Instructor: Dr. Daniela Vallega-Neu  
Email: dneu@uoregon.edu  
Office hours: W 2:15-4:15 pm and Thursdays by appointment in Susan Campbell Hall 245.  
Class meets M 6:00-8:50 in 121 McKenzie Hall

**Spinoza’s Ethics**

**Texts:**

Required for all students:

Required only for PHIL 533 (recommended for PHIL 433)
Jeffrey Bernstein, “Love and Friendship in Spinoza’s Thinking,” in *Monograph of the North American Spinoza Society*, Number 9, 2000, 3-17. (Text available through Canvas.)

Recommended

**Course Description:**
This course will consist mainly in a close reading and discussion of Spinoza’s *Ethics*. As we read Spinoza’ *Ethics* we will learn how he conceives of God/Nature as a substance with infinite attributes and modes comprising everything that exists, how he explains the nature and origin of mind and emotions, what power we have of our emotions, and how we can find ultimate blessedness in the love of God/Nature.

**Requirements PHIL 433** (for PHIL 533 see further down):
1. Annotated glossary 35%
2. Final term paper (6-9 pages) 35%
3. Participation, exercises, short homework assignments 20%
4. Weekly meeting in reading groups 10%

**Regarding 1**: You will be given concepts you need to include in your glossary. For each concept:
   a) Begin with a general definition of the word in Spinoza (include the Latin term) as you would find it in a dictionary.
   b) Then quote at least 3 passages in which Spinoza makes a significant use of this concept.
      (Note: you will add quotes as we progress in the reading of the *Ethics*. In week five, you only need to have one or two quotations.) Quote in the standard way for Spinoza, for example: Sch. Pr. 44, II. This means: Scholium, Proposition 44, Part II of the *Ethics*.
   c) Then explain in a written paragraph what the word means in the context of the quotation you presented.
Regarding 2: The final term paper needs to focus on Spinoza’s *Ethics*. You may focus on a topic of your choice. Most of your paper should consist in an analysis and explanation (which means, an interpretation) of the primary text. Define and explain all main concepts you use (your glossary will be of use to you here.) Quote and explain important passages. Never let a quote stand for itself; always add an explanation in your own words. You need to submit a final paper proposal at the beginning of week 9. Include a rough outline as well as an indication of the main text passages you wish to discuss.

Regarding 3: You will get participation points for attendance, valuable contributions to discussions and short in class exercises.

Regarding 4: Since we are meeting only once a week and this is a 4 credit course, you are expected to meet one additional hour outside of regular class time in smaller groups of about 5 students and discuss the readings of the previous main class. Rotate the leadership of the discussion group. The group leader should write down questions and text passages that were discussed and take attendance. These questions and the names of the attendees need to be emailed to me by the end of the week in which you met. I will sporadically (without announcement) attend some of the meetings.

PAPER FORMATS: All written work needs to be submitted typed, font Times New Roman 12, double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Add a cover page with your name, the title of your paper, and course information.

Requirements PHIL 533 (graduate students):

1. Annotated glossary 30%
2. Essay discussion 20%
3. Final term paper (10-14 pages) 40%
4. Participation in class 10%

Regarding 1: You will be given concepts you need to include in your glossary. [See instructions under Phil 433.]

Regarding 2: You are required to meet with your peer graduate students once every week for one hour to discuss one of the essays drawn from *The New Spinoza* or another essay about Spinoza. Each student will be responsible for the discussion of one essay (but you are expected to read all the essays that are being discussed) and needs to prepare a detailed outline for it and questions for discussion. Outline and questions will be turned in to me together with an attendance sheet. I am planning to attend these discussion sections.

Regarding 3: The final term paper should be based on the work we did in class and demonstrate your capacity to work closely with the primary text (*Ethics*). In any case, you need to submit a final paper at the beginning of week 9. The final paper proposal should consist in an introductory paragraph that exposes the problem, question, or concept you wish to address, and include a rough outline as well as an indication of the main text passages you wish to discuss. You need to integrate at least two secondary sources either in the main body of your paper or in extended footnotes.

Regarding 4: You will get participation points for attendance, valuable contributions to discussions and short in class exercises.
COURSE POLICIES

1. **Handing in an assignment late** will lower your grade. Homework that is more than a week late will not be accepted, unless this was for demonstrable (documented) reasons beyond your control.

2. In order to avoid disruptions in class you are asked to avoid exiting and entering the classroom while lectures and discussions are going on.

3. **If you miss a class** it is your responsibility to keep up with the course material. Use the syllabus as a guideline.

4. You are expected to follow the **rules of academic honesty**. Failure to do so will result in course failure (“F”).

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, one certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Verbatim statements by others must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from the regular text as indented extracts.

Students will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever: 1) one quotes another person’s actual words or replicates all or part of another’s product; 2) one uses another person’s ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one’s own words; 3) one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material—unless the information is common knowledge.

Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (68 PLC, 346-3226).

**Fabrication:** Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.

Examples include, but are not limited to: 1) citing information not taken from the source indicated; 2) listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise; 3) inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises.

**Cheating:** Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.

Examples include but are not limited to: 1) copying from another student’s work; 2) collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one’s work in a test situation; 3) using the course textbook or other material not authorized for use during a test; 4) using unauthorized material during a test; for example, notes, formula lists, cues on a computer, photographs, symbolic representations, and notes written on clothing; 5) resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor; 6) taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

**Grade Rubric:**

- **A** = excellent. No mistakes, well written, and distinctive in some way or other.
- **B** = good. No significant mistakes, well written, but not distinctive in any way.
- **C** = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
- **D** = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
- **F** = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.
COURSE SCHEDULE
(Tentative schedule; changes will be announced on Canvas)

Week One
Jan. 4: Introduction to the course. Ethics, Part One, Propositions 1-15. Proof that there is only one substance: God.

Week Two
Jan. 11: Ethics, Propositions 16-36 and Appendix. God and Causation

Week Three
Jan. 18: NO CLASS (Martin Luther King Holiday)
   [Make-up class to be scheduled.]
Ethics, Part II. On the nature and origin of the mind. Definitions, Axioms, Propositions 1-23.

Week Four

Week Five
Feb. 1: Ethics, Part III. Concerning the origin and nature of the emotions.
   [PHIL 433/533: Turn in annotated glossaries.]

Week Six
Feb. 8: Ethics, Part III. Continued.

Week Seven
Feb. 15: Ethics, Part IV. Of human bondage and the strength of the emotions.

Week Eight

Week Nine  [PHIL 433/533: Email final paper proposals.]
Feb. 29: Ethics, Part V. Of the power of the intellect or of human freedom.

Week Ten
March 7: Ethics, Part V. Continuation.
Discussion of final paper proposals.
   [PHIL 433/533: Annotated glossaries due. Turn in the glossary you submitted week 5 as well!]

FINAL PAPERS DUE: Monday, March 14 6:00 pm.
Submit an electronic version of your paper by email (WORD docx or PDF format).
Send the electronic version to dneu@uoregon.edu
Make sure you receive a confirmation that I received your paper the same day!!