

Ethics Throughout History

Syllabus (v1)

Course Info

Course Name & Number: Ethics Throughout History (01:730:341)

Instructor: Richard Fry, richard.fry@rutgers.edu

Meeting Time: M/W, 2:50-4:10, Scott Hall, Rm. 120 (College Ave.)

Office Hours: M/W 4:20-5:20PM, Miller Hall 108 (College Ave), and by appointment

Course Website: available through <https://canvas.rutgers.edu>

Course Description

Over the centuries, different human groups have thought about their obligations in different ways. Different thinkers have understood our moral and social obligations to each other through various, extraordinarily different lenses. This course takes up those different perspectives and seeks to understand the underlying moral thinking behind each of them, probing their similarities and their differences. This course examines thinkers in both Western and Eastern traditions, from ancient times through the 19th century. This course is reading-intensive and centers philosophical writing, so you will be expected to write regularly and well.

Learning Goals

This course has several goals:

- Departmental learning goals met by this course:
 - Develop the ability to accurately and fairly present others' views.
 - Improve your analytical reading and writing skills.
 - Improve your ability to analyze, evaluate, and construct arguments.
- Other learning goals for this course:
 - Introduce you to classic texts and questions in the history of Western philosophy
 - Cultivate your own thinking about central problems in philosophy, especially as those issues bear on your own life.
 - Develop essential life skills such as time management, communication when encountering difficulties, and thoughtful engagement with others.

Required Texts

- All course readings will be made available through Canvas.
 - You are required to bring these readings to class.

Policies

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

- You are expected and required to uphold standards of academic honesty.
- Plagiarism of ideas or words is unacceptable.
- Confirmed academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course.
- Familiarize yourself plagiarism is and academic dishonesty and Rutgers's policies:
 - <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>,
 - https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid_plagiarism
 - <https://wp.rutgers.edu/academics/undergraduate/plagiarism>

Personal Conduct

- You are responsible for treating your classmates with respect and courtesy.
 - Treating your classmates with respect entails arriving on time and being prepared.
 - Being prepared means reading before class and bringing the assigned material to class
 - Laptops/tablets will only be permitted when readings are distributed electronically.
 - Being prepared is evidenced by participating actively—both asking and answering questions—in discussion.
- Students are expected to attend all classes
 - If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. This system will automatically email me.
- *You are responsible for helping to foster a safe and productive learning environment.*
 - This course adheres to the Philosophy Department's policy on norms of discourse, available at <https://philosophy.rutgers.edu/about-us/discourse>

Accommodations

- Students needing accommodations should follow the procedures available at <https://ods.rutgers.edu>

Grades

- **LATE WORK:** For each 24 hours late after the due date for a piece of written work is submitted, 3% will be subtracted from whatever grade it earns.
 - All work more than a week late will receive an F.
- **EXTENSIONS:** If you need an extension, email me with a brief description of your situation.
 - If I approve an extension, we will work out an appropriate timeframe.
 - Extensions must be requested at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.
- **ANONYMOUS GRADING:** The papers for this course will be graded anonymously.

- Work submitted through Canvas should *not* have your name in the text or the filename.
- Failure to properly anonymize your submission will result in a 10% penalty to your grade.
- **GRADE APPEALS:** If you believe your work deserves a different grade than it received, you may ask in writing for reconsideration.
 - Submit this request within one week but no sooner than one day after work is returned.
 - Your written request must explain why you believe the work deserves a different grade.
 - Please note that if a change is made, the new grade may be either higher or lower.

Changes

- I reserve the right to change any part of this syllabus at any time.
- Changes will be announced in class and a new version of the syllabus posted to Canvas.

Assignments and Assessment

More details about these assignments will be distributed online and in class throughout the semester.

Weekly Reading Engagement (25%)

- A 200-300 word summary of a *single* argument from the texts assigned for that meeting
 - You will determine which argument to address and how to best capture it
- This should also include a single, clear question about the course content for the day
- Due each Monday by 10:00AM, starting February 3rd
- Your worst two attempts will not count toward your final grade

Misreading Papers - 2x - 12.5% ea. - 25% total

- A paper wherein you elucidate the 'straightforward' reading of a text
 - That is, reproduce a passage and argue briefly that it aims at a particular claim by way of a certain, reasonably well-defined argument
- Then illustrate, with textual evidence—and, where appropriate, extratextual background—why we should think that the claims made earlier about the content of the text are incorrect
 - And explain what we ought to take the text to mean instead, on that basis
 - You will thus argue for a *new* or *different* understanding based on your close reading
- Each should be turned in *within one week* of our discussion of the text you're writing about
 - That is, if you're writing about, e.g., the Bhagavad Gita, which we'll discuss March 4th, you must turn in your 'misreading' paper on it by 11:59PM, March 11th
- One of these must be turned in before spring break, the other after it

Exams - 2x - 12.5% ea. - 25% total

- Two take-home essay and short-answer exams
- Each exam will ask you to report on views and arguments we have examined
- Exams will be distributed several days before they are due
- Exams will be due via Canvas Friday, **March 13th**, and Friday, **May 1st**

Final Paper - 25% total

- A short (1200-1800 word) writing assignment asking you to explain an argument in depth and consider an objection or potential refinement from another ethical tradition
- This paper will build on the skills from the reading engagement and misreading papers to help you develop your writing skills, enhancing your ability to interpret and engage with philosophical texts
- This paper will be due at the time scheduled for the final exam

Calendar with Topics and Readings

You are expected to read this material before the class-day it is listed under.

