

Syllabus: Phil 008.01

Ethics

De Anza College

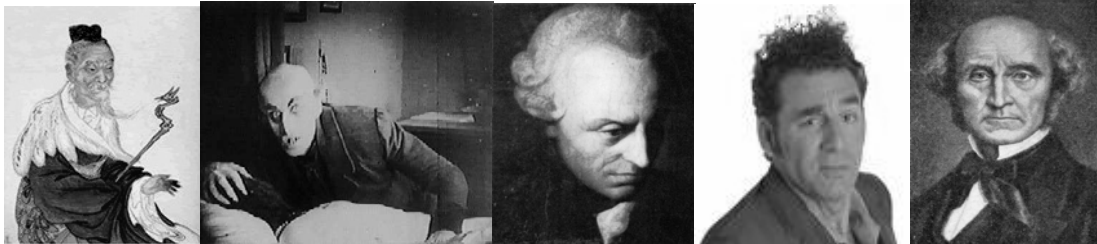
Winter Quarter, 2009

Instructor: Toño Ramirez

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Office Hours: M/W 9:30-10:30, T/TH 12:30-1:30, or by appointment

Office Location: Forum Building, room 2D



Course Description

This course investigates theories and issues central to ethical thought. Through a series of readings, films, and class discussions, we will rigorously study key themes that have emerged in the ongoing human project of determining the best way to live.

Course Objectives

The course is designed to satisfy three primary aims. First, students will develop a critical perspective on several of the prominent theories and arguments found in the world's ethical traditions. Secondly, students who successfully engage course materials will refine a core set of philosophical skills, including analysis and construction of arguments, proficiency with key philosophical concepts, and philosophical writing. Finally, students will apply these skills and concepts to contemporary cases in the development of original views.

Course work will consist of a series of written assignments and collaborative projects. Readings will come from primary and secondary sources.

Course Expectations and Requirements

Attendance:

As a significant portion of the course will involve the discussion of texts in class, it is expected that students will have completed assigned readings *before* the corresponding class meeting. Regular attendance is also required.

- Students may miss a total of *three* class meetings without penalty during the term. Each absence beyond this limit will incur a penalty as described in the "Student Assessment" section below. Students who miss an excessive number of class meetings (as determined by the instructor) will be dropped from the course.
- Students are *not* required to provide the instructor with a reason for absence, nor are apologies necessary. I assume that absences will only occur under legitimate circumstances.
- Students who are considering dropping the course for personal reasons are encouraged to meet with me first—I'm happy to do what I can to help you succeed in this class!
- Students who miss a class meeting are responsible for obtaining any information or assignments they may have missed.

- Attendance will be taken on a daily basis. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her name has been recorded accurately on daily attendance sheets.
- Students are expected to come to class *on time*. Three late arrivals will be considered equivalent to one absence on the attendance record.
- Reading assignments are *required* in this course. I have scheduled readings to allow for a reasonable workload, and expect that students will engage with the texts assigned. Reading quizzes will be given to ensure this.

Student Assessment:

Evaluations will be based upon the quality of individual student participation in discussions and written work. The final grade will be awarded according to the following criteria:

100 Pts		
15 Pts: Participation	55 Pts: Papers	30 Pts: Quizzes and Exams
10 Given	20 Argument Papers	10 Reading Quizzes
5 Earned	15 Short Essay	10 Midterm Exam
	20 Long Essay	10 Final Exam

GRADE SCALE: A+ (100-97), A (96-93), A- (92-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-83), B- (82-80), C+ (79-77), C (76-70), D+ (69-67), D (66-63), D- (62-60), F (59-0)

- Class participation: 15 percentage points
 - Students are given 10 of these percentage points at the beginning of the term. They are not earned, but can be lost as follows:
 - Each absence beyond the limit of three (3) will incur a penalty of 5 percentage points.
 - The remaining 5 percentage points are earned by contributing questions or comments to class discussions (at the rate of 1 point per question or comment). Points cannot be earned beyond the 5-point limit.
 - Participation in discussions will be evaluated according to the *quality* of student comments, and not quantity. Students who demonstrate excellence in discussions will attend closely to the comments of other students, and offer remarks that are of relevance to the discussion at hand. It is expected that students will engage one another's ideas in discussion, and that this will be done in a respectful manner. Neither disparaging remarks nor personal attacks will be tolerated in any way.
 - Class discussions will frequently feature small-group work. It is expected that students will participate actively in these groups.
 - Cell phones must be turned off during class. Students who need to leave a phone on for emergency purposes should let me know at the beginning of the class session.
- Papers: 55 percentage points
 - Written work will consist of two brief (1-2 p.) argument papers (10 percentage points each), one short (3-5 p.) essay (15 percentage points), and one longer (4-6 p.) essay (20 percentage points).
 - Written work will be evaluated according to standards provided with descriptions of individual assignments. Standards for each paper will also be addressed verbally in class at the time of assignment. It is expected that students who remain unclear as to the standards of excellent written work will meet with the instructor *before* the assignment is due.

