

# Ethics

## Philosophy 102

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Office hours: Mondays 12-2pm  
and by appointment (SCH 161)

### Course Description

This course is a philosophical study of ethics. Ethics is concerned with questions of what is good, what one ought to do, what duties one has, etc. In this course, we will focus on the philosophical questions of what ethics is and how ethics is possible. How might we understand the idea of moral obligations or conceptions of goodness? What assumptions do we make when we think in ethical terms, and what happens if we come to suspect these assumptions? Ultimately, this course will attempt to get us to a point where it becomes possible for something that seems familiar and everyday—our moral valuations—to begin to appear strange or complicated, something about which we begin to wonder and inquire.

This course will emphasize careful reading, deep thinking, and clear writing. The reading assignments will not be long, but you should expect to read the material twice before class. Because philosophy asks fundamental questions, you may find some of the material uncomfortable: all of us have areas of our moral lives that we have not previously questioned or examined. In this class, we will view this as a positive experience, an opportunity to understand ourselves better and to grow as human beings.

### Learning Outcomes

By participating in this course, students will

- Acquire knowledge of key texts and ideas in moral philosophy,
- Develop the ability to bring philosophical analysis to bear on moral questions, reflecting critically on their own and others' experiences,
- Strengthen skills in reading difficult texts carefully and analyzing concepts with precision,
- Strengthen skills in writing and communication, drawing on both textual and experiential resources to give expression to complex ideas, and
- Discover an appreciation of philosophy and its role in a well-lived life, experiencing the pleasure of thinking philosophically.

### Office Hours:

I am more than happy to discuss any issues with you at any time, so please send me an email or see me after class to make an appointment if my regularly scheduled hours do not work for you.

### Required Texts

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (ISBN: 978-1107612235)
- Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (ISBN: 978-1316602591)
- Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (ISBN: 978-1107401068)
- Other readings available on Canvas

You are expected to do the assigned readings before class and to bring the current texts with you to class each day. **For reading on Canvas, you are required to print them in order to bring them to class.**

## Course Requirements

- Attendance and Participation (20%). You are expected to do the reading before class, come to class with your texts, participate in class discussions, and turn in assignments promptly.
- Examination Papers (50% total). You will be required to write three midterm examinations that assess your comprehension of the most important aspects of our readings and discussions each week. Your best exam will be worth 20% of your overall grade; the other two will be worth 15% each.
- Final Paper (30%). You will be required to write a final paper (5-6 pages) that synthesizes class materials with respect to key concepts or themes that we have covered over the course of the term. Prompts will be given ahead of time in class.

All written work should be typed in a standard, 12pt font with 1" margins. Letter grades will be assigned in the typical way (100-90% = A, 80-89% = B, etc.) on a +/- scale.

## Procedures and Guidelines

- **Professionalism:** While debate and argument belong within the University, yelling, name-calling, or heated/aggressive behavior has no place in our classroom. I expect each of us to display a high level of respect toward other members of the class. Also, please turn off your cell phones before you come inside the classroom. **Text messaging during class is unacceptable and will reflect negatively on your participation grade.**
- **Technology:** The use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, and similar devices is not welcome in this class.
- **Plagiarism:** Students, in submitting work, certify that the work is their own original work and that all information garnered from others whether quoted, summarized, or paraphrased has been appropriately cited. Failure to acknowledge the work of others constitutes plagiarism and is a serious offense. **Normally, the penalty for plagiarism is failure in the course.** More serious penalties may also be invoked. For more information, see <http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>. For official policies, see <http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/>. Read these policies; they are considered part of the syllabus.
- **Accommodation:** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).
- **Resources:** The Teaching and Learning Center provides numerous resources, including tutoring, to help UO students succeed (located in 68 PLC, [tlc.uoregon.edu](http://tlc.uoregon.edu)). The University Counseling and Testing Center provides comprehensive mental health care and testing services (located on the second floor of the University Health, Counseling, and Testing Center Building, [counseling.uoregon.edu](http://counseling.uoregon.edu)).
- **Discrimination and Sexual Harassment:** For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see [titleix-uoregon.edu](http://titleix-uoregon.edu). Students experiencing any form of prohibited discrimination or harassment, including sex or gender based violence, may seek information on [safe.uoregon.edu](http://safe.uoregon.edu), [respect.uoregon.edu](http://respect.uoregon.edu), [titleix.uoregon.edu](http://titleix.uoregon.edu) or [aaeo.uoregon.edu](http://aaeo.uoregon.edu) or contact the non-confidential Title IX office (541-346-8136), AAEO office (541-346-3123) or Dean of Students offices (541-346-3216), or call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE for help. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at <https://hr.uoregon.edu/policies-leaves/general-information/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect/presidents-message>
- **Note:** Syllabus, assignments, and due dates subject to change at instructor's discretion.

## Schedule of Assignments

### Week 1: Introduction to Ethics

- Monday: Introduction to the course  
Preface to the *Groundwork*
- Tuesday: Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (part I)
- Wednesday: Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (parts I and II)
- Thursday: Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (part II)

Exam #1 due Saturday at 11:59pm

### Week 2: the Origins of Morality

- Monday: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*
- Tuesday: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (cont.)
- Wednesday: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (cont.)
- Thursday: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (cont.)

Exam #2 due Saturday at 11:59pm

### Week 3: the Virtuous Life

- Monday: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
- Tuesday: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (cont.)
- Wednesday: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (cont.)
- Thursday: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (cont.)

Exam #3 due Saturday at 11:59pm

### Week 4: Native Ethics

- Monday: Cordova (Canvas)
- Tuesday: Deloria (Canvas)
- Wednesday: Hester and Burkhart (Canvas)
- Thursday: Concluding Discussion

Final Paper due Sunday at 11:59pm