

Philosophy 002 – Introduction to Ethics

Fall 2013

Section 9 (#81249)

M/W/F 8:00 AM – 8:50 AM

Room: Mendocino Hall 3009

Satisfies General Education Area C3 (see learning objectives and evaluations below)

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”
- Aristotle

“There are two types of people in this world, good and bad. The good sleep better, but the bad seem to enjoy the waking hours much more.”
- Woody Allen

Instructor Information

Instructor: J. P. Carboni

E-mail: philosophy.carboni@gmail.com

Mailbox: Philosophy Department Office:
Mendocino Hall, Room 3000

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 10:00 AM
- 11:00 AM – Mendocino Hall, Room #
3032

Course Description

Course Catalogue: This course is designed around the “Examination of the concepts of morality, obligation, human rights and the good life. Competing theories about the foundations of morality will be investigated.”

Ethics is the study of right and wrong. However, it is more than what this overly simplistic definition implies. Ethics, and the study of ethics, concerns looking at how we act, why we act the way we do and how we justify the way we act. In this course we will discuss various traditional/historical ethical theories that have had an impact on the way in which we answer the questions above. However, while traditionally the philosopher has been stereotyped as being the “arm chair quarterback” or “backseat driver” of the moral realm, usually alongside a large wing-backed armchair and a pipe of some type, ethics is about doing. Thus, in addition to the above discussions/lectures, we will be engaging in ethical analysis of contemporary issues like abortion, war and terrorism, human rights, animal rights, environmentalism, etc. We will also read and discuss theories of the self, freedom, the role of religion, etc. and review how our understanding of these issues impacts our moral lives.

Required Textbooks

Exploring Ethics, 2nd Edition. (2010). Ed. Steven M. Cahn. Oxford University Press: NYC. ISBN 9780199757510

Learning Objectives

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities.
- B. Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies.
- C. Compare and analyze various conceptions of humankind.
- D. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including their animating ideas and values.
- E. Student Learning Objectives for Area C2 courses can be viewed at:
<http://www.csus.edu/acse/Senate-Info/13-14Agendas-Minutes/051514Agendas-Minutes/13-14FS-116ap.pdf>

Each of these learning objectives will be met through a variety of course assignments including readings, examination, quizzes, essays, group work and class lectures/discussions (each of these is discussed further below).

Standards of Conduct

Plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated in this class. All those who engage in these activities will receive a zero on the associated assignment. In addition, all incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism will be reported to the department chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs. It is your responsibility to both know and adhere to Sac State's Academic Honesty Policy. This policy can be found at the following address:
<http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/UMA00150.htm>

In-Class Participation: Purposely "obstructing" the viewpoint of another student in the classroom during classroom discussions is prohibited. This class will involve many discussions concerning the material assigned for homework and the material presented during the classroom lectures. This being a philosophy course, many of these discussions *may* challenge certain beliefs that you hold. Open dialog and proper methods of argumentation (which will be discussed) are not only expected but required for this class.

Attendance/Participation: Students are expected to attend each class session. This class will involve many in-class discussions and in-class group work. Students are expected to have completed the readings and participate in all in-class discussions. Your final grade will include a participation score evaluated both on the amount and level of participation within your group and the level of participation in the class as an individual (see points breakdown below).

Cell Phones and Computers: Please set your phone to vibrate before class! Cell phones are not to be used in class. If you must take a call (which I discourage unless an emergency) please step outside before you answer. No texting or Internet use will be allowed in class (unless directed by me). This is especially true during exams. Students may use computers in class but will be required to sit in the front row to ensure academic honesty.

Email Correspondence: Monday through Friday I check my Sac State and Gmail accounts a minimum of three times each day. If I do not respond to an email that you have sent within one

day, please feel free to resend the email. In order to get a prompt reply, all emails that you send should be formatted according to the following link:

<http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/How%20to%20correspond%20with%20your%20professor.html>

Special Note: All instructors employed by CSU, Sacramento are ‘mandatory reporters’ of suspected child abuse or neglect according to the *California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act*. As such, I am bound to the requirements established by CSU Executive Order 1083 which can be found at the following link: <http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1083.html>

Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you will need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Information can be found at the following link: <http://www.csus.edu/sswd/ApplicationProcess-Forms.html>. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours *before* the end of the third week of the semester.

Evaluation/Homework Assignments

Quizzes: Every Friday there will be a *group* quiz where students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the material discussed that week. The first quiz will be held on Friday, September 12th (please see the reading and assignment schedule at the conclusion of this syllabus for a complete quiz schedule). You will be evaluated as a group, and each quiz will be worth a total of 15 points. The lowest score on one quiz will be dropped at the conclusion of the semester. Students will be assigned by random selection to a group on Friday, September 5th (the second day of class) and will remain with that same group throughout the semester. There will be a total of 195 possible quiz points at the conclusion of the term. There will also be a number of in-class group exercises throughout the semester that will be worth a total of 40 possible points. Before the final class lecture on December 12th, students will be required to evaluate each of their group members. These evaluations will factor into the participation grade (see “Total Point Breakdown” below). There will be no make-up quizzes if you miss a quiz.

Examinations: There will be two in-class examinations in this class (a midterm and a final exam – 100 possible points each). The dates of these examinations will be as follows:

Midterm Exam: Friday, October 20th (Week 8)

Final Examination: TBA (December 13th - December 19th)

Essays: This class will involve three essay assignments. Each essay will be worth 100 possible points. You will be provided with a detailed essay assignment sheet including a grading rubric two weeks prior to the assignment due date.