- Academic honesty is imperative in written work. Any plagiarized paper will automatically be given a grade of 0 without a rewrite option, and may constitute dismissal from the course. Students who are unsure about standards for academic honesty should consult with me. In short, **any uncited material, presented as your own original work**, constitutes plagiarism. This includes uncited quotes from internet and print sources. **There will be no exceptions to this policy.**
- Assignments (specifically, the short paper and longer paper) turned in on time will be graded and returned with comments within one week of the due date. Students may submit assignments up to one week after the due date, but I make no guarantees for a prompt return. Policies for comments on late papers will vary according to the specific assignment. I will not accept papers that are more than a week late under any circumstances.
- I practice blind grading to ensure impartiality in evaluating student work. Students **should not** write their names on the front of any written assignment. Rather, the name should be written lightly in pencil on the back of the last page.
- Reading Quizzes, Mid-Term and Final Exams: 10 percentage points each
 - Reading quizzes will consist of short, informal responses to questions asked about the day's reading. The questions will be available in advance on the course website. These responses will not be handed back to you, but I will read them. If your response is satisfactory, it will be reflected as "x" on the course grade tracker (which I will post to the course website weekly). If your response is not satisfactory, it will be reflected as a "-" in the grade tracker. You may email me or meet me at my office to correct unsatisfactory responses. If this is done **within one week** of the original question date, you will be given full credit for the response. At the end of the quarter, each uncorrected response will incur a penalty of 2 points from the 10 allotted for reading quizzes. If you are absent, you will be expected to answer any reading questions that have been given that day—they will be posted to the class website.
 - A make-up exam will only be available under certifiable emergency circumstances. Students who miss either exam for non-emergency reasons will not have the option for a make-up.

Course Reading Schedule

(n.b.: The schedule is subject to change at my discretion)

- 1/6: Introduction to course
- 1/8: Rachels, Ch. 1
- 1/13: Rachels, Ch. 2-3
- 1/15: Epperson, "*Seinfeld* and the Moral Life" (in reader)
 - Read case study (handout from class)
- 1/20: Plato, *Euthyphro* (in reader)
- 1/22: Rachels, Ch. 4
- 1/27: Rachels, Ch. 5
- 1/29: Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (in reader)
 - Arthur, "World Hunger and Moral Obligation" (in reader)
 - **Short essay assigned**
 - **Deadline for first argument paper**

- 2/3: No reading assignment: In class film (“Gattaca”)
- 2/5: Gavaghan, “Off-the-Peg Offspring in the Genetic Supermarket” (in reader)
 - Mid-term study guide distributed
 - **SHORT PAPER DUE**
- 2/10: Rachels, Ch. 6-7
- 2/12: Yuen, “The Bloody Connection Between Vampires and Vegetarians” (in reader)
 - Tanner, “Why I Won’t Hurt Your Felines” (in reader)
 - **MID-TERM EXAM**
- 2/17: Rachels, Ch. 8
Kant, “On a Supposed Right to Lie...” (in reader)
- 2/19: Rachels, Ch. 9
Chuang-Tzu, excerpt (in reader)
 - **Final paper assigned**
- 2/24: Rachels, Ch. 11
- 2/26: Baier, “What do Women Want in a Moral Theory?” (in reader)
- 3/3: Rachels, Ch. 12
- 3/5: Riecken, “Review of Milgram” (in reader)
Wenglinsky, “Review of Milgram” (in reader)
- 3/10: Wolf, “Moral Saints” (in reader)
 - Ackerman, “For the Loved Ones in Your Life” (in reader)
- 3/12: Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (in reader)
 - Sullivan, “A Reply to Rachels” (in reader)
 - Ackerman, “The Other Two Sides” (in reader)
- 3/17: Blake, “Go Ahead, Steal My Car” (in reader)
 - Hazlett, “Possible Evils”
 - **Deadline for second argument paper**
- 3/19: **FINAL EXAM**
FINAL PAPER DUE

Texts

Readings will come from the following books, which are available for purchase at the bookstore:

- Rachels, James and Rachels, Stuart. The Elements of Moral Philosophy. 5th ed. McGraw Hill, 2007.
- PHIL08 Course Reader

Additional course readings will be handed out in class.

Course Website

Announcements, grade trackers, and electronic versions of most class materials will be available at <http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/ramireztono/phil08>