

**Instructor:** Dr. Daniela Vallega-Neu

**Email:** dneu@uoregon.edu

**Office hours:** M 11:00am-noon, T 12:30am-1pm and by appointment in SCH 211 C.

**Class meets** MW 14:00-15:50 in 142 HED

**Accommodations:** Please let me know if you have any needs for accommodations at the beginning of the course. Notify me right away if aspects of the instruction or course design result in disability related barriers to your participation.

## Spinoza's Ethics

### Texts:

Required for all students (available at the Duck store):

- Baruch Spinoza: *Ethics, Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect and Selected Letters*, translated by Samuel Shirley, edited and introduced by Seymour Feldman (Hackett, 1991). ISBN-10: 0872201309
- *The New Spinoza*, edited by Warren Montag and Ted Stolze (University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
- All students will also be required to read additional essays on Spinoza that will be presented in class and that will be made available on Canvas.

Recommended (some of these texts may be used for class presentations):

- Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (City Lights Publishers, 2001). [Available online]
- Genevieve Lloyd, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Spinoza and the Ethics* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996) [Available as ebook in Knight Library]
- *Feminist Interpretations of Benedict Spinoza*, edited by Moira Gatens (Penn State Press, 2009) [Available as ebook in Knight Library]
- Judith Butler, "The Desire to Live: Spinoza's *Ethics* Under Pressure," in *Senses of the Subject* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015) (Text available on Canvas.)
- Bruce Baugh, "Time, Duration and Eternity in Spinoza," in *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 2.2 (2010) 211-233. (Text available on Canvas.)
- Jeffrey Bernstein, "Love and Friendship in Spinoza's Thinking," in *Monograph of the North American Spinoza Society*, Number 9, 2000, 3-17. (Text available on Canvas.)

### Course Description:

This course will consist mainly in a close reading and discussion of Spinoza's *Ethics* from a continental perspective. Spinoza has been influential on continental authors such as Deleuze, Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida. Contemporary continental readings focus on materialist readings of Spinoza and is a resource for environmental philosophy (See G. Lloyd, E. De Jonge). As we read Spinoza's *Ethics* we will learn how he conceives of God/Nature as a substance with infinite attributes and modes comprising everything that exists, how he stipulates a strict mind/body parallelism, how he explains the nature and origin of mind and emotions, what power we have of our emotions, and how we can find ultimate joy in the love of God/Nature.

**Requirements PHIL 433** (for PHIL 533 see further down):

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|---|-----|
| 1. Annotated glossary                                   | 40% |
| 2. Final term paper (6-9 pages)                         | 40% |
| 3. Participation, exercises, short homework assignments | 20% |

**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. If Spinoza gives a definition, you may use his.

b) Then quote passages in which Spinoza himself makes a significant use of this concept. The word needs to be in the quotation! You will add quotes as we progress in the reading of the *Ethics*. At the end of the term, you will need to have at least 2 quotations for each term. In week five, you only need to have 1 quotation.

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 quotations you presented.

I will read your glossary entries three times. The first time I will give you extensive comments and a grade that I will *not* count toward the final glossary grade. You will turn in your glossary as a mid-term and will then have a chance to improve what you submitted once more when you turn in your glossary at the end of the term. I will ask you to turn in as well the mid-term glossary that I previously graded. Should your glossary improve, I will add 1/3 of a grade to your mid-term glossary for the final glossary grade.

**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 but you should integrate as well at least two secondary sources. 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 by email a final paper proposal (1 page) at the beginning of week 9. Include a rough outline as well as an indication of the main text passages you wish to discuss. Please submit your final essay by email (word or pdf format).

**Regarding 3:** You will get participation points for attendance, valuable contributions to discussions and short in class exercises. They will be converted into grades at the end of the point.

**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 you name, the title of you paper, and course information.**

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**Requirements PHIL 533 (graduate students):**

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| 1. Annotated glossary                        | 30% |
| 2. Essay presentation or text interpretation | 15% |
| 3. Final term paper (10-14 pages)            | 40% |
| 4. Participation in class                    | 15% |

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

**Regarding 2:** You may chose between an essay presentation and a text interpretation.

**Essay presentations** consist in presenting the main points of **one essay** on Spinoza in the last 20-30 minutes of class (unless two of you present a longer article together with a classmate, in which case we will take 50 minutes.) **Prepare a handout** (1-2 pages) with the **main points** you discuss **and add two questions for discussion**. Make copies for your classmates. Also, make sure to give the complete bibliographical reference for your essay. (No written paper is required.) Everybody is expected to read all the essays on which there are presentations.

