

PHIL 160: Intro to Ethics (Fall 2019)

Section Syllabus

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 (will respond within 48 hours,
 except on weekends)

Section 003,4: F 9-11, AH G115
Section 005,6: F 12-2, MH 1460
My Office Hours: W 1-3, AH 1156,
 and by appointment (just email me!)
Prof. Jacobson's Office Hours:
 M 2-4, AH 2263, and by appointment

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

By the end of this discussion section, you will be able to:

- Critically use ethical theories and tools to analyze and try to solve real-world problems
- Closely and charitably read difficult texts
- Improve clarity and originality in writing
- Respectfully discuss high-stakes topics with a diverse group of thinkers

WHY LEARN IT?

Moral problems affect all of us daily. This class will give you the tools to begin to identify, study, and solve those problems. How cool is that? Moreover, skills in reading, writing, and discussion will be directly useful in your daily academic and non-academic pursuits.

That said, this course is not the end-all, be-all of life. Stay attentive to your overall wellness; check out the Canvas 'Wellbeing' tab to help you do so!

HOW CAN YOU SUCCEED IN LEARNING IT?

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| 1. You can succeed through brilliance hard work and ownership over the course. |
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Hard work, not some innate spark, will be the first key to success. That's why we will primarily be *learning by doing*. We will use individual and group exercises to examine real-world issues.

The second key to success will be *making this course yours*. That's why I'll ask you to wrestle with your own moral views; to select a topic as a class for a full debate; and to write your final papers on an ethical issue that really matters to you.

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| 2. You can succeed by never seeking help when you need it. |
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Seeking help is not shameful; it's smart! I recommend the following process:

- First, see if the syllabus and other course documents can answer your question.
- Second, ask your fellow peers. They will be an educational resource just as much as me!
- Third, come to my or Professor Jacobson's office hours, with a question, confusion, insight, or inkling!
- At any stage, consult me if you'd like more resources about reading/writing philosophy!

3. You can succeed by doing the hard work ~~alone~~ with others.

Working by yourself not only traps you into your own worldviews, but also eliminates your ability to shape the worldviews of others. That's why we will strive to learn *from and with each other*.

To do so, we will follow norms of respectful and engaged participation. I've started us off with a few, but please do propose additional norms as the course continues. We – including me! – should all:

- Create an accessible and inclusive environment, by ensuring our words, actions, and body language include, respect, and affirm others. Talk to or email me if we can make accommodations that will make section more accessible for you. I also encourage you to talk with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (ssd.umich.edu; 734-763-3000; Haven G664), who can help secure accommodations without disclosing medical information to course instructors.
- Hear from all voices – step up if we're shy; step back if we're talkative.
- Be courteous. No interruptions, no sidebars.
- Listen carefully, especially if we disagree.
- Respond in a way that shows we've carefully listened to each other.
- Support our claims with evidence and reasoning, to ensure productive discussion.
- Use laptops/etc. for note-taking only. No phones at any time.
- Take group-work seriously.
- Recognize we're still learning – that's why we're here! Let us all grow from mistakes.

HOW WILL YOU *DEMONSTRATE* YOUR LEARNING?

Assignments:

1. Class Readings. Do readings before section. They influence quality of work in every other part of class.
2. Class Participation (6%). Your grade depends on the quality – did you make *substantial and thoughtful* contributions? – and quantity – did you *consistently* contribute? – of your participation. Section and office hours can both count. You can miss two sections, no questions asked, with no penalty. Further absences will only be excused in the event of emergencies.
3. 200-word Reading Assignment (3%). An assignment to practice active reading of philosophical texts.
4. 500-word Argument Reconstruction and Objection Assignment (8%). An assignment to practice reconstructing authors' arguments and objecting to them.
5. Midterm Exam (20%). An exam to test comprehension of half the term's material (lecture and readings).
6. 500-word Objection and Response Assignment (8%). An assignment to practice objecting to authors' arguments and responding to your own objection.
7. Final Paper Outline (5%). An outline to prepare and get feedback for the final paper.
8. 1200-word Final Paper (20%). A final paper on an ethical issue of your choice (excluding class material), involving argument reconstruction, objection, and response.
9. Final Exam (30%). An exam to test comprehension of the term's material (lecture and readings). Comprehensive, but focuses on second half of the term.

