

Syllabus for PHIL 441 – Ethical Theory  
Taught by Justin Kalef, Rutgers University, Spring 2017

**Contact information:** The easiest way to contact me outside of class is by email, at [jkalef@philosophy.rutgers.edu](mailto:jkalef@philosophy.rutgers.edu)

**Office hours:** Noon to 1pm on Mondays in my office (5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 106 Somerset Street, Office 546).

**Texts:** The first half of the course will be devoted to a consideration of Michael Huemer's *Ethical Intuitionism*. The second will be devoted primarily to Richard Joyce's *The Myth of Morality*. **These texts are required.** Students who do not secure access to the texts early on (especially *Ethical Intuitionism*) should not expect to pass the course.

**Students will also need to purchase four-month 'Rationale Extra' subscriptions to the online argument mapping service, Rationale, at the discounted rate of \$5 per subscription.** Here's how you get that:

First make a free account at [www.rationaleonline.com](http://www.rationaleonline.com) here:

<https://www.rationaleonline.com/accounts/register>

Next upgrade your account by typing in the following code (making sure there are no spaces): j2pdxyqc

This is where you type the code: [https://www.rationaleonline.com/accounts/license\\_code\\_enter](https://www.rationaleonline.com/accounts/license_code_enter)

Those whose grammar is less than perfect are strongly advised to work through Janis Bell's *Clean, Well-Lighted Sentences*, or some other reputable guide to English grammar, as soon as possible.

**Topic and purpose of course:** In this course, you will participate in the main debates in metaethics. The emphasis throughout will be on *doing* philosophy rather than learning about what philosophers say (though of course you'll need to learn what philosophers say in order to understand the issues and arguments sufficiently to do the philosophy). My main hope is to help each of you become a better critical thinker, reader, writer, listener, and speaker through taking this course.

**Assessment:** You will have an opportunity to earn up to 1000 points in this course (not counting bonus points, which may in exceptional cases earn students a final total above 1000). This final score, divided by ten, will be your final percentage, and will be converted to a letter grade according to the following scale:

**A: 90-100** (outstanding work);

**B+: 87-89** (very good work);

**B: 80-86** (good work);

**C+: 77-79** (decent work);

**C: 70-76** (satisfactory work);

**D: 60-69** (minimally acceptable work);

**F: 0-59** (inadequate work).

Points will be awarded for your performance on the following tasks, all of which will be explained in class and/or in future handouts:

<u>Work</u>	<u>Maximum Score</u>
Argument maps of assigned passages in the readings.....	2 x 30 = 60 points
Best 3 out of 4 Pop Quizzes.....	3 x 80 = 240 points
Midterm Exam.....	200 points
Final Exam.....	200 points
Essay.....	300 points
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

#### Possible Bonus Points

Grammar bonus points.....	up to 15 points
Bonus points for answering peer questions.....	up to 15 points
Bonus points for questions <i>asked</i> in the forum.....	up to 15 points
Original quiz questions.....	up to 15 points

### **Schedule:**

#### I. Preliminaries

**Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>: Introduction to the course and to metaethics.**

#### II. Ethical Intuitionism

**Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>: Overview of the text; introducing subjectivism.**

*Reading: Chapter 1*

**Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>: The varieties of subjectivism.**

*Reading: Chapter 3*

**Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup>: Analytic reductionism.**

*Reading: Chapter 4 to the end of 4.3.1*

**Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>: Defenses of analytic reductionism**

*Reading: 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4 and 4.3.5*

**Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>: Synthetic reductionism, the argument from radical dissimilarity, and the best explanation for moral beliefs.**

*Reading: The rest of Chapter 4*

**Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>: The case for ethical intuitionism, plus some common epistemological objections.**

*Reading: Chapter 5 to the end of 5.4*

**Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup>: Further support for ethical intuitionism: a Moorean argument against nihilism; direct realism; and the isolation of the moral realm.**

*Reading: The rest of Chapter 5*

**Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup>: Dealing with the argument from disagreement.**

*Reading: Chapter 6*

**Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup>: Practical reasons: the Humean account.**

*Reading: Chapter 7 to the end of 7.4*

**Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>: Practical reasons: against the Humean and neo-Humean accounts.**

*Reading: The rest of Chapter 7*

**Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>: Noncognitivism introduced and criticized; dealing with Hare's version.**

*Reading: Chapter 2 to the end of 2.4*

**Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>: Dealing with Gibbard's, Blackburn's, and Timmons' versions; a final anti-expressivist argument.**

*Reading: The rest of Chapter 2.*

**Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>: Dealing with further objections against ethical intuitionism.**

*Reading: Chapter 8*

**Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup>: Huemer's final remarks; MIDTERM EXAM.**

*Reading: Chapter 9*

## **\*\* Reading Week \*\***

### III. The Myth of Morality

**Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup>: Error Theory and Motivation.**

*Reading: Preface and Chapter 1 of Joyce*

**Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>: Error Theory and Reasons.**

*Reading: Chapter 2*

**Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>: Practical Instrumentalism.**

*Reading: Chapter 3*

**Thursday, March 30<sup>th</sup>: The Relativity of Reasons.**

*Reading: Chapter 4*

**Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>: Internal and External Reasons.**

*Reading: Chapter 5*

**Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>: Morality and Evolution.**

*Reading: Chapter 6*

**Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup>: Fictionalism.**

*Reading: Chapter 7*

**Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>: Moral Fictionalism.**

*Reading: Chapter 8*

**Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>: Assessing Joyce's case**

*Reading: Epilogue*

**Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>: Parallel Arguments**

*Reading: Loeb, 'Gastronomic Realism: A Cautionary Tale'*

**Monday, April 24<sup>th</sup>: The Intuitive Case Against Subjectivism, Reassessed**

*Reading for April 26<sup>th</sup>: Loeb, 'The Argument from Moral Experience'*

**Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup>: Relativism, Reconsidered**

*Reading for April 28<sup>th</sup>: Kalef, 'Sympathy for the Relativist'*

**Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>: Wrapping Up**

*Reading: None*

**!!! FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 8, 2016, 9:30am – 11am !!!**

Finally, the Dean's office has requested that I add the following:

**Student-Wellness Services:**

**Just In Case Web App**

<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

**Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)**

**(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / [www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/](http://www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/)**

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

**Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)**

**(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / [www.vpva.rutgers.edu/](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/)**

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students,

staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

### **Disability Services**

**(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

### **Scarlet Listeners**

**(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>**

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.