0: Introductions and History

22 Jan - Intro to the Course

No reading

1: Ancient Greek

27 Jan - Laws and Obligations

Plato, *Crito*

29 Jan - Justice

Plato, *Republic* IV 428a-445a

02 Feb - Morals and Function

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk.I

05 Feb - Virtue/Virtues

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk.II

10 Feb - Pleasure

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk.VII.11-14, X.1-5

12 Feb - Epicureanism (I)

Diogenes Laertius, "Epicurus's Ethics"

17 Feb - Epicureanism (II)

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* Bk.III (all), Bk.IV (excerpt)

19 Feb - Stoicism (I)

Epictetus, *Handbook*

24 Feb - Stoicism (II)

Seneca, "On Leisure"

2: South Asian and Buddhist

26 Feb - Background and Metaphysics

Kena Upanishad, Isa Upanishad

02 Mar - The Good, The Pleasant, and Death

Katha Upanishad

04 Mar - Conflict and Character

Bhagavad Gita (excerpt)

06 Mar - The Search and the Path

Noble Search (Ariyapariyesana Sutta, MN 26)

An Analysis of the Path (Magga-vibhanga, SN 45:8)

11 Mar - The Life of the Mind

The Fruits of the Contemplative Life (Samannaphala Sutta, DN 2)

Heart Sutra

Exam #1 due before 11:59PM Mar. 13th

3: Modern European

23 Mar - Stoicism (III)

Descartes and Elizabeth, *Correspondence* starting 22 Jun 1645

25 Mar - Interdependence

Spinoza, *Ethics* IV.app, V.pref

30 Mar - Moral Duty

Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* I

01 Apr - Sexual Ethics

Kant, selections on sexual ethics from *Lectures*

06 Apr - Pleasure and Happiness

Mill, *Utilitarianism* ch1-2

08 Apr - Society

Mill, *On Liberty* (excerpts)

4: Ancient Chinese

13 Apr - Social Relationships

Confucius, *Analects* (selections)

15 Apr - Universal Love

Mo Zi, "On Cultivating the Self," "On Standards and Rules," and "On Universal Love I"

20 Apr - The Way (Dao)

Dao De Jing 1-22 (Moss Roberts, tr.)

Dao De Jing 1-22 (Ames and Hall, tr.)

Read through **both** the Moss Roberts **and** the Ames and Hall translations/commentaries

(For best results, place them side by side and read simultaneously through them)

22 Apr - Commentary and Combination

Zhuangzhi, "The Way of Heaven"

5: Japanese

27 Apr - Buddhism and Virtue

Dōgen, "On Good and Evil"

29 Apr - Interpersonality

Watsuji, "Ethics"

Exam #2 due before 11:59PM May 1st

6: Wrap Up

04 May - Wrap Up

no new reading

Final Paper due at the time scheduled by the registrar for the Final Exam

Resources

Philosophical Resources

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<http://plato.stanford.edu>

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<http://www.iep.utm.edu>

Tips on Writing a Philosophy Paper

<http://goo.gl/iDzgFb>

Academic Resources

Disability Services (ODS)

<https://ods.rutgers.edu>

(848) 445-6800

Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway

The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.

Academic Support

<https://newbrunswick.rutgers.edu/academics/academic-support>

This site has links to help you find your academic advising office, understand degree requirements and your progress toward them, and links to services to help you succeed, like:

Writing Centers (<https://wp.rutgers.edu/writingcenters/writingcenters>)

Learning Centers (<https://rlc.rutgers.edu>)

Program in American Language Studies, for non-native English speakers (<https://pals.rutgers.edu>)

RU1st, for first-generation, underrepresented, and low-income students (<https://diversity.rutgers.edu/ru1st>)

Library Tutorials

<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/tutorials>

The library has a number of helpful tutorials to get you started with searching, understanding the difference between scholarly and popular literature, and avoiding plagiarism. Check them out!

Student-Wellness Services

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

<http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/>

(848) 932-7884

17 Senior Street, New Brunswick

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)

<http://vpva.rutgers.edu>

(848) 932-1181

3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick

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.

Scarlet Listeners

<http://www.scarletlisteners.com>

(732) 247-5555

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

“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.