate arguments and evidence” (John C. Bean, *Engaging Ideas*, 87). The students will be graded according to four criteria: (1) whether the introduction has a clear and explicit thesis and organized developing statements; (2) whether the paper is well organized and demonstrates a logical flow of ideas (in accordance with the introduction); (3) whether there are well constructed and developed arguments and/or critical

explanations of philosophical problems and solutions; and (4) whether the writing skills, such as word use, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation are correct.

The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.

(4) Lecture Presentation (10% of the final grade)

Each student will be responsible for delivering a lecture presentation on one of the selected reading during the second half of the semester

How to turn in your assignments, paper, and exam?

Students will create a FOLDER in Google Drive. Name the “**ME-[Last Name]**,” for instance, “ME-Cantens”. You will then share this folder with me (with the option to edit). Everything that goes into this file I will have access to. When you complete an assignment you will place it in this FOLDER. Please name the assignment “**ME-[LAST NAME]-[assignment-#]**,” for instance, “ME-Cantens-Assignment-1”. I will grade it using Notability or as a Google doc, and I will share it with you when I have completed grading it. You will then have access to your graded paper on Google Drive.

You will do the same for the paper. Please name the paper “**ME-[Last Name]-Paper**” for instance, “**ME-Cantens-paper**”

You will do the same for the final exam. Please name the exam “**ME-[Last Name]-Exam**” for instance, “**ME-Cantens-exam**”

Step 1: *Create* a FOLDER on Google Drive called **ME-[Last Name]**.

Step 2: *Share* the FOLDER **ME-[Last Name]** on Google Drive with me (Cantens).

Step 3: *Name* the assignments file “**ME-lastname-assignment-#**” for example ME-Cantens-Test-1.

Step 4: *Upload* the assignment document into your Google Drive FOLDER **ME-[Last Name]**.

Step 5: *Repeat* steps 3 and 4 for all assignments, paper, and exam.

Step 6: *Name* paper “**ME-[Last Name]-paper**” for instance, “**ME-Cantens-paper**”

Step 7: *Name* exam “**ME-[Last Name]-exam**” for instance, “**ME-Cantens-exam**”

Academic Dishonesty Policy

See Student Handbook pp. 32 – 38.

Plagiarism

“A major form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism, which we define as the use, whether deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment; an “outside source” is

defined as any work (published or unpublished), composed, written, or created by any person other than the student who submitted the work (adapted from Napolitano vs. Princeton). Instructors often encourage—and in the case of research essays, require—students to include the ideas of others in their writing. In such cases, students must take care to cite the sources of these ideas correctly (in other words, to give credit where credit is due).” (Moravian Academic Dishonesty Policy)

Student Behavior:

See Student Handbook pp. 38 – 40.

Students Disability Policy

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Topic

Introduction
 The Open Question Argument
 Emotivism
 Error Theory
 Moral Realism and Naturalism
 Moral Realism and Non-Naturalism
 Quasi Realism
 Moral Relativism
 Moral Psychology
 Moral Epistemology

PROGRAM AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

| WEEK | TOPIC | READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| WEEK 1 Jan. 18-22 | MORAL ONTOLOGY | |
| | | <p>Prepare a 1-2 minute YouTube video introducing yourself to the class. Share the link in our Google Community.</p> <p><i>Introduction</i> 1-10 <i>Foundations</i> 1-5</p> |
| WEEK 2 Jan. 25-29 | | |

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| | The Open Question Argument | <i>Introduction</i> 11-24 <i>Foundations</i> , Moore, 465-73 |
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| WEEK 3 Feb 1-5 | | |
| February 1 (Monday) | | Assignment 1 Due |
| | Emotivism | <i>Introduction</i> 25-38 <i>Foundations</i> , Ayer, 40-6 |
| WEEK 4 Feb. 8-12 | | |
| February 8 (Monday) | | Assignment 2 Due |
| | Error Theory | <i>Introduction</i> 39-53 <i>Foundations</i> , Mackie, 13-23 |
| WEEK 5 Feb. 15-19 | | |
| February 15 (Monday) | | Assignment 3 Due |
| | Moral Realism and Naturalism | <i>Introduction</i> , 55-71 |
| WEEK 6 Feb 22-26 | | |
| | Moral Realism and Naturalism | |
| WEEK 7 | | |

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| Feb. 29- March 5 | | |
| Feb. 29 (Monday) | | Assignment 4 Due |
| March 8-12 | Spring Recess | <p>Start Reading <i>Foundations</i>, Railton, 186-205 (This is the most difficult reading)</p> <p>Choose a future topic and start preparing a five-minute lecture. You will make a video of the lecture and upload to YouTube. Share the link on our Google Community.</p> |
| WEEK 8 March 15-19 | | |
| | Moral Realism and Naturalism | <i>Foundations</i> , Railton, 186-205 |
| WEEK9 March 22-25 | | |
| | | Assignment 5 Due |
| | Moral Realism and Non-Naturalism | <i>Introduction</i> , 73-89 |
| WEEK 10 March 28- April 1 | PROBLEMS IN METAETHICS | |
| | | Assignment 6 Due |
| | Quasi Realism | <i>Introduction</i> , 91-109. <i>Foundations</i> , Jackson, 449-54 |
| WEEK 11 April 4-8 | | |

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| April 4 (Monday) | | Assignment 7 Due |
| | Moral Relativism | <i>Introduction</i> , 111-126. <i>Foundations</i> , Harman, 84-92. |
| WEEK 12 April 11-15 | | |
| | Work on completing the paper | |
| WEEK 13 April 18-22 | | |
| April 18 | | Paper Due Lecture |
| | Moral Psychology | <i>Introduction</i> , 127-140. <i>Foundations</i> , Smith, 223-42. |
| WEEK 14 April 25-29 | | |
| | Moral Epistemology | <i>Introduction</i> , 141-56 <i>Foundations</i> , Audi, 402-19 |
| May 4 (Monday) | | Final Exam Due |