

Ethics (Phil 240-12)
Spring 2014 – University of San Francisco

Basic Information

Instructor: Grant J. Rozeboom, e-mail at gjrozeboom@usfca.edu

Location and Time: Education Building 110, 4:35-6:20, Tuesdays and Thursdays

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00-4:00 p.m., in the café next to the bookstore

Course Outcomes (in line with Core D3)

Overall, the goal of this course is for us to become better at evaluating and developing answers to some basic questions about how we morally should act, what kinds of people we should be, and how we should organize our political communities. This means that, by the end of the course, we will be able to ...

- (1) discern the main points, along with their supporting arguments, in a piece of philosophical writing,
- (2) critically evaluate an argument for a general moral claim,
- (3) initiate and help sustain a civil and focused discussion about some moral controversy, even with those who hold opposing views,
- (4) articulate one's central moral views and expose them to some critical scrutiny that is informed by philosophical texts,
- (5) draw on the basic conceptual distinctions and main claims of important philosophical moral theories, and evaluate these theories,
- (6) use general moral theories to defend one's own moral views, and
- (7) identify the importance of diversity for moral philosophy and, in particular, to recognize the challenge that it presents in resolving contemporary ethical issues.

In short, the goal is for all of us to practice and get better at engaging in philosophical reflection about important moral matters.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments: You will complete three different kinds of assignments during this course, all of which are important for helping us to achieve the goals listed above.

(1) Encyclopedia Entries: You will all write two short (around 700 words) summaries of important moral philosophical views or debates. (I will highlight options as they come along.) The goal of these summaries is to write something that could serve as a useful reference for someone who wanted to understand what was most important, and most worrying, about some given philosophical moral theory or debate. One of these must be completed by Week 3, and the other must be completed by Week 12. *These assignments will help us to achieve Goals (1), (4), (5), and (6).*

(2) Argumentative Essays: You will all write two papers. The first, shorter one (around 1300 words) will be due by the end of Week 8, and the second, slightly longer one (around 1700 words) will be due by the end of finals week. The goal

of these papers will be to defend your tentative answer to one of the questions we take up in this course. *These essays will help with Goals (1), (2), (4), and (6).*

(3) Participation Preparation: On most weeks, you will complete a small assignment (no more than 300 words) designed to prepare you for what we'll be doing in class that week and, in Weeks 4-6, for your writing of the argumentative essays. They will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. *These assignments will help us to achieve all seven of the goals listed above.*

In addition to these three kinds of assignments, it is important to participate in our in-class activities, including small- and large-group discussions, *which will help us to achieve Goals (3) and (7).* Absences will lower your participation grade unless they are excused, and they will be excused only if you notify me in advance about extenuating circumstances (such as illness) and/or the absence results from an emergency.

Grade Calculation: 10% of your grade will come from participation in class discussions and activities, 15% will come from the Participation Preparation assignments, 30% will come from your two Encyclopedia Entries (15% each), and 45% will come from your two Argumentative Essays (20% for the first, 25% for the second). Your grade will be assigned on a standard percentage scale: 98-100% A+, 93-97 A, 90-92 A-, 88-89 B+, 83-87 B, 80-82 B-, 78-79 C+, 73-77 C, 70-72 C-, 68-69 D+, 63-67 D, 60-62 D-.

Course Policies

Civility: One of the goals of this course is to foster robust, civil discussions within which we can frankly express our moral views. This means that *all* contributions to discussion will be taken seriously. No forms of mocking or insult will be tolerated. Students who mock or insult others will be asked to leave the class.

Electronic Devices: Laptop computers may *not* be used to access the internet at any time during class. But, if you disable your computer's internet connectivity, you may use it to take notes and look at electronic copies of course readings. You also may not access your cell phones or other similar electronic devices at all during class. Violating either of these policies will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability or disabling condition, or if you think you may have a disability, contact Student Disability Services at 415 422-2613 within the first week of class, or immediately upon onset of disability, to speak with a disability specialist. If you are determined eligible for reasonable accommodations, please meet with your disability specialist so they can arrange to have your accommodation letter sent to me, and we will discuss your needs for this course. For more information, please visit: <http://www.usfca.edu/sds> or call 415 422-2613.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to adhere to the Academic Honor Code (www.usfca.edu/catalog/policies/honor). The Encyclopedia Entries and Argumentative Essays will be turned in through turnitin.com. Penalties for violating the honor code may include, but are not limited to, getting no credit for assignments and receiving an F for the course. All violations will be reported to the Academic Honesty Committee.

