

PHILOSOPHY 320: ETHICS

Professor B. Cox-White, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: TR 3:20-4:50 PM; W: 9:00AM—noon; and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** A **writing intensive** course focused on classical ethical theories.

**COURSE GOALS:** Student will **competently** identify, evaluate, & appreciate seminal concepts (The Good, The Right, Character, role of motives) that collectively comprise ethical theories; (2) appreciate the genesis & evolution of classical ethical theories; (3) demonstrate an understanding of ethical concepts, theories, and arguments, in substantively and formally correct writings.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Attendance/participation & daily writing assignments = each 5% of course grade**  
Class attendance is required. Your presence **and** your enthusiastic and intelligent participation in discussion of assigned reading material are expected every day.  
In preparation for class discussion, you should be able to identify:
  - a. The main claim(s) in assigned readings;
  - b. Arguments supporting these claims;
  - c. Evidence given to support the premises in the arguments;
  - d. The philosopher's conception of and the roles played by The Good, The Right, and a person's character and motives;
  - e. Strengths and weaknesses of the concepts, arguments, and theories; and
  - f. Ways in which the concepts and theories differ from those of other philosophers.
2. **Three (3) papers = 45% of course grade** (Paper #1 = 10%; Paper #2 = 15%; Paper #3 = 20%) **Topics/requirements/due dates @ <http://sites.google.com/site/phil320f09/>**
3. **Three (3) short answer & essay exams = 45% of course grade:** Midterm #1 = 10%; midterm #2 = 15%; final exam = 20%. **NOTE: All exams are comprehensive.**

**TEXTS: All are required.** All are in the AS Bookstore **and** in Limited Loan, Meriam Library.

1. **If you use a different edition/translation, you may have difficulty following in-class discussions and identifying text assigned for papers.**
2. **ALWAYS BRING YOUR TEXT TO CLASS.** (I mean it!)
3. **TEXTS:**

Aristotle. *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nichomachean Ethics*. Rev. ed. Trans. J.A.K. Thomson, 1953. Rev. trans. Hugh Tredennick. New York: Penguin, 1976. Print.

Houghton, Peggy M. and Timothy J. Houghton. Rev. ed. *MLA: The Easy Way!* Eds. Michele M. Pratt and Sandra W. Valensky. Flint, MI: Baker College, 2009. Print.

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 1888. Rev. ed. P.H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon, 1978. Print.

Kant, Immanuel. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., rev. Trans. Lewis White Beck. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1990. Print.

Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism*. Ed. Oskar Piest. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1957. Print.

White, B.C. *PHIL320.Ethics.Fall 2011*. Web.

## **RULES OF THE GAME**

1. We will ***all come to class prepared to discuss intelligently*** the assigned readings. This is impossible if you have not read and thought seriously about the material.
2. One learns to do philosophy by doing philosophy; you need the practice, so you will do lots of talking. I will randomly call on students to answer questions about readings—starting with the questions above. If you are truly unable (as opposed to merely unwilling) to respond, you may pass. You should pass rarely.
3. ***I will do all I can to help you thrive in this class.*** I hope (really, I do) that you will come to my office to discuss philosophy. Such discussions are both fun and likely to improve your grasp of course material (again, really).
4. ***If you have problems understanding the readings or meeting course requirements, see me as soon as you realize you need assistance.*** Wait till dead week & you are dead meat.
5. I will post grades after each graded assignment. If you do not understand why your grade is what it is, ask me. (Well, DUH!)
6. **Mere seat time will not guarantee you a “Gentleman’s [sic] C.” Your grade will be based on *your mastery of* (not mere exposure to) the material.**
7. Be in your seat, ready to begin discussion at 11AM. Arriving late is rude and annoying.
8. ***No eating in class.***
9. ***No use of cell phones in class. Turn off your phone before class begins.*** (If you are waiting to hear about your mother in ICU or some similar crisis, let me know.)
10. You may use your computer in class, but only for class purposes. If I discover you are using the computer for non-class purposes, I will confiscate it.
11. Anyone caught ***plagiarizing or cheating*** will be shot. Survivors will ***fail the course*** and be referred to Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. I will recommend expulsion from university, since (1) anyone who cheats deserves punishment; and (2) anyone who cheats in an ethics course lacks the intellect necessary to appreciate complex concepts and was admitted to university by mistake.

