

Rutgers University
PHIL 730:107
Introduction to Ethics¹
Fall 2014

Times: Tuesdays 5:35pm to 8:35pm

Location: [Ruth Adams Building](#), Room 204

Professor: Christopher Gregory Weaver

E-mail: cgweaver [at] rcj [dot] rutgers [dot] edu (replacing the term ‘at’ with ‘@’ and the ‘dot’ place-holders with two periods or ‘.’s) Emails to any other address will be ignored.

Office Hours: Every Tuesday we have class from 3:00pm to 4:00pm on the 5th Floor in office 510 at 106 Somerset St. New Brunswick, NJ (in the [Gateway Building](#)).

Materials: Course lecture notes will be emailed to you.

I. Course Description

PHIL 730:107 sect. 2: Introduction to Ethics is an intensive survey course. We will cover virtually every substantive issue peculiar to metaethics and normative ethical theory. “This course satisfies Core Curriculum Goal: ‘o’. Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.”

II. Learning Objectives

1. Students will develop the skill to properly interpret scholarly literature in the field of ethics and in the subfields of metaethics and normative ethics.
2. Students will develop the ability to write a philosophy paper in the field of ethics.
3. Students will acquire the ability to engage in philosophical inquiry about issues peculiar to ethics.
4. Students will learn all of the leading metaethical theories and normative ethical theories, including, but not limited to moral realism, moral fictionalism, moral error theory, moral cognitivism, moral non-cognitivism, utilitarianism, Kantianism, contractualism, and virtue ethics.

III. General Approach

On designated quiz days (quizzes will be made available on Sakai every Tuesday we have class (except on our first meeting) and they must be completed by the start of class on those days), you will be responsible for completing online quizzes that will be made available on the course Sakai site. The quizzes will be over the assigned reading material, as well as the material presented during previous lectures. I will go over the correct answers in class and I will field questions you have about the quiz at that time. I will then make a few points about the assigned reading, and subsequently start lecturing through material. On days we do not take a quiz, we will first discuss the assigned reading, and then move into the content of a new lecture. All lectures will be supported by lecture notes made available in entirety on Sakai.

¹ The Instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus when he deems that a change is necessary.

IV. Textbooks

The required textbooks for this course are:

1. David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007). 680pp. ISBN: 0195325915. (Paperback)
2. Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics*. Second Edition. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011). 338pp. ISBN: 0199773556. (Paperback)

V. Assignments and Grading

Preparation and Class Attendance

10%

You are expected to read all of the assigned material. You are also expected to ask questions during the lectures and participate in in-class activities. **Missing more than two classes will negatively affect your grade.** If you are absent, you might want to e-mail a classmate and get the notes. It is your responsibility to keep up with any work you miss. Class participation grades will also be negatively affected if disrespect is shown to others.

Quizzes

30%

Your lowest quiz score will be dropped and will not count against you. If you miss a quiz because you are late to or absent from class, you will receive a zero for that quiz, but remember, your lowest quiz score will not count against you. Quizzes will be made available on Sakai every Tuesday we have class, and they must be completed by the start of class on those specific days. All quizzes are open book and open note. You may not complete any quizzes with the help of other students. You may not use any resources to complete your quizzes except (a) your textbooks, (b) the course lecture notes, and/or (c) your own personal notes based on course lectures.

Short Paper

25%

Your short paper must be on an issue in meta-ethics that we discussed in class. Please have your short paper topic approved by Instructor Weaver by October 8th. To acquire my approval of your topic, please email me with the subject heading "Short Paper Topic for Approval", then in the body of your email state the thesis you intend to argue for. You should argue for or against a metaethical position, advancing arguments for your position. Your paper should be 3 pages *single spaced*, justified, and in Times New Roman font (size 12), with one inch margins. The paper should be documented in [the University of Chicago of manual of style](#) and should include a bibliography. **Short papers are due in PDF format via Sakai, on October 31st, 2014 at 11:00am.** A late paper will be docked five points every hour it is late.

Final Paper

35%

Your final paper should be on a topic covered in class or in one of the textbooks (it should be different from the topic you wrote your short paper on). Please have your final paper topic approved by Instructor Weaver by November 1st. To acquire my approval of your topic, please email me with the subject heading "Final Paper Topic for Approval", then in the body of your email state the thesis you intend to argue for. Your paper should be 7 to 10 pages *single spaced*, justified, and in Times New Roman font (size 12), with

one inch margins. Your bibliography and/or title page may not be used to fulfill the length requirement. If the prose or substantive content portions of your paper exceeds 10 pages, that content will be ignored. The paper must be documented in [the University of Chicago manual of style](#) and should include a bibliography. **Final papers are due in PDF format via Sakai, on December 12th, 2014 at 11:00am.** A late paper will be docked five points every hour it is late.

VI. Schedule for the Fall Semester

(All readings in red are mandatory; all other readings are supplementary and helpful but not required. Due dates for required readings will be disclosed in class. The underlined readings will be provided for you.)

