

Introduction to Ethics
Carnegie Mellon University
Fall 2015

Instructor: Aidan Kestigian

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Office hours (Aidan): Monday 11:30-1:30, and by appointment

Office hours (Liam): By appointment

Course location: Doherty Hall 2122

Time: MWF 10:30 – 11:20 a.m.

Course Description:

We frequently grapple with difficult moral questions. How should I treat my friends and family? What kinds of policies should our government adopt? When, if ever, can we justify harm? These are the kinds of questions we will consider as we survey the most prominent, contemporary ethical theories. We will delve into particular ethical theories and determine the benefits and downsides of each. Along the way, we will consider the implications of those theories for real world ethical issues.

Philosophical inquiry is pursued via writing, speaking, and reading. Throughout this course, students will be asked to read primary source texts, write short essays, and participate in classroom discussions. Essays will typically involve a summary of one or more philosophers' arguments, followed by an original critique or defense of those arguments. No philosophical background is required for this class. However, if you are having difficulty with the readings or essays, please make an appointment to meet with the instructor.

Text:

There is no required text. All readings will be available on the Blackboard site.

Course Expectations:

To be successful in this course, students must come to class on time and prepared. A student is adequately prepared if she has carefully completed all of the required reading and compiled any comments or questions. There will be three essays required for course. I am available by appointment to answer questions about essays and presentations *before* they are due.

Learning Expectations

By the end of this course, students should have a general understanding of core ethical theories and be able to apply those theories to contemporary ethical issues.

Grading:

Participation & Attendance	15%
Essay 1 & Response	20%
Essay 2 & Response	25%
Essay 3 Outline	10%
Essay 3	30%

Participation & Attendance

Students will be evaluated on their preparedness for the day's discussion. In order to be successful, a student must have completed the reading and come prepared with any questions or comments. Attendance is required for this course and will be recorded each class. Each student is allowed two "freebies." Every class missed after the first two will result in a five-point deduction from your attendance and participation grade. You can improve your participation grade by taking advantage of office hours.

Essays

The essays assigned in this course will be short to medium length (anywhere between three and eight pages double-spaced) and will vary in focus as the course progresses. Note: I will not be available to answer questions about essays on the day that they are due. However, I am available for appointment on any other day to discuss the essays.

Essays are due on the blackboard site unless a different time/place is designated on the syllabus or assignment description.

Late Work

All work handed in late will receive a deduction, starting the minute after assignments are due. Late work will receive a 10 point deduction for every day late. Assignments that are more than four days late will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

I take very seriously the university's policy on plagiarism and cheating. In all original work, you *must* cite every source you use. Please use a consistent, standard system of citation unless otherwise noted. MLA and APA are common formats in the humanities and social sciences. If a student is caught plagiarizing, the assignment in question will receive a failing grade for both the assignment and the course. In addition, the university will be notified of the student's misconduct.

A short excerpt from the Carnegie Mellon *Policy on Academic Integrity* is listed below:

"In any manner of presentation, it is the responsibility of each student to produce her/his own original academic work. Collaboration or assistance on academic work to be graded is not

permitted unless explicitly authorized by the course instructor(s). Students may utilize the assistance provided by Academic Development, the Global Communication Center, and the Academic Resource Center (CMU-Q) unless specifically prohibited by the course instructor(s). Any other sources of collaboration or assistance must be specifically authorized by the course instructor(s).