Essay # 1 Due Date: October 10th, 2014 – Assignment details provided Sept. 26th

Essay # 2 Due Date: November 14th, 2014 – Assignment details provided October 31st

Essay # 3 Due Date: December 5th, 2014 - Assignment details provided Nov. 21st

Grading Scale

All essays/exams will be graded based upon a 100 pt scale where 1 pt = 1%. Below is the grade breakdown for all examinations and essays:

A Outstanding (96 – 100 pts)
B+ Above Satisfactory (86 – 89 pts)
B- Below Satisfactory (80 – 82 pts)
C Average (73 – 75 pts)
D Poor (60 – 69 pts)

A- Very Good (90 – 95 pts)
B Satisfactory (83 - 85 pts)
C+ Above Average (76-79 pts)
C- Below Average (70 – 72 pts)
F Unacceptable (59 and lower pts)

Overall Point Breakdown:

Quizzes – 195 pts possible
Examinations – 250 pts possible
Essays – 300 pts possible
Participation – 40 pts possible (15 group and 25 class)

Total Possible Points: 770 pts. with 1 dropped quiz

Final Grade Breakdown: **A** 770 – 728 pts; **A-** 727 – 690 pts; **B+** 689 – 665 pts; **B** 664 – 645 pts; **B-** 644 – 615 pts; **C+** 614 – 590 pts; **C** 589 – 565 pts; **C-** 564 – 530 pts; **D** 529 – 455 pts; **F** 454 pts and Below

Reading/Assignment Schedule

Below is the reading schedule for the course. All readings, unless indicated, will be from the required text for the course. All additional materials will be posted on Blackboard. Unless otherwise indicated, Fridays are scheduled for quizzes, reviews, group-work and to catch up on material that was not completed on Monday/Wednesday.

- Week 1:** Course introduction. What is philosophy and who cares about ethics?
Readings – For Wednesday: Course Review, Learning Exercises
For Friday: Morality and Moral Philosophy, William K. Frankena & Are we entitled to our opinions? &
- Week 2:** What is morality? How do we know what's right?
Readings – For Monday: How Not to Answer Moral Questions, Tom Regan
For Wednesday: *Crito*, Plato
For Friday: The Nature of Ethical Disagreement, Charles L. Stevenson & Group Quiz #1
- Week 3:** What role does God play in all this?
Readings - For Monday: God and Morality, Steven M. Cahn
For Wednesday: Euthyphro Problem (Blackboard)
For Friday: Group Quiz 2
- Week 4:** Sophistic Relativism (Cultural and Ethical) – What is Relativism, Where did it originate, and why is it such a headache for moral philosophers?
Reading – Monday/Wed: The Challenge of Cultural Relativism, James Rachels
For Friday: Group Quiz 3
Review for Essay #1

Week 5: Psychological and Ethical Egoism

Readings – For Monday: Reading on Ayn Rand (*Blackboard*)
For Wednesday: The Social Contract, *Thomas Hobbes*
For Friday: Group Quiz 4

Week 6: Utilitarianism

Readings – For Monday: Reading on Jeremy Bentham (*Blackboard*)
For Wednesday/Friday: Utilitarianism, *John Stuart Mill*; Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism, *Louis P. Pojman*
For Friday: Group Quiz 5
Due: Essay #1

Week 7: Deontic Ethics

Readings – For Monday: The Categorical Imperative, *Immanuel Kant*
For Wednesday: *Kant Cont. & A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics*, *Onora O'Neill*
For Friday: Group Quiz 6

Week 8: Virtue Ethics

Readings - For Monday: The Nature of Virtue, *Aristotle*
For Wednesday: *Aristotle Cont. & Virtue Ethics*, *Bernard Mayo*
For Friday: Group Quiz 7

Week 9: Midterm Exam Review, Group Work (Monday Wednesday) and Midterm Exam (Friday). Essay #2 Review (Wednesday)

Week 10: What is a person & the Nature of Animal Rights

Readings – For Monday: The Case for Animal Rights, *Tom Regan*
For Wednesday: The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research, *Carl Cohen*
For Friday: Group Quiz 8

Week 11: Personhood and abortion

Readings – For Monday: On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion, *Mary Anne Warren*
For Wednesday: Why Abortion Is Immoral, *Don Marquis*
For Friday: Group Quiz 9
Due: Essay #2

Week 12: Human Rights

Readings – For Monday/Wednesday: Famine, Affluence, and Morality, *Peter Singer*
For Wednesday/Friday: World Hunger and Moral Obligation: The Case Against Singer, *John Arthur*
For Friday: Group Quiz 10
Review for Essay #3

Week 13: Environmental Ethics – Should we care about our planet?

Reading - For Monday/Wednesday: Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism, *Elliott Sober* – Group Quiz 11 on Wednesday
Holiday: Friday, November 28th

Week 14: Should we care about what we eat?

Reading – For Monday: We Are What We Eat, Tom Regan

Film – For Wednesday/Friday: *Forks Over Knives* (To be followed by a class discussion)

For Friday: Group Quiz 12

Due: Essay #3

Week 15: Just war theory and the ethics of torture & What Does All This Even Mean?

Reading – For Monday: *The Moral Equivalent of War*, William James (Blackboard)

Friday: Final Examination Review

For Friday: Group Quiz 13

Week 16: Final Examination

Finally, welcome to philosophy 002.