

Philosophy 107: Introduction to Ethics

Instructor: Aaron Rabinowitz
Email: aaron.rabinowitz@rutgers.edu

1. Course Location and Meeting Times:

1.730.107.01 Monday/Thursdays 11:30-12:50 in FH-A4
Office Hours: Thursdays 1pm-3pm in Miller 212
Online Office Hours: By Appointment

2. Course Description:

In this course, we will discuss the field of ethics on three key levels: applied, normative, and metaethics. Our goal is to understand the significance of ethical thinking in our daily lives. We will survey the most significant normative ethical theories, and will discuss key problems in metaethics. We will then apply these theories to topics like animal rights, euthanasia, and pornography. This class will help prepare you to face daily ethical challenges and hopefully will help you pursue a life you find fulfilling. It will also teach you to better analyze and defend your own views.

3. Course Materials and Assignments:

Exploring Ethics: An Introductory Anthology by Steven M. Cahn Oxford University Press

All other materials will be made available through the sakai site.

4. Core Curriculum Information:

This course meets the Aho (Area of Inquiry: Arts and Humanities) requirement.

5. Class Schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
9/6	First Meeting	Read Syllabus	
9/10	The Importance of Ethics	Letter from a Birmingham Jail by MLK Jr. pg. 27	Forum Topic 1: Select a passage from Birmingham Jail that reflects an ethical principle you're sympathetic to and explain why the principle appeals to you. (due 9/14)
9/13	Normative Ethics: Utilitarianism	Utilitarianism by Mill pg. 118	
9/17	Applied Ethics: Utilitarianism	All Animals are Equal by Singer (Sakai)	Forum Topic 2: Do you find Singer's argument compelling? Why or why not? (due 9/21)
9/20	Normative Ethics: Deontology	A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics by O'Neill pg. 114 The Categorical Imperative by Kant pg. 102	
9/24	Applied Ethics: Deontology	Why Abortion is Immoral by Marquis pg. 223	Forum Topic 3: Come up with a situation where you think Deontology gives the wrong answer, and one where you think it gives the right answer. (due 9/28)
9/27	Normative Ethics: Virtue Theory	The Nature of Virtue by Aristotle pg. 139	
10/1	Applied Ethics: Virtue Theory	Meaning of Life by Wolf pg. 485	Forum Topic 4: Which virtues do you consider most essential for a meaningful life? (due 10/5)

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
10/4	Normative Ethics: The Ethics of Care	The Ethics of Care by Held pg. 148	FIRST PAPER DUE
10/8	Applied Ethics: Ethics of Care	The Intentional Termination of a Life by Steinbock pg. 253	Forum Topic 5: Describe a case where you prefer care ethics to more traditional ethical systems and why. (due 10/12)
10/11	Metaethics: Is Morality Real?	How Not to Answer Moral Questions Regan pg. 45	
10/15	Metaethics: Why Be Moral?	Right and Wrong by Angel pg. 67 Egoism and Moral Skepticism by Rachels pg. 71	Forum Topic 6: Do you believe humans construct or discover morality and why? (due 10/19)
10/18	Moral Psychology: Moral Foundations Theory	Happiness and Immorality by Cant and Murphy pg. 83 Moral Foundations Theory (Sakai)	MIDTERM DUE
10/22	Metaethics: The is/ought divide	Hume's Moral Philosophy (Sections 1-6) https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hume-moral/#pred	Forum Topic 7: Are ethical disagreements about facts or values or both? (due 10/26)

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
10/25	Metaethics: What is Ethical debate really about?	<p>The Nature of Ethical Disagreement by Stevenson pg. 90</p> <p>The Rationality of Moral Disagreement by Foot pg. 97</p>	
10/29	Normative/Metaethics: Ethical Constructivism	<p>The Social Contract by Hobbes pg. 154</p> <p>A Theory of Justice by Rawls pg. 162</p>	Forum Topic 8: What Principles would you accept from the original position? (due 11/2)
11/1	Metaethics: Moral Luck	Moral Luck by Nagel (Sakai)	
11/5	Applied Ethics: Affirmative Action	<p>Two Conceptions of Affirmative Action by Cahn pg. 421</p> <p>Facing Facts and Responsibilities by Hansson pg. 432</p>	Do you believe we should ever use any form of Affirmative Action? Why or why not? (Due 11/9)
11/8	Applied Ethics: Business Ethics	https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-business/ (1-6)	
11/12	Applied Ethics: Bioethics	https://www.iep.utm.edu/bioethic/	Forum Topic 10: Which form of emergent technology do you think presents challenging new ethical conundrums? (due 11/16)

