

History of Philosophical Ethics

Phil 333
Fall 2014
MW 1:00-2:15
Office hours: M-F 10:20-11:20

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Catalog Course Description:

A survey of central figures and issues in the history of Western philosophical ethics. Attention is given to the historical development of philosophical ideas. Figures are selected from among the following: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Kant, Mill, Nietzsche, Freud. Prerequisite: PHIL 233.

Course Objectives:

This course aims to introduce students to important thinkers and themes in the history of philosophical ethics. Attention will be given to different meta-ethical theories and their various proponents, questions of moral psychology, theories of virtue, and theories of justice. Course objectives are:

1. Students will come to recognize some key figures and issues in the history of philosophical ethics and their importance as part of our intellectual heritage.
2. Students will begin to appreciate the historical dimensions of philosophical inquiry and the development of philosophical thought.
3. Students will develop their skills in critical thinking and begin to appreciate the importance of critical thinking in determining one's own beliefs and judgments.
4. Students will be encouraged to engage in rational, critical argument with their peers on important philosophical issues.

Course Requirements

1. Regular attendance and participation in class discussions, homework assignments, and in-class assignments. These activities will comprise 10% of the overall grade. Regular attendance and participation in class discussions, homework assignments, and in-class assignments. Students are also expected to exhibit *mature comportment*. Passing notes, giggling, chatter, and otherwise disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Cell-phones may neither be used nor handled during class. Students who cannot comport themselves appropriately will be asked to leave the classroom. Students asked to leave the classroom on two separate occasions will be dropped from the class.
2. Three exams each weighted equally, which together comprise 90% of the total course grade. Students who miss exams will receive a failing grade unless they have been required to attend a TLU event or unless their absence has been approved by the professor prior to the time of the exam. Mild forms of physical misery (e.g., things like allergy induced sniffles) do not constitute a legitimate reason for missing an exam. Students who unexpectedly miss an exam due to a

serious illness must bring a letter signed by a doctor before they will be allowed to make up any exam.

Required texts

1. Plato, *Meno*.
2. Plato, *Republic*.
3. St. Augustine, *The City of God*.
4. John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*.
5. Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*.
6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*.
7. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

Students with disabilities:

TLU seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified individuals with disabilities. If you require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements, it is your responsibility to register with the Office of Disability Services in the Student Life Office and to contact the course instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be made.

Academic Honesty:

TLU's policy concerning cheating and plagiarism is found on pages 18-19 of the 2014-2015 *Student Handbook*. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a failing grade on that assignment. The student will also be reported to the Dean of Student Life and Learning, where the incident will be recorded in his or her academic file.

This syllabus is not a contract. It may be modified by the instructor in consultation with the students

COURSE SCHEDULE

8/27 Introduction to course
handouts

9/1 **LABOR DAY**

9/3 Allan Bloom, "Books" in *The Closing of the American Mind*, **handout**
Intro to Socrates,
Assignment: *Euthyphro*, **handout**

9/8 Problems with the Socratic method
Plato, *Meno*

9/10 Discussion of *Meno*
Plato, *Meno*,

- 9/15 Plato, *Republic*, Book I
(pages 1-31)
- 9/17 *Republic*, Book II
(pages 32-59)
- 9/22 *Republic*, Book III
(pages 60-93)
- 9/24 Video: "Merchants of Cool"
Allan Bloom, "Music" in *The Closing of the American Mind*, pp. 68-81, **handout**
- 9/29 *Republic*, Book IV
(pages 94-121)
- 10/1 *Republic*, Book VIII
(pages 213-240)
- 10/6 **EXAM**
- 10/8 Augustine, The City of God
Book I, preface. Book XII, chapters 1-3, 5-9. Book XIV, chapters 1, 4-6, 11-13
(pages 5-6, 471-474, 476-483, 547, 552-556, 568-574)
- 10/13 *City of God*
Book XIV, chapter 28. Book XV, chapters 1, 4-7. Book XIX, chapters 4-11.
(pages 593-596, 599-606, 852-866)
- 10/15 *City of God*
Book XIX, chapters 12-14, 17-22, last paragraph of 23, 24-28.
(pages 866-874, 877-884, 890-894)
- 10/20 Augustine, *On the Morals of the Church*
reading on reserve
- 10/22 Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, "First Section"
(pages 7-17)
- 10/27 Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, "Second Section"
(pages 19-48)
- 10/29 Kant, excerpts from the *Critique of Practical Reason*, **handout**
- 11/3 Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns"
(pages 63-67)

11/5 **EXAM**

11/10 J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapters 1 & 2
(pages 1-25)

11/12 *Utilitarianism*, chapter 3 & 4
(pages 26-40)

11/17 *Utilitarianism*, chapter 5
(pages 41-63)

11/19 Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals
Reading to be announced

11/24 Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*.

11/26 **THANKSGIVING**

12/1 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, chapters 1-3
(pages 10-52)

12/3 *Civilization and Its Discontents*, chapters 4-8
(pages 53-112)

12/8 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

12/10 Concluding thoughts

FINAL EXAM

Friday, Dec. 12, 1:30-4:30 p.m.