

Syllabus for PHIL 441 – Ethical Theory  
Taught by Justin Kalef, Rutgers University, Spring 2016

**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:** 11:00am to 1:00am on Wednesdays 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*. **This text is required. Students who do not secure access to these texts early on should not expect to pass the course.**

The second half of the course will consider alternatives to Huemer's position. The readings for the second half will all be available on our Sakai site.

**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.** Details will follow.

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, speaker and teammate 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
Peer Review .....	50 points
Midterm Exam.....	100 points
Final Exam.....	100 points
<b>Mastery Portion:</b>	
Completing Level 1 .....	<b>Exactly 60 points</b>
Completing Level 2 (after passing Level 1).....	<b>Exactly 90 points</b>
Completing Level 3 (after passing Level 2).....	<b>Exactly 100 points</b>
Completing Level 4 (after passing Level 3).....	<b>Exactly 100 points</b>
Completing Level 5 (after passing Level 4).....	<b>Up to 100 points</b>
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

#### Possible Bonus Points

Grammar bonus points.....	up to 30 points
Bonus points for answering peer questions.....	up to 30 points
Bonus points for questions <i>asked</i> in the forum.....	up to 30 points
Original quiz questions.....	up to 30 points

## **Schedule:**

### I. Preliminaries

**Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>: Introduction to the course.**

**Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>: Introduction to metaethics and to argument mapping.**

### II. Ethical Intuitionism

**Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>: Overview of the text; introducing subjectivism.**

*Reading for Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 1*

**Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>: The varieties of subjectivism.**

*Reading for Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 3*

**Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>: Analytic reductionism.**

*Reading for February 2<sup>nd</sup>: Chapter 4 to the end of 4.3.1*

**Thursday, February 4<sup>th</sup>: Defenses of analytic reductionism**

*Reading for February 4<sup>th</sup>: 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4 and 4.3.5*

**Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>: Synthetic reductionism, the argument from radical dissimilarity, and the best explanation for moral beliefs.**

*Reading for February 9<sup>th</sup>: The rest of Chapter 4*

**Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>: The case for ethical intuitionism, plus some common epistemological objections.**

*Reading for February 11<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 5 to the end of 5.4*

**Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>: Further support for ethical intuitionism: a Moorean argument against nihilism; direct realism; and the isolation of the moral realm.**

*Reading for February 16<sup>th</sup>: The rest of Chapter 5*

**Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup>: Dealing with the argument from disagreement.**

*Reading for February 18<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 6*

**\*\* FIRST-ROUND PEER REVIEWS due by email by the start of class on the 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>: Practical reasons: the Humean account.**

*Reading for February 23<sup>rd</sup>: Chapter 7 to the end of 7.4*

**Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup>: Practical reasons: against the Humean and neo-Humean accounts.**

*Reading for February 25<sup>th</sup>: The rest of Chapter 7*

**\*\* FIRST-ROUND PEER REVIEWS due by email by the start of class on the 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>: Noncognitivism introduced and criticized; dealing with Hare's version.**

*Reading for March 1<sup>st</sup>: Chapter 2 to the end of 2.4*

**Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>: Dealing with Gibbard's, Blackburn's, and Timmons' versions; a final anti-expressivist argument.**

*Reading for March 3<sup>rd</sup>: The rest of Chapter 2.*

**Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>: Dealing with further objections against ethical intuitionism.**

*Readings for March 8<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 8*

**Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>: Huemer's final remarks; midterm exam.**

*Reading for March 10<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 9*

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

### III. Alternative views

**Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>: Expressivism, reconsidered (Day 1).**

*Reading for March 22<sup>nd</sup>: Blackburn, 'Securing the Nots'*

**Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>: Expressivism, reconsidered (Day 2).**

*Reading for March 24<sup>th</sup>: Lenman, 'Naturalism without Tears'*

**\*\* SECOND-ROUND PEER REVIEWS due by email by the start of class on the 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>: Moral naturalism, reconsidered (Day 1).**

*Readings for March 29<sup>th</sup>: Sturgeon, 'Moral Explanations'*

**Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup>: Moral naturalism, reconsidered (Day 2).**

*Reading for March 31<sup>st</sup>: Leiter, 'Normativity for Naturalists'*

**Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>: Moral skepticism, reconsidered.**

*Readings for April 5<sup>th</sup>:*

*Sinnott-Armstrong, 'Moral Intuitionism Meets Empirical Psychology';*

*Joyce, excerpt from The Myth of Morality*

**Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>: Moral error theory, reconsidered.**

*Readings for April 7<sup>th</sup>:*

*Joyce, 'Moral Fictionalism: when falsehoods are too useful to throw out';*

*Joyce, 'The Skeptick's Tale'*

**Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>: Reasons internalism, reconsidered.**

*Reading for April 12<sup>th</sup>: Markovits, 'Why Be An Internalist about Reasons?'*

**Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>: The implications of the 'partners in crime' move.**

*Reading for April 14<sup>th</sup>: Loeb, 'Gastronomic Realism: A Cautionary Tale'*

**Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>: Evolutionary debunking (Day 1).**

*Reading for April 19<sup>th</sup>: Street, 'A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value'*

**Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>: Evolutionary debunking (Day 2).**

*Reading for April 21<sup>st</sup>: Vavova, 'Debunking Evolutionary Debunking'*

**Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>: Relativism, reconsidered (Day 1).**

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

**Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>: Relativism, reconsidered (Day 2).**

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

**\*\* THIRD-ROUND PEER REVIEWS due by email by Noon on May 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**!!! FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 6, 2016, 8am – 11am !!!**