

Syllabus: Phil 008.03 (T/TH section)

Ethics

De Anza College

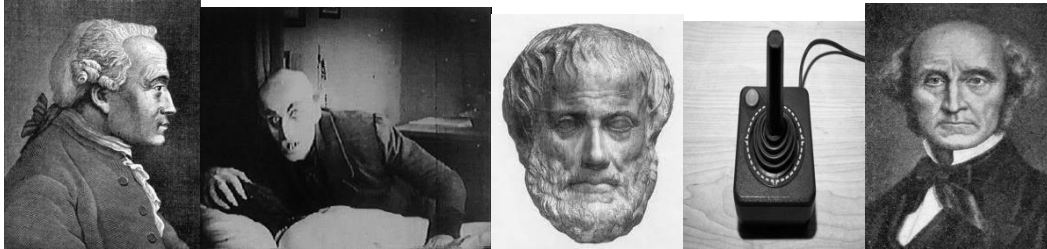
Winter Quarter, 2014

Instructor: Toño Ramirez

Email: ramireztono@fhda.edu

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 8:00-9:30 AM, Tuesday 12:30-1:30 PM

Office Location: Forum Building, room 2D



Course Description

This course introduces students to the methods and practices of philosophy through a rigorous investigation of central topics pertaining to traditional themes in moral philosophy. Students will engage key readings and ideas from the history of philosophy, and will find that the themes encountered bear heavily on current issues, events and popular culture.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully engage with the course and its content will be able to:

- Identify and analyze central questions about right action and the good life
- Analyze and assess solutions to these problems from a variety of philosophical traditions
- Articulate and defend original positions on these questions
- Identify applications of philosophical tools to real-world actions and decisions

Course Expectations and Requirements

- Students who are considering dropping the course for *any* reason are encouraged to meet with me first—I'm happy to do what I can to help you succeed in this class! To this end, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of office hours.
- Students may miss a total of *three* class meetings without penalty during the term. A fourth absence will result in the loss of the "attendance buffer" (explained below) when final grades are calculated. A sixth absence will result in dismissal from the course.
- Students are *not* required to provide me with a reason for absence, nor are apologies necessary. I assume that absences will only occur under legitimate circumstances.
- Students who miss a class meeting are responsible for obtaining any information or assignments they may have missed.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class on a regular 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 understand that some of the reading will be challenging, and that it may not be fully understood without

- subsequent in-class explanation. Nevertheless, I expect that students will read the texts assigned, and will spend time thinking about them before each class meeting.
- As a significant portion of the course will involve in-class discussions of texts, it is expected that students will have completed assigned readings *before* the corresponding class meeting.
 - 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. 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.
 - Class discussions will feature small-group work. It is expected that students will participate actively in these groups.
 - Cell phones and other electronic devices 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. Text messaging/web-surfing is incompatible with active participation in class activities, and will not be permitted during class time. Students who use electronic devices in class without obtaining prior permission will be asked to leave.

Noteworthy Administrative Information About Enrollment

The following points are policies of De Anza College, and will be enforced in this course:

- No Late Adds or Drops will be accepted/processed. All adds and no show drops must be completed the first two weeks of the 12-week term or by deadlines in the portal for late starting/nonconforming classes. **This means that any student who is 'dropped' after the first two weeks of class for failing to meet course requirements as specified above will receive a grade of "F" for the course.**
- W drops: Ws are now assigned effective the Census date (as described above). There is no "grade of no record" period as in past terms.
- End of term adds/drop will not be accepted. Students who have attended all quarter without official registration will not be added retroactively.
- The California Community College Board of Governors recently passed revisions to Title 5 regarding course repetition. Students may enroll in a course only three (3) times if they received a substandard grade (D, F, NP or NC) or withdrew from a class with a "W."

Student Assessment:

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

- Homework journal:
 - In order to promote reading comprehension and improve the quality of class discussions, students will keep a journal documenting responses to all course readings. These responses are to address each of the questions found at the end of the assigned readings from the Cahn text. If the reading does not come from the Cahn text, then other questions will be specified in the course syllabus. It is expected that all students will have this journal with them, *completed and up-to-date*, at the *beginning of every* class

meeting. I will collect journals at random throughout the course to check for completion, and occasionally offer comments on journal entries.

- Failure to provide an-up-to-date journal available on request will be handled as follows:
 - First instance: Student will be given an opportunity to provide the up-to-date journal at the beginning of the next class meeting, with no penalty
 - Second instance: Student will lose 5 percentage points allotted to “HW Journal” in the calculation of the final grade
 - Third instance: Student will lose the remaining percentage points allotted to “HW Journal” in the calculation of the final grade
 - Fourth instance: Student will be dropped from/fail the course
- If a student is absent on a date when his/her journal is requested, the journal will be due for submission upon the student’s return to class
- Paper assignments:
 - All students will submit one [short essay](#), and one [longer essay](#).
 - Essays will be evaluated according to [standards provided with assignment prompts](#). 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. “Re-writes” are not accepted for paper assignments. I am happy to review advance drafts of papers with you **in person**, but not via email.
 - Academic honesty is imperative in written work. I will spend time in class discussing plagiarism, and will take measures to help students avoid accidental plagiarism. **Any** plagiarized paper submitted to me will automatically result in a grade of “F” for the course, and will be reported to the Dean of Academics. Students who are unsure about standards for academic honesty should [review this tutorial](#), and 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.**
 - Paper Assignments 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 at no penalty, but I make no guarantees for a prompt return. I will not accept any papers that are turned in after this time.
 - I practice blind grading to ensure impartiality in evaluating student work. Students **should not** write their names on the front of any paper assignment. Rather, the name should be written lightly in pencil on the back of the last page.
- Mid-Term and Final Exams:
 - A make-up exam will only be available under certifiable emergency circumstances, as determined by the instructor. Students who miss either exam for non-emergency reasons will not have the option for a make-up.

