

INTRODUCTION TO MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Lecture and Contact Information

Class: PHILO 130-C

Lecture Times: T/U 1:05-2:20PM

Room: D 106

Professor: Nathan Kellen

Email: nathankellen@ksu.edu

Office Hours: T/U 11:00AM-1:00PM (D 305)

Course Description

Ethics, the study of what we owe to others, is one of the most fundamental areas of inquiry in human life. All of us reason ethically often throughout our lives, both with and without realizing it. This class will examine the three major aspects of ethical theory:

- **METAETHICS:** the study of ethics itself
- **NORMATIVE ETHICS:** the study of how we ought to reason ethically or what to do ethically
- **APPLIED ETHICS:** the application of normative ethical theory to applied issues.

Course Objectives

This course is designed as a “toolkit” course - a course which gives students the theoretical tools of a certain discipline and then teaches them to apply said tools to various issues. The course is designed with three purposes in mind: learn to do philosophy well, reason well and live well by applying the lessons learned to issues in your own lives. The tools in this course, plus their applications, will fulfill these three objectives by giving you a solid background in contemporary ethical philosophy and training you to reason ethically about issues relevant to human life.

In addition to training you to reason well about ethical issues this course will train you to write well. Students will learn how to write short and medium length argumentative papers, displaying their ability to argue and communicate information successfully and succinctly.

This course fulfills the K-State Ethical Reasoning and Responsibility area description.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand and apply moral principles from a range of normative ethical theories
- Develop your reading comprehension of texts with complex arguments
- Learn to analyze and formulate arguments with complex structure
- Develop your argumentative writing skills
- Gain an appreciation of others’ ethical views through dialogue

Course Readings

All of the readings will be available freely online in PDF format at the K-State Canvas site. **It is a necessary requirement of this course that you read the assigned readings before the lecture.**

Course Assignments and Grades

In this course you will be evaluated via multiple methods. The grading scheme is as follows:

- **Participation:** 10%
- **Short Writing Assignments:** 20%
- **Midterm Exam:** 20%
- **Final Exam:** 20%
- **Final Paper:** 30%

Participation

Participation is earned by coming to class, prepared and ready to participate with your fellow students and your instructor in a shared intellectual conversation. Philosophy is often a collaborative process: I may posit a position, which you object to, and then another person defends. Engaging in philosophical discussion is an essential part of honing your reasoning skills and doing philosophy well. In order to earn the full participation grade students must not have many absences, must participate in class discussion and be respectful in discussions to their fellow interlocutors.

In order to earn the full participation grade students must not have many absences and must fully participate in group work. **It is a requirement of this course that you read the assigned readings before the lecture.** Part of your participation grade will be coming to class prepared by having read the reading. I expect you to bring your readings with you to class everyday.

Short Writing Assignments

Short writing responses will test your understanding of the material and your ability to apply the knowledge you have learned. Each week I will give you at least one topic/question via email and you will write a short response (about 500 words). Writing assignments will be graded on your grasp of the material, the strength of your arguments and the clarity of your writing.

Assignments will be given out by midnight Thursday and are due by email 11:59PM Sunday. You must email your assignment to me by the due date in an email with the subject:

PHILO 130: LastName Week N Assignment

filling in your last name and the week of the assignment as appropriate.
The PDF's file name must be:

LastName_WeekN_Assignment

filling in your last name and the week of the assignment as appropriate.

You must complete five short writing assignments between Weeks 2-11 (not including Week 6). You may choose when to complete four of these assignments, however **everyone must complete the short writing assignment for Week 2.**

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will be administered in class on **Thursday October 3**. The midterm exam will cover all the material from Weeks 1-6, and will be a 10 question short essay (i.e. one blue book page) multiple question exam.

Final Exam

The final exam will be administered during the scheduled final exam time/room, TBA. The final exam will cover all the material from Weeks 7-15, and will be a 10 question short essay (i.e. one blue book page) multiple question exam.

Final Paper

The final paper will test your ability argumentative and long-form writing skills. You will be tasked with writing a four-five page **argumentative essay** on one of the topics/readings from Weeks 7-11. You will additionally be required to submit a paper outline and rough draft, as well as participate in two in-class writing workshops.

The first requirement for the final paper is attendance in an in-class workshop on how to write argumentative essays, held during regular class time on **Thursday November 14th**. Participation in this workshop is mandatory.

The second requirement for the final paper is submission of a paper outline, **in class on Thursday November 21st**.

The third requirement for the final paper is the submission of a rough draft, **in class on Thursday December 5th**.

