

Syllabus: Phil 008

Ethics

De Anza College

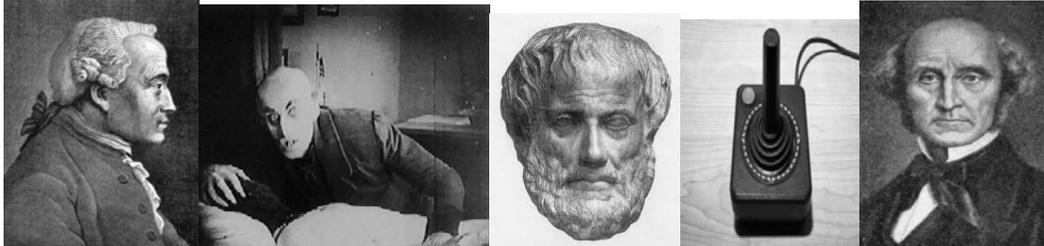
Summer Quarter, 2011

Instructor: Toño Ramirez

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Office Hours: M/T/W/Th 6:30-7:30 AM and 1-2 PM, or by appointment

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 questions in moral inquiry. 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/or 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 personal reasons 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 *two* class meetings without penalty during the term. A third absence will result in the loss of the “attendance buffer” (explained below) when final grades are calculated. A fifth absence will result in dismissal 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 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 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 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.

- As a significant portion of the course will involve class discussion of texts, it is expected that students will have completed assigned readings *before* the corresponding class meeting.
- 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. Text messaging is incompatible with active participation in class activities, and will not be permitted during class time.

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:

- Written work:
 - Written work will consist of a series of homework assignments one short essay, and one longer essay.
 - Homework assignments will be based upon course readings. For each assigned reading, questions will be posted on the course website (explained below) pertaining to the text. Questions highlighted in **bold** should be answered for the homework assignment. You do not need to submit written responses for questions that are not highlighted in bold. Responses may be brief and informal, but *must reflect that the reading has been done*. I will collect responses at the *beginning* of class. Students who are late will be expected to submit homework responses upon arrival. Students who are absent will be expected to submit responses via email *prior to returning to class on the following day*. Late responses will not be accepted.
 - Homework assignments account for 20% of your final grade in this course. The number of percentage points you earn toward the homework portion of your grade will correspond to the percentage of satisfactory homework assignments you submit (i.e. if you submit 10 satisfactory assignments out 20 assigned, you will earn 10 of the 20 possible points toward the final grade). Assignments will not be handed back to you, but I will read them. If your response is satisfactory (i.e. it demonstrates that you have both read and understood the assigned reading), it will be reflected as "x" on the course grade tracker (which I will update on the course website on a regular basis). If your response is not satisfactory, it will be reflected as "-" 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. Corrections submitted beyond this one week period will not be accepted. **You may correct a maximum of three responses in this manner.**
 - 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. Any plagiarized paper 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 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 turned in on time will be graded and returned with comments within one week of the due date. Students may submit assignments the Monday 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 written 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.
- Argument Paper: 3 pts extra credit (OPTIONAL)
 - Students may earn up to 3 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.
- Attendance Buffer and Grade Calculation:
 - Students who miss three or fewer classes will automatically keep an attendance buffer, which will be used in calculating the final grade. Final grades will be calculated as follows

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

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)

- 6/28: Introduction to course
- 6/29: Rachels, Ch. 1-2
- 6/30: Rachels, Ch. 3
 - Read case study #1 (online reading #1)

- 7/5: Plato, *Euthyphro* (in reader)
 - Rachels, Ch. 4
- 7/6: Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” (in reader)
 - Arthur, “World Hunger and Moral Obligation” (in reader)
- 7/7: Rachels, Ch. 5
 - In class film: *Gattaca*
 - *AP Date*

- 7/12: Gavaghan, “Off-the-Peg Offspring in the Genetic Supermarket” (in reader)
 - Rachels, Ch. 6
- 7/13: Rachels, Ch. 7
 - Leguin, “The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas” (online reading #2)
- 7/14: Yuen, “The Bloody Connection Between Vampires and Vegetarians” (in reader)
 - Tanner, “Why I Won’t Hurt Your Felines” (in reader)
 - Mid-term study guide distributed
 - **SHORT PAPER DUE**
 - *AP Date*

- 7/19: In class film: *Gone Baby Gone*
 - **MID-TERM EXAM**
- 7/20: Rachels, Ch. 8-0
 - Kant, “On a Supposed Right to Lie...” (in reader)
- 7/21: Chuang-Tzu, excerpt (in reader)
 - Rachels, Ch. 11
 - Baier, “What do Women Want in a Moral Theory?” (in reader)
 - *AP Date*

- 7/26: Rachels, Ch. 12
 - Sommers/Zimbardo: “The Power of the Situation” (online reading #4)
- 7/27: In class film (“Million Dollar Baby”)
 - **Last day to submit optional argument paper**
 - *AP Date*
- 7/28: NO CLASS MEETING

- 8/2: Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (in reader)
 - Sullivan, “A Reply to Rachels” (in reader)
 - Ackerman, “...After You!” (online reading #3)
- 8/3: Wolf, “Moral Saints” (in reader)
 - Ackerman, “For the Loved Ones in Your Life” (in reader)
 - Blake, “Go Ahead, Steal My Car” (in reader)
 - Hazlett, “Possible Evils” (in reader)
- 8/4: **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 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>