- Students who miss two or fewer classes will automatically keep an “attendance buffer”, which will be used in calculating the final grade. The buffer is lost upon a third absence, and will not be restored. Final grades will be calculated as follows

	With attendance buffer	Without attendance buffer
HW Journal	15	15
Short Essay	20	25
Longer Essay	25	30
Midterm Exam	15	15
Final Exam	15	15
Attendance Buffer	10	0

- [Argument Paper](#): 2 pts extra credit (OPTIONAL)
 - Students may earn up to 2 extra percentage points in the course by submitting an argument paper. Argument papers are described in detail on the “Assignments” page of the course website, and will be explained verbally in class. Only one argument paper may be submitted for the course.

GRADE SCALE: A+ (100-97), A (96-93), A- (92-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-83), B- (82-80), C+ (79-77), C (76-73), D+ (73-70), D (69-67), D- (66-63), F (62-0)

Course Reading Schedule

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

Readings come from the Cahn book unless otherwise indicated. All readings should have HW journal entries unless otherwise specified. Readings from the Rachels text (recommended) are indicated in parenthesis. Readings in parenthesis do not need HW journal entries.

- 1/6
- 1/7
- 1/8
- 1/9
 - Introduction to course—no reading assigned
 - Please read [this case study](#)
 - Frankena, “Morality and Moral Philosophy”
 - (Rachels, “What is Morality?”)
- 1/13
- 1/14
 - **[Submit a completed copy of this form in class](#)**
 - Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism”
- 1/15
- 1/16
 - Nagel, “Right and Wrong”
 - Stevenson, “The Nature of Ethical Disagreement”
 - (Rachels, “Subjectivism in Ethics”)
- 1/20
- 1/21
 - Cahn and Murphy, “Happiness and Immorality”
 - Nietzsche, [“Master Morality and Slave Morality”](#) (note: journal questions for this reading are located at the *beginning* of the article, on p. 2)
- 1/22
- 1/23
 - Cahn, “God and Morality”

- (Rachels, “Does Morality Depend on Religion?”)
 - **Argument paper date**
- 1/27
- 1/28
 - Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
 - Arthur, “World Hunger and Moral Obligation”
- 1/29
- 1/30
 - Rachels, “Egoism and Moral Scepticism”
 - (Rachels, “Ethical Egoism”)
 - **Argument paper date**
- 2/3
- 2/4
 - Mill, “Utilitarianism”
 - Pojman, “Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism”
 - (Rachels, “The Utilitarian Approach” and “The Debate Over Utilitarianism”)
- 2/5
- 2/6
 - In class film: *Gattaca* (no reading required)
- 2/10
- 2/11
 - [MID-TERM EXAM](#)
 - Gavaghan, “[Off-the-Peg Offspring in the Genetic Supermarket](#)” (for HW journal, please respond to [these questions](#))
- 2/12
- 2/13
 - Kant, “The Categorical Imperative”
 - O’Neill, “A Simplified Account of Kant’s Ethics”
 - (Rachels, “Are There Absolute Moral Rules?” and “Kant and Respect for Persons”)
- 2/17
- 2/18
 - Held, “The Ethics of Care”
 - Mayo, “Virtue Ethics”
 - (Rachels, “Feminism and the Ethics of Care”)
 - [First Essay Due](#)
- 2/19
- 2/20
 - In class film: *Gone Baby Gone* (no reading required)
 - **Argument Paper Date**
- 2/24
- 2/25
 - Rawls, “A Theory of Justice”
 - For HW journal, please also respond to [these questions about the film](#).
- 2/26
- 2/27
 - Aristotle, “The Nature of Virtue”
 - Sommers/Zimbardo: “[The Power of the Situation](#)” (no response needed for HW journal)
 - (Rachels, “The Ethics of Virtue”)
 - **Argument Paper Date**
- 3/3
- 3/4
 - Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”
 - Cohen, “The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research”
 - Wallace, “[Consider the Lobster](#)” (no journal questions for this one, but DO read it)
- 3/5
- 3/6
 - Wolf, “[Moral Saints](#)” (for HW journal, please respond to [these questions](#))
 - (Ackerman, “For the Loved Ones in Your Life”)

- 3/10
 - 3/11
 - 3/12
 - 3/13
 - 3/17
 - 3/18
 - 3/19
 - 3/20
 - 3/24
 - 3/25
 - 3/26
 - 3/27
 - 3/28
 -
- **Argument Paper Date**
 - In class film: *Million Dollar Baby* (no reading required)
 - Film discussion (for HW journal, please respond to [these questions about the film](#))
 - Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”
 - Sullivan, “A Reply to Rachels”
 - (Ackerman, “[....After You!](#)”)
 - Blake, “[God Ahead, Steal My Car](#)”
 - Hazlett, “[Possible Evils](#)”
 - For HW journal, please respond to [these questions](#)
 - [Final Essay Due](#) (for grade + comments)
 - [FINAL EXAM](#)
 - King, “Letter From a Birmingham Jail”
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 - Last day final essay will accepted for a grade (via email, by 12:00 noon, and no comments will be given)
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Texts

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

- Cahn, *Exploring Ethics* (2nd ed) (REQUIRED)
- Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (5th ed) (NOT REQUIRED, BUT RECOMMENDED)

Additional course readings will be distributed on the course website.

Course Website

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