The fourth requirement for the final paper is participation in an in-class peer-review workshop where students will read and give comments on each others' rough drafts. This workshop will be held during regular class time on **Thursday December 12th**.

The fifth and final requirement for the final paper is the submission of your final draft, as well as your paper outline, rough draft and peer review sheets. All documents must be submitted **in class during the administration of the final exam, in time/room TBA**.

To summarize:

1. Thursday 11/14: In-Class Workshop on Writing Essays
2. Thursday 11/21: Submit Paper Outline
3. Thursday 12/5: Submit Rough Draft
4. Thursday 12/12: In-Class Peer Review Workshop
5. Final Exam Date: Submit Final Draft, Outline, Rough Draft, Peer Review Sheets

Email Contact

In order to make sure that I receive your email and can respond in a timely fashion, please make sure the subject of every email begins with "PHILO 130:". Feel free to email me any minor questions you have; if your question is more substantial, please stop by my office hours to get help instead.

Office Hours

As your instructor, my aim is to help you do as well in this course as you want to do. The bulk of that aim is accomplished through lecture. My office hours are another place for you learn, but instead via one-on-one instruction. I encourage students to attend my office hours with any and all questions, as much as they need to or find helpful. My office hours are set aside time in my schedule with the express purpose of providing help to students - you are not in any way infringing upon my work or personal time by coming to office hours, so don't be shy.

If you cannot make it to my office hours, please do not go without the help you need! Contact me via email and we will set up an appointment that works for the both of us.

As a final note, office hours need not be used only for class purposes. I encourage students to stop by for any reason they'd like, including but not limited to: learning about other areas of philosophy, chatting about academic topics in general, etc.

Digital Office Hours

In addition to my regular office hours and email contact I will hold digital office hours. These office hours will utilize the Discord platform, which is essentially a chatroom platform (with some extra bells and whistles).

The goal of the digital office hours will be to provide you with quick help which is public to everyone else. Chances are if you have a question, others do as well, and if you ask it in the Discord chatroom then everyone can go there and see the answer.

Discord is completely free, and requires only an email to sign up. You can use Discord in your web browser, via a downloaded computer app platform, or on your phone (iOS/Android). You can access the Discord office hours chatroom via the following invite link: <https://discord.gg/t9tQjcq>. I ask that all students who use these office hours set their usernames to their first and last name, so I can tell who is asking what.

No student is required to use this platform; all use is strictly optional. It is just another way to reach me which has certain advantages over email usage and in-person office hours, especially given how short the course is. Students may use the chatroom to ask questions, pinging me (by starting your message with @NathanKellen) to begin, and I will answer when it's possible for me to do so.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who need classroom accommodations, access to technology, or information about emergency building/campus evacuation processes should contact the Student Access Center and/or their instructor. Services are available to students with a wide range of disabilities including, but not limited to, physical disabilities, medical conditions, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, depression, and anxiety. If you are a student enrolled in campus/online courses through the Manhattan or Olathe campuses, contact the Student Access Center at accesscenter@k-state.edu, 785-532-6441; for K-State Polytechnic campus, contact Academic and Student Services at polytechnicadvising@ksu.edu or call 785-826-2674.

Student Resources Statement

K-State has many resources to help contribute to student success. These resources include accommodations for academics, paying for college, student life, health and safety, and others found at www.k-state.edu/onestop.

Statement Regarding Academic Honesty

Cheating is reprehensible. Cheating in a course on *ethics* is particularly reprehensible. Any case of cheating (that is, representing someone else's work as your own) may result in a penalty ranging from failure of the assignment to failure in the entire course, as well as a report to the Honor and Integrity System, which can impose penalties up to and including expulsion.

Activities that constitute cheating include copying off others assignments or tests, buying or selling answers to assignments or tests, working with others on assignments without my explicit permission, as well as anything else classified as academic misconduct by the Academic Honesty Policy. Please note that the passive forms of all of these activities (e.g. letting someone copy off your assignment or test) are considered cheating to the same degree as the active forms.

Kansas State University has an Honor and Integrity System based on personal integrity which is presumed to be sufficient assurance in academic matters one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor and Integrity System. The policies and procedures of the Honor System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning.

A component vital to the Honor and Integrity System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by students. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work."

The default in this class is that ALL work will be accomplished individually, UNLESS my permission is given in advance of an assignment/quiz/exam/take-home exam/final. If you are in doubt, please ask.

A grade of XF can result from a breach of academic honesty. The F indicates failure in the course; the X indicates the reason is an Honor Pledge violation.

For more information, visit the Honor and Integrity System home web page at: <http://www.k-state.edu/honor/>.