**READING PHILOSOPHY FOR FUN AND PROFIT:** Course readings examine complex concepts and demand careful study. You should allot at least 3 hours (4-5 would be better) for each reading. You should read assignments before & after class discussions. Yes, I am suggesting you read each assignment (at least) twice; no, I am not insane. Yes, I know you have a life. But we should all acknowledge: *Vita breva, ars longa*—and commit ourselves to the task at hand.

## **READING SCHEDULE:**

- 8/23 Introduction to ethical theory
- 8/25 Textual Exegesis and Analysis—and Aristotle  
READ: 1) Syllabus @ <http://www.csuchico.edu/phil/course/course.html> or @ <http://sites.google.com/site/phil320f09/>; 2) “Textual exegesis and analysis” @ <http://sites.google.com/site/phil320f09/>; (3) Aristotle, Bk. I.§§ i-vi; (4) Houghton, pp. 1-6  
**WRITE: See “Daily Writing Assignments” @ <http://sites.google.com/site/phil320f09/>.**
- 8/30 Aristotle  
READ: (1) Aristotle: Bk. I, §§ vii-xiii; (2) Houghton, pp. 7-27  
**WRITE: See “Daily Writing Assignments” @ <http://sites.google.com/site/phil320f09/>.**

- 9/1 Aristotle  
 READ: (1) Aristotle: Bk. II, all §§; and (2) Houghton, pp. 29-39  
**WRITE: See “Daily Writing Assignments” @ <http://sites.google.com/site/phil320f09/>.**
- 9/6 Aristotle  
 READ: (1) Bk. III, §§ i-v & x-xii; and (2) Houghton, pp. 63-69  
**WRITE: See “Daily Writing Assignments” @ <http://sites.google.com/site/phil320f09/>.**
- 9/8 Aristotle  
 READ: (1) Bk. VII, §§ i-x; (2) “Paper Topics; and (3) “Philosophical Writing” @  
<http://sites.google.com/site/phil320ethicsbcwhite/>
- 9/13 Aristotle, Bk X—§§all
- 9/15 Review for midterm exam #1  
**PAPER #1 IS DUE**
- 9/20 **MIDTERM EXAM #1—Bring a Green Book**  
**NOTE: I WILL HOLD OFFICE HOURS ON MONDAY, 9/19, 2-4 PM.**
- 9/22 Hume: READ: (1) “Hume & His Metaphysics” (@  
<http://sites.google.com/site/phil320ethicsbcwhite/> and (2) Hume II.III.I-II (399-412)
- 9/27 **Class will not meet today; reread Hume II.III.I-II (399-412 (I am serious about this!)**
- 9/29 Hume: II.III.III-V (412-424)
- 10/4 Hume: III.I.I-II (455-476)
- 10/6 Hume: III.II.I-II (477-501)
- 10/11 Hume: Hume III.II.V-VI (516-534)
- 10/13 Hume: III.III.I-II (574-602)  
**PAPER #2 IS DUE**
- 10/18 Hume: III.III.III-VI (602-621)
- 10/20 Review for midterm exam #2
- 10/25 **MIDTERM EXAM #2—Bring a green book. (Remember: exam is comprehensive.)**  
**NOTE: I WILL HOLD OFFICE HOURS ON MONDAY, 10/24, 2-4 PM.**
- 10/27 Kant, Preface and First Section [387-406]
- 11/1 Kant, Second Section [406-420]
- 11/3 Kant, Second Section [420-435]
- 11/8 Kant, Second Section [435-446]
- 11/10 Kant, Third Section [446-454]
- 11/15 Kant, Third Section [454-463]
- 11/17 Bentham, “An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation” @  
<http://www.utilitarianism.com/jeremy-bentham/index.html> Read Chapters I-IV.

**11/21—11/25 Thanksgiving Break**

11/29 Mill, Chapters 1-2  
12/1 Mill, Chapters 3-4  
**PAPER #3 IS DUE**  
12/6 Mill, Chapter 5  
12/8 Review for final exam

**12/15 FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 15, 10:00 AM.**  
**Bring a green book. (Remember: exam is comprehensive.)**

**Office hours during finals week: Monday and Wednesday 1:00-3:30 PM**