**Text interpretations** require a more in depth preparation of text passages assigned for the day. You will be responsible for 50% of the assigned reading. I will assign the more precise text passages at the end of the previous class. Again, you will be asked to **prepare a handout** with main points of the text and **two questions for discussion**.

**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 via email a final paper proposal on Monday of week 9. The final paper proposal (1 page) 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.

Please submit your final essay by email (word or pdf format).

**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). In addition, it is plagiarism to submit as your own any academic exercise prepared totally or in part by another person, even if that person is acting as a tutor or editor (and ends up substantially producing part of the work).

*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.

### **Discrimination and sexual harassment:**

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

According to the new Title IX policy (<https://titleix.uoregon.edu/employee-reporting-responsibilities-policy-overview>) only some UO employees are required reporters, which includes me in my capacity as Head of the Philosophy Department. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Most regular faculty members as well as GEs are classified as "student-directed employees," i.e. they are not mandatory reporters. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

### **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.

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## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**(Tentative schedule; changes will be announced on Canvas)**

### **Week One**

Sept. 24: Introduction to the course. Spinoza, "Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect," pp. 233-234 (or 1-15).

Sept. 26: *Ethics*, Part I, Propositions 1-15. Proof that there is only one substance: God.

### **Week Two**

October 1: *Ethics*, Part I. Continuation. Propositions 16-29. [**Turn in your glossary entries so far!**]

October 3: *Ethics*, Part I. Continuation. Propositions 30-36 and Appendix.

Essay presentation (1): Warren Montag, Preface to *The New Spinoza*, ix-xx.

### **Week Three**

Oct. 8: *Ethics*, Part II. On the nature and origin of the mind. Definitions, Axioms, Propositions 1-23.

Oct. 10: Continuation.

Essay presentation (2): Louis Althusser, "The Only Materialist Tradition," in *The New Spinoza*, 3-19.

#### **Week Four**

Oct. 15: Ethics, Part II. Continuation. Propositions 24-49.

Oct 17: Ethics, Part II. Continuation.

Essay presentation (joint presentation by two students 3-4): Pierre Macherey, "The Problem of Attributes," in *The New Spinoza*, 65-94.

#### **Week Five**

Oct 22: Guest lecture by Rocio Zambrana on Hegel and Spinoza.

Oct. 24: Instructor absent. Workshop on concepts in Spinoza.

[PHIL 433/533: **Turn in annotated glossaries by email before SUNDAY 6pm.**]

#### **Week Six**

Oct 29: Ethics, Part III. Concerning the origin and nature of emotions.

Text interpretation (13) ?

Oct. 31: Continuation of Part III.

Essay presentation Deleuze (5)

#### **Week Seven**

Nov. 5: Continuation of Part III.

Text interpretation (6)

Nov. 7: Ethics, Part IV. Of human bondage and the strength of the emotions.

Essay presentation Butler "The Desire to Live" (7)

#### **Week Eight**

Nov. 12: Continuation of Part IV

Text interpretation (8)

Nov. 14: Continuation of Part IV

Essay presentations (9) essay TBA.

#### **Week Nine** [PHIL 433/533: Email final paper proposals.]

Nov. 19: Ethics, Part V. "Of the power of the intellect or of human freedom."

Text presentation (10)

Nov. 21: Continuation Part V.

Text presentation (11)

#### **Week Ten**

Nov 26: Review. Essay presentation (12) essay TBA.

Nov. 28: Discussion of final paper proposals.

[PHIL 433/533: **Annotated glossaries due.** Turn in the glossary you submitted week 5 as well!]

**FINAL PAPERS DUE: Wednesday, Dec. 5th at 5pm.**

**Submit an electronic version of your paper by email** (WORD docx and/or PDF format).

Send the electronic version to [dneu@uoregon.edu](mailto:dneu@uoregon.edu)

Make sure you receive a confirmation that I received your paper the same day!!