Readings: Readings are listed below on the day *by which* they are to be completed. I will notify you of any changes to this tentative reading schedule. Otherwise, it is your responsibility to keep track of the schedule below and complete the listed readings prior to class on the date on which they are listed.

Course Readings

You are required to obtain the following four texts, which are available at the bookstore but can also be purchased online. Other required readings will be posted on Canvas.

- (1) Frankfurt, *Taking Ourselves Seriously and Getting It Right*
 - ISBN: 978-0804752985
- (2) Hampton and Murphy, *Forgiveness and Mercy*
 - ISBN: 978-0521395670
- (3) Mill, *Utilitarianism* and *On Liberty*
 - ISBN: 978-0631233527
- (4) Satz, *Why Some Things Should Not Be for Sale: The Moral Limits of Markets*
 - ISBN: 978-0199892617

Course Schedule

Weeks 1-2: Systematic Thought about Morality I

- 1/21: Readings: none
A&A (Assignments & Activities): discussion of the “Friendly Lie” case
- 1/23: Readings: Mill – Ch. 1, 2 (Sec. 1-10); Darwall, *Welfare and Rational Care*
A&A: Participation Preparation (PP) #1
- 1/28: Readings: Nozick, “Side Constraints”; Ross, *The Right and the Good*
A&A: class discussion of “hard cases” for Nozick and Ross
- 1/30: Readings: none
A&A: PP #2; class discussion of when why-questions about morality arise

Week 3: Non-Human Animals and Morality

- 2/4: Readings: Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*; Singer, “All Animals are Equal”
A&A: Encyclopedia Entry (EE) #1
- 2/6: Readings: Korsgaard, “Facing the Animal You See in the Mirror”
A&A: PP #3; class discussion

Weeks 4-5: Love and Morality

- 2/11: Readings: Frankfurt – Lecture 1
A&A: class discussion of the “Loving Amoralist”
- 2/13: Readings: Frankfurt – Lecture 2
A&A: PP #4
- 2/18: Readings: none
A&A: documentary, *Bill Cunningham New York*

Weeks 5-6: Forgiveness and Morality

- 2/20: Readings: Hampton and Murphy – pages 14-19, 36-43
A&A: in-class writing about the “Forgiveness Puzzle”
- 2/25: Readings: Hampton and Murphy – pages 43-96
A&A: PP #5
- 2/27: Readings: Hampton and Murphy – pages 24-34, 147-57
A&A: discuss Essay #1 topics

Week 7: Systematic Thought about Morality II

- 3/4: Readings: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books I-II
A&A: small group discussion of “Activist Virtue”
- 3/6: Readings: Wolf, “Moral Saints”
A&A: PP #6

Week 8: Spring Break!

Weeks 9-10: Character and Responsibility

- 3/18: Readings: Watson, “Responsibility and the Limits of Evil”
A&A: class discussion of Harris case
- 3/20: Readings: none
A&A: Argumentative Essay #1
- 3/25: Readings: review Watson, “Responsibility and the Limits of Evil”
A&A: documentary, *The Boogie Man: The Life of Lee Atwater*

Weeks 10-11: Systematic Thought about Morality III

- 3/27: Readings: Rawls, “Justice as Fairness,” Sections I-II (pages 224-31)
A&A: class discussion of “Roommate Rules”
- 4/3: Readings: Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapters 1, 3, and 4
A&A: PP #7 (due 4/1)
- 4/8: Readings: Nozick, “The Entitlement Theory”; Rawls, VI (pages 245-51)
A&A: in-class writing about “Rental Property Schemes”

Weeks 12-14: Noxious Markets?

- 4/10: Readings: Satz – Ch. 1, 4
A&A: PP #8
- 4/15: Readings: Twohey, “The Child Exchange”
A&A: EE #2
- 4/17: **No class (Holy Thursday holiday)**
- 4/22: Readings: Satz – Ch. 5, 6
A&A: in-class writing about whether certain markets are “noxious”
- 4/24: Readings: Satz – Ch. 9
A&A: PP #9

Weeks 15-16: Religion, Diversity, and Liberty

- 4/29: Readings: Okin, “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?”
A&A: split-class debate about exemptions for cultural practice
- 5/1: Readings: *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (selections)
A&A: class discussion of the value of religious liberty and public education
- 5/6: Readings: none
A&A: PP #10

Week 16: Tying Together Some Threads

Argumentative Essay #2 will be due during Finals Week