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
11/15	Applied Ethics: Pornography	Pornography, Oppression, and Freedom by Longing pg. 339 The Case Against Pornography: An assessment by Feinberg pg. 352	
11/19	Applied Ethics Debate: Free Speech		SECOND PAPER DUE
	Thanksgiving Break 11/22-11/25		
11/26	Applied Ethics: Gun Control	Gun Control by LaFollette (Sakai)	Forum Topic 11: What argument for or against gun control do you find most compelling, and what follows from it? (due 11/30)
11/29	Applied Ethics In Class Debate: Gun Control		
12/3	Normative Ethics: Trolley Problems	The Trolley Problem by Thomson pg. 446 Turning the Trolley by Thomson pg. 449	Forum Topic 12: Concoct a version of the trolley problem which highlights an interesting ethical principle. (12/7)
12/6	Normative Ethics: Death	Death by Nagel pg. 453	

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
12/10	Metaethics: Moral Saints	Moral Saints by Wolf pg. 173	Forum Topic 13: Have your views on morality changed over the course of this class? (12/14)
			Final exam is due at 3pm on December 20th

6. Grading and Assignments:

A. Quizzes (10%)

There will be a short quiz posted on Sakai relating to each reading due before the start of each class. The quizzes are meant to be completed alongside the reading to make sure you are getting through the material.

B. Forum Responses (10%)

Each week I will post a forum discussion prompt related to that week's topic. You will have until the end of the day on Friday to post a 100-200 word response to the prompt. The goal is to make sure you are absorbing and retaining the material.

C. First Paper (20%)

You will write a 1,000-1300 word argumentative paper on one of the topics we cover in class. If you want to write on something we haven't covered yet, please see me for approval. I will provide a list of potential topics as well as a grading rubric that explains the desired structure for the paper, and a sample essay. Papers will be submitted online through Sakai. Late papers will receive 2 points off (out of 40) for every day that they are late.

D. Second Paper (20%)

You will write a 1,300-1,600 word argumentative paper on one of the topics we cover in class. If you want to write on something we haven't covered yet, please see me for approval. I will provide a list of potential topics as well as a grading rubric that explains the desired structure for the paper, and a sample essay. It is expected that the quality of your writing will improve based on feedback from the first paper. Papers will be submitted online through Sakai. Late papers will receive 2 points off (out of 40) for every day that they are late.

E. Midterm (20%)

There will be a take home, open notes midterm posted on Sakai covering topics from the first half of the class. It will contain 15 multiple choice questions.

F. Final Exam (20%)

There will be a take home, open notes midterm posted on Sakai covering primarily topics from the second half of the course, though you will be expected to retain key ideas from the first half. It will contain 15 multiple choice questions.

Late Work Policy: If you don't submit an assignment on time, you will not be able to submit it late unless you have an appropriate excuse and the relevant documentation.

Your letter grade will be determined by the following grading scale:

A	B+	B	C+	C	D	F
100%-90%	89%-87%	86%-80%	79%-77%	76%-70%	69%-60%	59%-0%

7. Sakai Site:

Some reading materials and important information, including your grades, will be available on the site. You can check Sakai for this information, and an email will be sent to you when any information is added to the site. Emails sent through Sakai will be sent to your Rutgers email address. So, if you do not check the Sakai site regularly and primarily use another email aside from your Rutgers one, you should set up the email that you primarily use so that messages sent from Sakai to your Rutgers email account can be forwarded to your primary email address.

The Sakai site can be accessed at:

<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

8. Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend all classes. Attendance will be taken each class. For every unexcused absences beyond the first two (free passes) you will lose one point off your final grade. If you require an excused absence beyond the first two, you will need to provide me a copy of the excused absence form on Sakai as well as documentation of some sort.

My policy for missed classes is that students who miss classes are responsible for finding out **from other students** what they missed.

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.

9. Behavior Policy:

Please note that none of the following disruptive activities are permitted:

- a) Engaging in private conversations during lecture components of the class;
- b) Using cell phones or laptops in class; or
- c) Engaging in discussions unrelated to the course during group work time.

If you cannot adhere to this code of conduct on a particular day, please don't attend class on that day. If you repeatedly disrupt class, I will ask you to leave.

A note on in class discussion:

Productive intellectual inquiry – the basic purpose of colleges and universities – requires respectful, constructive discussion that enables all parties to participate fully. Philosophy has an especially vital role to play in facilitating such inquiry, because philosophers have been developing and honing practices of critical discussion over many centuries: techniques for uncovering, justifying, and assessing assumptions lurking behind any claim, from the most obvious to the most controversial.

Philosophy is thus a valuable tool for self-reflection and for communal debate. This is especially true at a time when so much is being debated, in such heated terms. But like any tool, in order to work, it must be used well. In our community we expect all participants to observe basic norms of civility and respect. This means stating your own views directly and substantively: focusing on reasons, assumptions and consequences rather than on who is offering them, or how. And it means engaging other's views in the same terms. No topic or claim is too obvious or controversial to be discussed; but claims and opinions have a place in the discussion only when they are presented in a respectful, collegial, and constructive way.

10. Policy on Cheating:

Anyone caught cheating in any way, or aiding anyone else in cheating, will receive an automatic F for the course and be referred to the appropriate authorities for further measures to be taken. These further measures may include suspension or expulsion.

Rutgers Academic Integrity Information: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Tutorial about plagiarism:

<http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModules/Plagiarism/>

11. 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/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professionals 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/

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.