Part 1: Metaethics

Lecture 0: Introduction to Ethics

Homework: Read **Simon Blackburn, “Antirealist Expressivism and Quasi-Realism”, in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 146-162** and **Mark Eli Kalderon, *Moral Fictionalism* (Lines of Thought). (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005)** and excerpts from **Richard Joyce, “Error Theory and Motivation”, and “Error Theory and Reasons”, from Richard Joyce, *The Myth of Morality* (Cambridge Studies in Philosophy) (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-52**

Lecture 1: Moral Non-Cognitivism and Moral Fictionalism

Homework: **Michael Smith, “Meta-Ethics”, in Frank Jackson and Michael Smith (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 3-30** and **Terence Cuneo and Sean Christy, “The Myth of Moral Fictionalism”, in Michael Brady (ed.), *New Waves in Metaethics* (New Waves in Philosophy). (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 85-102.**

Lecture 2: Moral Cognitivism

Homework: **Jonas Olson, “In Defense of Moral Error Theory”, in Michael Brady (ed.), *New Waves in Metaethics* (New Waves in Philosophy). (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 62-84.**

Lecture 3: Moral Error Theory

Homework: **David Enoch, “Doing with Less”, from David Enoch, *Taking Morality Seriously: A Defense of Robust Realism*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 100-133.**

Lecture 4: Against Moral Error Theory

Homework: Read **G.E. Moore, “The Open Question Argument: The Subject-Matter for Ethics”, in Andrew Fisher and Simon Kirchin (eds.), *Arguing about Metaethics*. (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2006), pp. 31-46** and **Terence Horgan and Mark Timmons, “Troubles for New Wave Moral Semantics: The Open Question Argument Revived”, in Andrew Fisher and Simon Kirchin (eds.), *Arguing about Metaethics*. (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2006), pp. 179-199.**

Lecture 5: The Open Question Argument and the Naturalistic Fallacy

Homework: Read William Frankena, "[The Naturalistic Fallacy](#)", in Andrew Fisher and Simon Kirchin (eds.), *Arguing about Metaethics*. (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2006), pp. 47-58.

Lecture 6: Responses to the Open Question Argument

Homework: Nicholas L. Sturgeon, "Ethical Naturalism" in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 91-121.

Lecture 7: Ethical Naturalism

Homework: Jonathan Dancy, "Nonnaturalism" in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 122-145.

Lecture 8: Ethical Non-Naturalism

Homework: Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, "Moral Realism" in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 39-62 and David Enoch, *Taking Morality Seriously: A Defense of Robust Realism*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Lecture 9: Moral Realism

Homework: Philip L. Quinn, "Theological Voluntarism" in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 63-90.

Lecture 10: Course Related Media**Lecture 11: The Humean Theory**

Homework: Peter Railton, "Humean Theory of Practical Rationality" in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 265-281.

Lecture 12: The Kantian Theory of Practical Rationality

Homework: Stephen Darwall, "Morality and Practical Reason: A Kantian Approach" in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 282-320.

Lecture 13: Divine Command Theory

Homework: Thomas Hurka, "Value Theory" in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 357-379.

Part 2: Normative Ethics**Lecture 14: Value Theory**

Homework: James Dreier, "Moral Relativism and Moral Nihilism" in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 240-264.

Lecture 15: Ethical Relativism

Homework: David McNaughton and Piers Rawling, “Deontology” in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 424-458.

Lecture 16: Deontology

Homework: David O. Brink, “Some Forms and Limits of Consequentialism” in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 380-423.

Lecture 17: Consequentialism

Homework: Russ Shafer-Landau, “Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions” and “Consequentialism: Its Difficulties” from Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics. Second Edition.* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 117-153; Derek Parfit, “Consequentialism”, from Derek Parfit, *On What Matters. Volume One* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 371-403.

Lecture 18: Utilitarianisms

Homework: Thomas E. Hill, Jr. “Kantian Normative Ethics” in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 480-514 and Derek Parfit, “Respect and Value”; “Universal Laws”; “What if Everyone Did That?”; “Impartiality”, from Derek Parfit, *On What Matters. Volume One* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 233-257; 275-342.

Lecture 19: Kantian Ethics

Homework: Julia Annas, “Virtue Ethics” in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 515-536.

Lecture 20: Virtue Ethics

Homework: T.M. Scanlon, “Contractualism and Utilitarianism”, in Stephen Darwall, Allan Gibbard, and Peter Railton (eds.), *Moral Discourse and Practice* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 267-286; T.M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Derek Parfit, “Contractualism”, in *On What Matters. Volume One* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 343-370; and Derek Parfit, “Scanlonian Contractualism” in *On What Matters. Volume Two* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 213-243.

Lecture 21: Contractualism

Homework: Russ Shafer-Landau, “Ethical Pluralism and Absolute Moral Rules” and “Ethical Pluralism: Prima Facie Duties and Ethical Particularism” from Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics. Second Edition.* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 214-251.

Lecture 22: Ethical Pluralism

Homework: Russ Shafer-Landau, "Ethical Egoism", from Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics*. Second Edition. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 104-116.

Final papers are due in PDF format via email, on December 12th, 2014 at 11:00am.

VII. Current Academic Integrity Policy

To view the current academic integrity policy, visit the link [here](#). All students are expected to abide by that policy.

VIII. Self-Reporting Absence Application:

"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. An email is automatically sent to me [the instructor]."

IX. Food, Cell Phone, and Computer Use Policies

I do not allow students to consume food in class. Moreover, because the lecture notes will be provided for each student, I will not allow cell phone and computer use in class during lecture time. When lecture begins, all computers and cell phones must be stored.

X. Email Correspondence Policy

All email correspondence with your instructor must be done using your academic (usually the one provided for you by Rutgers University) email address (that's an email address ending with .edu). Correspondence from your instructor to the entire class will be performed via [R.A.M.S.](#) Email correspondence received from non-academic email addresses will be ignored. Email correspondence sent to any other email address besides cgweaver [at] rci [dot] rutgers [dot] edu (replacing the term 'at' with '@' and the 'dot' place-holders with periods or '.'s) in an attempt to communicate with me will be ignored.