

I. Course Description

This course seeks to provide students with the ability to think about ethical problems in terms of the common normative systems of ethics and the ability to apply this type of thought to real world problems and situation.¹ This course will accomplish this by a close reading of Aristotle, Mill, and Kant and an engagement of the theories they propose with contemporary issues.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students should

- Be familiar with the theoretical structures of deontology, virtue ethics, and consequentialism
- Be able to systematically examine everyday phenomena in terms of their ethical consequences
- Be able to articulate their sense of morality in philosophical terms

III. Required Texts²

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by Terence Irwin (Hackett: 1999, ISBN 0-87220-464-2).

Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: on a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns*, trans. by James W. Ellington (Hackett: 1993, ISBN 0-87220-166-X).

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, edited by George Sher (Hackett: 2001, ISBN 0-87220-605-X).

Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education, Second Edition, with a New Preface* (UC Press: 2003, ISBN 978-0520238640)

Plato, *The Republic, Book 2* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.3.ii.html>)

Other articles on electronic reserve..

IV. Grading and Assignments

A.	Outlines	30%
B.	Term Paper	15%
C.	Midterm Exam	12%
D.	Final Exam	20%
E.	Participation	15%
F.	Issue Analysis	8%

A. Outlines

“Outlines” provide a major writing component of this course. An outline requires the student to demonstrate an understanding of the argument made in a philosophical text by restating it within a limited number of words. These outlines will be graded on a scale of 20 points. An 18 is considered a high achievement on an outline, a 16 is a respectable achievement, a 14 is passing, and grades beneath this reflect work that is of insufficient quality. This semester, there will be five outlines and the lowest grade on an outline will not be factored into calculating this part of the student’s grade.

B. Term Paper

In addition to the outlines, each student will write an eight to ten page term paper in which they analyze a contemporary issue in ethics. The author should take a position which demonstrates both awareness of the basic historical approaches and knowledge of at least one contemporary position. Additionally, the paper must discuss at least one of the primary theories and two contemporary articles.

C. And D. Examinations

An exam may include any of the following:

- (1) a short answer section which demonstrates a basic ability to interact with the material and to understand the terms employed in normative ethical theories and meta-ethics.

¹ For more information, refer to the catalog entry that defines this core requirement.

² In general, I use Hackett translations because they are (a) scholarly and (b) inexpensive.

- (2) a practical problems section. Practical problems will require the student to use one of the primary methods in the chapters covered by the test.
- (3) an essay section in which the student engages with the material and demonstrates the ability to use the concepts it employs or to analyze and critique the material covered.

E. Participation, Attendance, and Conduct

Participation amounts to 15% of the course grade. While participation can take various forms, including careful listening, coming to office hours, sending questions via e-mails concerning the material, coming to class having read the material (for which I reserve the right to quiz you should other forms of participation fail), participation primarily takes three forms in class. First, participation amounts to meaningful engagement with class lectures and involvement in class discussions. I track participation daily and will notice (**but not mention**) if you are texting, surfing the internet, studying for another class, sleeping or otherwise not participating.

Second, I expect every student to prepare at least one question for each class. I will not be collecting the questions but I will ask students at random in each class. The failure to have a meaningful question will lower the student's participation grade.

Third, it is impossible to participate without attending. As such, class attendance is expected and absences must be excused through contact with the instructor by e-mail, voicemail, or in person during office hours. Students missing two full class sessions or more will receive an F in the course. Late attendance is preferable to missing an entire session, but no student may come to class late repeatedly since this harms the learning environment.

Beyond the contribution of participation to the student's grade, the instructor also reserves the right to award a failing grade in the course to any student whose conduct (after an initial warning) continues to detract substantially from the learning experience of other students, and to ask the student to stop attending and drop the course.

Part of good classroom conduct is remembering to turn off cellular phones (ringing results in a zero for the day) and to not text message during class (texting results in a zero for the day and a broader reduction in your participation grade). Having your cell phone ring in class will not result in a public reprimand but will result in a zero for participation for that day.