Statement Defining Expectations for Classroom Conduct

All student activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the Student Judicial Conduct Code as outlined in the Student Governing Association By Laws, Article V, Section 3, number 2. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be asked to leave the class.

Campus Safety Statement

Kansas State University is committed to providing a safe teaching and learning environment for student and faculty members. In order to enhance your safety in the unlikely case of a campus emergency make sure that you know where and how to quickly exit your classroom and how to follow any emergency directives. To view additional campus emergency information go to the University's main page, www.k-state.edu, and click on the Emergency Information button, located at the bottom of the page.

Weapons Policy Statement

Kansas State University prohibits the possession of firearms, explosives, and other weapons on any University campus, with certain limited exceptions, including the lawful concealed carrying of handguns, as provided in the University Weapons Policy, found at <http://www.k-state.edu/police/weapons/index.html>.

You are encouraged to take the online weapons policy education module online weapons policy education module to ensure you understand the requirements of the policy, including the requirements related to concealed carrying of handguns on campus. Students possessing a concealed handgun on campus must be 21 years of age or older and otherwise lawfully eligible to carry. All carrying requirements of the policy must be observed in this class, including but not limited to the requirement that a concealed handgun be completely hidden from view, securely held in a holster that meets the specifications of the policy, carried without a chambered round of ammunition, and that any external safety be in the "on" position.

If an individual carries a concealed handgun in a personal carrier such as a backpack, purse, or handbag, the carrier must remain within the individual's exclusive and uninterrupted control. This includes wearing the carrier with a strap, carrying or holding the carrier, or setting the carrier next to or within the immediate reach of the individual.

Each individual who lawfully possesses a handgun on campus shall be wholly and solely responsible for carrying, storing and using that handgun in a safe manner and in accordance with the law, Board policy and University policy. All reports of suspected violation of the weapons policy are made to the University Police Department by picking up any Emergency Campus Phone or by calling 785-532-6412.

Reading and Lecture Schedule

Week One - Introduction to Philosophy, Ethics and Philosophical Reasoning

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| August 27th | Introductions, Syllabus and Intro to Philosophy | No Readings |
| August 29th | Introduction to Philosophical Reasoning | No Readings |

Week Two - Ethics, Religion and Culture

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| September 3rd | Ethics and Religion | Brink |
| September 5th | Cultural Relativism | Gensler |

Week Three -Realism and Utilitarianism

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| September 10th | Moral Realism | Enoch |
| September 12th | Pleasure and Utility | Mill |

Week Four - Utilitarianism

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| September 17th | Act and Rule Utilitarianism | Mill |
| September 19th | Objections to Utilitarianism | Nozick |

Week Five - Kantian Ethics

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| September 24th | Kantianism | Kant ("The Good Will...") |
| September 26th | Kantianism Continued | Kant ("The Good Will...") & Hay |

Week Six - MIDTERM

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| October 1st | Objections to Kantianism | Thomson ("The Trolley Problem") |
| October 3rd | MIDTERM | Study! |

Week Seven - Animal Ethics

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| October 8th | Animal Welfare | Kant ("We Have No...") & Norcross |
| October 10th | Animal Rights | Korsgaard |

Week Eight - Abortion

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| October 15th | The Right to Abortion | Thomson (“A Defense...”) |
| October 17th | The Impermissibility of Abortion | Marquis |

Week Nine - Gun Control

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| October 22nd | Moderate Gun Control | LaFollette |
| October 24th | Against Gun Control | Wheeler |

Week Ten - Consumer Ethics: Pollution and Sweatshops

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| October 29th | Pollution | Sinnott-Armstrong |
| October 31st | Sweatshops | Zwolinski |

Week Eleven - Charity and Privacy

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| November 5th | Charity | Singer |
| November 7th | Privacy | Lynch |

Week Twelve - Anti-natalism and Writing Workshop

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| November 12th | Anti-natalism | Harman |
| November 14th | In-Class Writing Workshop | No Readings |

Week Thirteen - Gender and Race

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| November 19th | Gender and Privilege | McIntosh |
| November 21st | Race and Privilege | Kelly & Roeddert (PAPER OUTLINE DUE) |

THANKSGIVING BREAK

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| November 25th-29th | BREAK | No Readings |
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Week Fourteen - Sexual Consent

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| December 3rd | Seduction and Consent | Barnhill |
| December 5th | Deception and Consent | Dougherty (PAPER DRAFT DUE) |

Week Fifteen - Wrapping Up

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| December 10th | Final Exam Review | BRING WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO CLASS |
| December 12th | In-Class Peer Review Workshop | BRING DRAFT PAPER TO CLASS |