Standards:

97-100 = A+
94-96 = A
90-93 = A-

87-89 = B+
84-86 = B
80-83 = B-

77-79 = C+
74-76 = C
70-73 = C-

67-69 = D+
64-66 = D
60-63 = D-

Policies:

1. Rubrics: I will hand out grading rubrics for section assignments before the due-dates. This ensures consistent grading.
2. Anonymity: I will grade work anonymously, to ensure fair grading. Please do not put your name on or in any assignments, exams, or file names; use only your UMID number.
3. Misconduct: Plagiarism and other academic misconduct take the intellectual property of others and/or produce unfair academic advantages. That's why we ask students to follow LSA's academic integrity standards (<https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity.html>).
4. Late Work and Extensions: Late work loses three percent per day. After a week, it will not be accepted, barring extreme, unforeseen circumstances. Extensions will not be allowed, barring extreme, unforeseen circumstances. This ensures that students get equal time to complete assignments and that the assignments (and grading) do not pile up near the end of the semester.
5. Extra Credit: Extra credit will not be granted, as this can create the opportunity for unfair, ad hoc grade adjustments.
6. Grading Appeals: If you believe an assignment you submitted deserves a different grade than it received, please come talk to me in office hours to explain why. After we talk, you may ask in writing for reconsideration. Your request must be submitted within two weeks, but no sooner than three days after the assignment is returned. Your written request must explain why you believe the assignment deserves a different grade. The opportunity to appeal is important to ensure student voice; the procedure for appeal ensures thoughtfulness in a decision to appeal and consistency across appeals.
7. General Grading Questions: If you have any questions about grading, just ask!

Thanks to CRLT, philosophy colleagues, and The Chronicle of Higher Education for resources regarding syllabus construction.

PHIL 160 Schedule (Fall 2019)			
<i>All readings on Canvas unless otherwise noted.</i>			
<u>Week</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Section Topic and Reading</u>	<u>Section Assessment</u>
Sep. 2-6	Topic: The Good and the Right (W) Reading: None	Topic: Introduction Reading: None	Reading assignment explained First day questionnaire handed out
Sep. 9-13	Topic: Relativism and Nihilism (M); Divine Command Theory (W) Reading: Bagish (M); Timmons (W)	Topic: Recap 9/9 and 9/11; The Ethics of Non-Monogamy Reading: C.S.I. Jenkins and Jonathan Jenkins Ichikawa, "On Being the Only Ones" (6 pgs.)	Reading assignment due (in section, 9/13) First day questionnaire due (in section, 9/13) Argument Reconstruction and Objection Assignment explained
Sep. 16-20	Topic: Egoism, Psychological and Ethical (M); TBD (W) Reading: Feinberg (M); TBD (W)	Topic: Recap 9/18; Disability and Care-Giving Reading: Eva Feder Kittay, "The Ethics of Care, Dependence, and Disability" (9 pgs.)	Reading assignment returned (in section, 9/20)
Sep. 23-27	Topic: Utilitarianism I (M); Utilitarianism II (W) Reading: Mill (M); Mill (W)	Topic: Recap 9/23 and 9/25; Animal Ethics Film: "Earthlings," dir. Shaun Monson, narr. Joaquin Phoenix, < http://www.nationearth.com/ >, <i>content warning: fatal violence</i> (90 min.)	
Sep. 30 - Oct. 4	Topic: Utilitarianism II (M); Secular Deontology (M) Reading: Mill (M); Ross (W)	Topic: Recap 9/30 and 10/2; HIV Treatment and Prevention Reading: Case Study on HIV Treatment and Prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa (4 pgs.)	Reconstruction and Objection assignment due (on Canvas, midnight 10/2)
Oct. 7-11	Topic: What Does Morality Demand? (M); Is Singer's Principle Tenable? (W) Reading: Singer (M); Schmidtz (M)	Topic: Recap 10/7 and 10/9; Midterm Review Reading: None	Reconstruction and Objection assignment returned (on Canvas, 10/11) Objection and Response Assignment explained

