

Syllabus
The University of New Orleans
Dept. of Philosophy

PHIL 2201: Ethics (3 credits)

SECTION 002: LA 372, TTh, 9:30 - 10:45 a.m.

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Clarence Mark Phillips
Office: UNO: LA 391
Office Hours: MWF 1-2; TTh 10:45-11; 12:15-1 (and by appointment)
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Course Webpages: [Moodle](#) login page

Required Texts

- [1] Johnson & Reath – Ethics: Selections From Classical and Contemporary Writers (Wadsworth, 11th edition)
- [2] Lewis Vaughn – Doing Ethics: Moral Reasoning & Contemporary Issues (Norton, 3rd edition)
- [3] (Recommended)
Hugo Bedau - Thinking and Writing about Philosophy and/or
Zachary Seech - Writing Philosophy Papers (on reserve in UNO Library)

Course Description

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: A study of concepts of right and wrong, good and evil, and their grounds.

COURSE OVERVIEW: Ethics is the study of right and wrong action, of what makes some ways of acting good or bad, moral or immoral. Since the time of Socrates, philosophers have sought criteria for determining how, when, and why an act can be judged to be “ethical” or “unethical”. This course will be a survey of those attempts, from such ancient writers as Plato and Aristotle, through the medieval writings of Augustine and Aquinas, and onto modern thinkers like Kant and the Utilitarians. Ultimately, our goal will be to see which, if any, of these thinkers is right about how to determine the ethics of human behavior.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- to recognize ethical issues.
- to know the various subfields of ethics and the sorts of questions dealt with by philosophers in those areas.
- to know how to form arguments.
- to know the views of proponents of various ethical positions.
- to understand the philosophical issues associated with definitions of ethical terms.
- to identify key figures in the history of Ethics.
- to understand the nature of philosophical argumentation.
- to present and to defend your own views regarding the above issues.
- to read philosophical texts.
- to recognize philosophical questions.
- to define key concepts in philosophical thought.
- to write an argumentative essay on some topic in the field of Ethics.

Grades will be based on a 400 point scale distributed as follows:

| Requirement | | Final grade | |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Exam 1 | (25%) 100 points | A | 360 - 400 points |
| Exam 2 | (25%) 100 points | B | 320 - 359 points |
| Exam 3 | (25%) 100 points | C | 280 - 319 points |
| Term Paper | (25%) 100 points | D | 240 - 279 points |
| | | F | 0 - 239 points |

READINGS:

Students will be expected to keep up on the weekly reading assignments for the course, to have read the material *prior* to class, and to come to class with relevant questions about, and/or criticisms of, those readings.

EXAMS:

There will be 3 in-class examinations on material from the reading and class lectures, and there will be no make-up exams.

Students will also be requested to pay close attention to current news issues (in order to determine the relevance of philosophy to present-day concerns).

Grading:

Each test will count for 25% of the overall score, and the term paper the remaining 25% – (3 exams X 25% per test = 75%) + (term paper x 25% = 25%) = 100%. An overall score of 360 = A; 320 = B; 280 = C; 240 = D; anything less = F. Failing all tests will necessarily result in an F. In-class *attendance* will decide all borderline cases.

Since UNO does not use pluses and minuses, borderline cases will be determined by attendance and class participation.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodation. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: Please remember that both the Library and Learning Resource Center are available to assist all students regarding writing and research.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and to evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the UNO Judicial Code for further information. The Code is available online: http://www.uno.edu/~stlf/Policy%20Manual/judicial_code_pt2.htm

ATTENDANCE: Regular *attendance* is also required, and will count toward the final grade. Missing more than 4 days of class will result in the loss of one letter grade (e.g. A + 5 days of absence = B). *And use of objects external to the course (e.g. cell phones, novels, calculators, etc.) equals absence, as does unconsciousness.*

CLASSROOM CONDUCT/SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Feel free to say anything to me or to your peers, but tailor your remarks so as not to be uncivil, abusive, or inappropriate. Abusive behavior, personal attacks, or name calling will not be tolerated.

COMPUTERS/PADS: You may use a computer or tablet with to take notes or access an e-version of the textbook. But you may NOT go online during class – including to check email, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

INCOMPLETES: Incompletes are discouraged. Should you need to take an incomplete, arrangements must be made with me before the last class meeting.

MAKE-UPS: There are no make-up exams.

PHONES: Phone calls and texting interrupt class (for both you and your fellow students). So, all phones should be turned off before class begins. And NO texting during class.

WITHDRAWALS: You may withdraw from this course for any reason. Withdrawal is strictly up to you and none of my business. Look in the course listings for the last day to withdraw without a penalty — a 'W' appearing on your transcript.

PHIL 2201 – Spring 2015 Timeline
(subject to revision)

| DAY | TOPIC/READING |
|--------------|--|
| Tue Jan. 13 | Introduction (Syllabus) |
| Thu Jan. 15 | An Introduction to the Study of Ethics/Paper Topics |
| Tue Jan. 20 | Chapter One: Ethics & The Examined Life |
| Thu Jan. 22 | Chapter Two: Subjectivism, Relativism & Emotivism |
| Tue Jan. 27 | Chapter Three: Evaluating Moral Arguments |
| Thu Jan. 29 | Chapter Four: The Power of Moral Theories |
| Tue Feb. 3 | Chapter Five: Ethical Egoism |
| Thu Feb. 5 | Chapter Six: Non-consequentialist Theories |
| Tue Feb. 10 | Review |
| Thu Feb. 12 | First Exam (Chapters 1-6) |
| Tue Feb. 17 | <i>MARDI GRAS - NO CLASS</i> |
| Thu Feb. 19 | Chapter Seven: Virtue Ethics |
| Tue Feb. 24 | Chapter Eight: Abortion |
| Thu Feb. 26 | “ |
| Tue Mar. 3 | Chapter Nine: Altering Genes & Human Cloning |
| Thu Mar. 5 | “ |
| Tue Mar. 10* | Chapter Ten: Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide |
| Thu Mar. 12 | “ |
| Tue Mar. 17 | <i>Work on Term Paper - NO CLASS</i> |
| Thu Mar. 19 | <i>Work on Term Paper - NO CLASS</i> |
| Tue Mar. 24 | Second Exam (Chapters 7-10) |
| Thu Mar. 26 | Chapter Eleven: Capital Punishment |
| Tue Mar. 31 | Chapter Eleven: Capital Punishment |

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| Thu Apr. 2 | SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS |
| Tue Apr. 7 | Chapter Twelve: Sexual Morality |
| Thu Apr. 9 | Chapter Thirteen: Same-Sex Marriage |
| Tue Apr. 14 | Third Exam (Chapters 11-13) |
| Thu Apr. 16 | Chapter Fourteen: Environmental Ethics |
| Tue Apr. 21 | Chapter Fifteen: Animal Rights |
| Thu Apr. 23 | Chapter Sixteen: Political Violence – War, Terrorism, & Torture |
| Tue Apr. 28 | Chapter Seventeen: Global Economic Justice |
| Thu Apr. 30 | Term Paper Due/Review |

Thu May 7 Final Exam (10 a.m.)

* Final date to drop course(s) or resign from the University: 3/11.