F. Issue Analysis

Each student will also be required to present an issue analysis which will to approach a real contemporary problem in a news article by explaining how different ethical theories would approach this problem. Further details will be provided in a handout.

V. Assignment Schedule

For Readings, A = Aristotle, M = Mill, K = Kant, N = Noddings

	Reading	Assignment
January 19	Introduction, Syllabus, Link: Republic, BK 2	
Jan 26: Mill	M: Chapters 2-5	Outline M2,6-12 (300 words)
Feb 2: Relativism, Deontology	E-Res: James Rachels "Cultural Relativism", E-Res: Singer "Biological Basis of Ethics" K: Preface	Outline: Rachels (250 words)
Feb 9	K: Section I	Outline I (350 words)
Feb 16	K: Section II	
Feb 23	Selections from Kant's <i>Metaphysics of Morals</i> ; E-Res: Stocker, Baron	
Mar 2	E-Res: Singer: "Famine, Affluence, Morality", E-res: B. Williams, E-res: O. O'Neill	
Mar 9	MIDTERM Examination	(Utilitarianism / Deontology)
Mar 16	SPRING BREAK	
Mar 23: Aristotle	A: BK I (entire), E-Res: Nussbaum	Outline BK I.1-9 300 words
Mar 30	A: BK II (entire), III.1-5	Outline BK III.1-5 (300 words)
Apr 6	A: BK III.6-9; A: BK VIII (entire)	*Turn in Thesis Statement for Analysis Paper
Apr 13	A: BK X.6-9; E-res: Anscombe; Online: http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml	
Apr 20: Care Ethics	N: Ch. 1, Ch. 4	
Apr 27	N: Ch. 5-6	* Turn in Analysis Paper
May 4	N: Ch. 7; Review For Final	

Final Exam: TBA (Probably May 11 9:30am)

VI. Policies and Guidelines

A. Late Homework and Exam Policy

Late Homework. On those days when the homework is taken for a grade, it will not be accepted late. The instructor will regard excuses about computer and printer problems as equivalent to “The dog ate my homework.” In the event that a student has an excused absence for such a period, the student may provide the homework upon their return. If a student fails to do so with reasonable promptness (along the same guidelines as students who were present), then no credit will be given.

Late Exams. Every student must take the exams for this course with the rest of the class at the indicated times. Excepting a dire emergency (such as medical conditions that require admission to a hospital) that can be documented to the instructor’s satisfaction, in which case the student must arrange to take the exam as soon as reasonably possible. *The instructor does not offer early or make-up exams to students for whom the exam schedule conflicts with their travel schedule. It is each student’s responsibility to inform anyone who might make travel arrangements on her or his behalf of the academic calendar.*

B. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

For a full statement of Fordham policies applying to academic integrity, see the Honor Code section of <http://www.fordham.edu/UndergraduateBulletin/>, which is hereby incorporated into this syllabus by reference. Briefly stated, plagiarism is the use or citation of materials in a manner that misrepresents the authorship as one’s own. The most flagrant examples of this are examples of direct copying either in whole or in part without the use of quotation marks or an indication of its source. Equally wrong is the effective copying of a work’s contents by paraphrase without identifying the source of the statements or arguments. Finally and most subtly, an improper citation also is a form of plagiarism. At the discretion of the instructor, plagiarism cases may incur an F in the course, 0 on the assignment, or a reduction in grade on an assignment -- depending both on the severity of the act and the attitude of the student towards the committed act.

C. Disability Services

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (Rose Hill - O’Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655 or at Lincoln Center – Room 207, x6282).

Note: The ADA cuts both ways in that it is also unlawful for me to provide you with such a benefit without you going through the Office of Disability Services.

D. Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to alter or make reasonable exceptions to any detail of this syllabus if, in his view, doing so will enhance the learning experience while preserving fairness for all students. (If a student knows that something in this syllabus will be a problem, it is the student’s responsibility to approach the instructor to ask for clarification and revision.)