<u>Week</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Section Topic and Reading</u>	<u>Section Assessment</u>
Oct. 14-18	Topic: <i>No Lecture: Fall Break</i> (M); Midterm Exam (W) Reading: None	Topic: Structured Debate on Issue of Class's Choice Reading: None	Final Paper (and outline) explained
Oct. 21-25	Topic: Natural Law: Property Rights (M); Is Morality Everything? (W) Reading: Locke (M); Wolf (W)	Topic: Recap 10/21 and 10/23; Indian Independence and Self-Sacrifice Video: "The Good Place – How Your Life Is Scored", < https://bit.ly/2k9Y0sY > (2 min.) Reading 1: Mahatma Gandhi, excerpt of "Quit India" Speech (4 pgs.) Reading 2: Subhas Chandra Bose, "Give Me Blood and I Promise You Freedom!" (5 pgs.)	
Oct. 28 – Nov. 1	Topic: Why Be Moral? (M); Justifying the State (W) Reading: Plato (M); Hobbes (W)	Topic: Recap 10/28 and 10/30; Worker Freedom Reading: Elizabeth Anderson, excerpt from <u>Private Government</u> (12 pgs.)	Objection and Response assignment due (on Canvas, midnight 10/30) Midterm exam returned (in section, 11/1)
Nov. 4-8	Topic: Utilitarianism and Justice (M); Kant I (W) Reading: Hare (M); Kant (W)	Topic: Recap 11/4 and 11/6; Objectification Reading: Leslie Green, excerpt of "Pornographies" (6 pgs.) Painting 1: "Quality Control," Anne Collier, <i>content warning: nudity</i> (2 pgs.) Painting 2: "Family Jules: NNN (No Naked Niggahs) 1974," Barkley L. Hendricks, <i>content warning: nudity</i> (3 pgs.)	Objection and Response assignment returned (on Canvas, 11/8)
Nov. 11-15	Topic: Kant II (M); TBD (W) Reading: Kant (M); TBD (W)	Topic: Recap 11/11 and 11/13; Final Paper Workshop Reading: Assigned Peer Final Paper Outline(s)	Final paper outline due (on Canvas, midnight 11/13)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Section Topic and Reading</u>	<u>Section Assessment</u>
Nov. 18-22	Topic: Moral Responsibility I (M); Moral Responsibility II (W) Reading: Frankfurt (M); P.F. Strawson (W)	Topic: Recap 11/18 and 11/20; Implicit Bias and Structural Racism Reading 1: "Implicit Bias Means We're All Probably at Least a Little Bit Racist," Jenée Desmond-Harris (11 pgs.) Reading 2: "Reparations: Reasonable and Right," Charles Blow (3 pgs.)	Final paper outline returned (on Canvas, 11/20)
Nov. 25-29	Topic: Moral Responsibility III (M); Review (W) Reading: G. Strawson (M)	<i>No Section: Thanksgiving Break</i>	
Dec. 2-6	Topic: Theory of Value I (M); Theory of Value II (W) Reading: Epictetus (M); Epicurus and Nozick (W)	Topic: Recap 11/25, 11/27, 12/2, and 12/4; End-of-Semester Wrap-Up Reading: None	Final paper due (on Canvas, midnight 12/4)
Dec. 9-13	Topic: Virtue Ethics (M); A Challenge to Morality (W) Reading: Aristotle (M); Nietzsche (W)	<i>No Section: Classes Over</i>	Final paper returned (on Canvas, 12/15)
Date TBA: Optional Final Exam Review (including recap of 12/9 and 12/11)			
W Dec. 18 8-10 AM: Final Exam (in lecture classroom)			