In all academic work to be graded, the citation of all sources is required. When collaboration or assistance is permitted by the course instructor(s) or when a student utilizes the services provided by Academic Development, the Global Communication Center, and the Academic Resource Center (CMU-Q), the acknowledgement of any collaboration or assistance is likewise required. This citation and acknowledgement must be incorporated into the work submitted and not separately or at a later point in time. Failure to do so is dishonest and is subject to disciplinary action”

For more information, please read the full *Policy on Academic Integrity*, found at the following link: <http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Academic%20Integrity.html>

Daily Readings

Week 1: Introduction

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) August 31	Introduction	
(W) September 2	Ethical vs. Scientific Inquiry	Harman, "Ethics and Observation"
(F) September 4	Reason-Giving and Morality	Dworkin, "The Concept of A Moral Position"

Week 2: Making Ethical Arguments

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) September 7	No Class (Labor Day)	
(W) September 9	Making Ethical Arguments Topic: School Vouchers	Gutmann, "Parental Choice"
(F) September 11	Reconstructing Arguments Topic: School Vouchers	Petersen, "The Case for Vouchers"***

***Reading for September 11: <http://www.hoover.org/research/case-vouchers>

Weeks 3 & 4: Consequentialism

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) September 14	Objective Moral Theories	Shafer-Landau, "How Ethical Objectivism..."
(W) September 16	What is Consequentialism?	Consequentialism Handout
(F) September 18	Utilitarianism	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> excerpts, p. 65-70
(M) September 21	Developing Critiques	
(W) September 23	Topic: War	Nagel, <i>War and Massacre</i>
(F) September 25	Writing Workshop	Paper 1 distributed

Week 5 & 6: Deontology

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) September 28	What is Deontology?	Deontology Handout
(W) September 30	Kantian Ethics	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> excerpts
(F) September 2	Kantian Ethics	
(M) October 5	Recap: Kantian Ethics	O'Neill, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics"
(W) October 7	Rights	Beauchamp, "Rights"
(F) October 9	Topic: Human Rights	Paper 1 due at 4:00 p.m.

Week 7: Comparing & Contrasting Deontology & Consequentialism

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) October 12	Recap	Review Mill & Kant
(W) October 14	Topic: Capital Punishment	
(F) October 16	Topic: Pornography	Longino, "Pornography, Oppression, and the Law"

Week 8: Kantian Autonomy

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) October 19	Kantian Autonomy	Raz, <i>Morality of Freedom</i> p. 369-378
(W) October 21	Topic: Free Speech	Wells, "Reinvigorating Autonomy," Parts I and II
(F) October 23	No Class (Midterm Break)	

Week 9: Critiques of Kantian Ethics

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) October 26	Feminist Critiques	Feminist Critiques Handout
(W) October 28	Topic: Public Health	Kenny et al, "Re-visioning Public Health Ethics"
(F) October 30	Topic: Ethical Research with Human Participants	Gerber & Green, "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout"

Week 10: Virtue Ethics

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) November 2	Virtue Ethics	Aristotle, Excerpt from <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
(W) November 4	Virtue Ethics continued	
(F) November 6	Topic: Gender Equality	Nussbaum, "Women and Equality"

Week 11: Pluralism and Multiculturalism

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) November 9	Goods and Pluralism	Paper 2 Due at 4:00 p.m.
(W) November 11	Topic: Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism Handout

(F) November 13	Justice as Fairness	Rawls, "Justice as Rational Choice"
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Week 12: Social and Political Justice

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) November 16	Justice as Fairness, continued	
(W) November 18	Libertarianism	Nozick, "Distributive Justice"
(F) November 20	Libertarianism, contd.	Final Paper Distributed

Week 13: Thanksgiving, No Class

Week 14: Ethics for Healthcare

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) November 30	Inequality & Healthcare	Beckles & Truman, Education and Income CDC Study**
(W) December 2	Topic: Universalized Healthcare	Daniels, "Justice, Health, and Healthcare"
(F) December 4	Healthcare continued	Final Paper Outline Due

****Reading for November 30:**

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/su6203a3.htm?s_cid=su6203a3_w

Week 15: Conclusion

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) December 7	Course Recap	
(W) December 9	No Class- Open office hours 9 a.m.-12 p.m.	
(F) December 11	No Class- Open office hours 9 a.m.-12:p.m.	
(M) December 14	Final Paper Due at 4:00 p.m.	