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

Office hours: 11:00am to 1:00am on Wednesdays in my office (5th 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); C: 70-76 (satisfactory work);
B+: 87-89 (very good work); D: 60-69 (minimally acceptable work);
B: 80-86 (good work); F: 0-59 (inadequate work);
C+: 77-79 (decent 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument maps of assigned passages in the readings</td>
<td>2 x 30 = 60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best 3 out of 4 Pop Quizzes</td>
<td>3 x 80 = 240 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mastery Portion:**
- Completing Level 1 (after passing Level 1) \( \text{Exactly 60 points} \)
- Completing Level 2 (after passing Level 1) \( \text{Exactly 90 points} \)
- Completing Level 3 (after passing Level 2) \( \text{Exactly 100 points} \)
- Completing Level 4 (after passing Level 3) \( \text{Exactly 100 points} \)
- Completing Level 5 (after passing Level 4) \( \text{Up to 100 points} \)

**Total** \( \text{1000 points} \)

**Possible Bonus Points**
- Grammar bonus points \( \text{up to 30 points} \)
- Bonus points for answering peer questions \( \text{up to 30 points} \)
- Bonus points for questions asked in the forum \( \text{up to 30 points} \)
- Original quiz questions \( \text{up to 30 points} \)

**Schedule:**

I. Preliminaries

**Tuesday, January 19th:** Introduction to the course.

**Thursday, January 21st:** Introduction to metaethics and to argument mapping.

II. Ethical Intuitionism

**Tuesday, January 26th:** Overview of the text; introducing subjectivism.

*Reading for Jan. 26th: Chapter 1*

**Thursday, January 28th:** The varieties of subjectivism.

*Reading for Jan. 28th: Chapter 3*

**Tuesday, February 2nd:** Analytic reductionism.

*Reading for February 2nd: Chapter 4 to the end of 4.3.1*

**Thursday, February 4th:** Defenses of analytic reductionism

*Reading for February 4th: 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4 and 4.3.5*
Tuesday, February 9th: Synthetic reductionism, the argument from radical
dissimilarity, and the best explanation for moral beliefs.
Reading for February 9th: The rest of Chapter 4

Thursday, February 11th: The case for ethical intuitionism, plus some common
epistemological objections.
Reading for February 11th: Chapter 5 to the end of 5.4

Tuesday, February 16th: Further support for ethical intuitionism: a Moorean
argument against nihilism; direct realism; and the isolation of the moral realm.
Reading for February 16th: The rest of Chapter 5

Thursday, February 18th: Dealing with the argument from disagreement.
Reading for February 18th: Chapter 6

** FIRST-ROUND PEER REVIEWS due by email by the start of class on
the 23rd

Tuesday, February 23rd: Practical reasons: the Humean account.
Reading for February 23rd: Chapter 7 to the end of 7.4

Thursday, February 25th: Practical reasons: against the Humean and neo-Humean
accounts.
Reading for February 25th: The rest of Chapter 7

** FIRST-ROUND PEER REVIEWS due by email by the start of class on
the 23rd

Tuesday, March 1st: Noncognitivism introduced and criticized; dealing with Hare’s
version.
Reading for March 1st: Chapter 2 to the end of 2.4

Thursday, March 3rd: Dealing with Gibbard’s, Blackburn’s, and Timmons’
versions; a final anti-expressivist argument.
Reading for March 3rd: The rest of Chapter 2.

Tuesday, March 8th: Dealing with further objections against ethical intuitionism.
Readings for March 8th: Chapter 8

Thursday, March 10th: Huemer’s final remarks; midterm exam.
Reading for March 10th: Chapter 9

** Reading Week **
III. Alternative views

Tuesday, March 22nd: Expressivism, reconsidered (Day 1).
Reading for March 22nd: Blackburn, ‘Securing the Nots’

Thursday, March 24th: Expressivism, reconsidered (Day 2).
Reading for March 24th: Lenman, ‘Naturalism without Tears’

** SECOND-ROUND PEER REVIEWS due by email by the start of class on the 29th **

Tuesday, March 29th: Moral naturalism, reconsidered (Day 1).
Readings for March 29th: Sturgeon, ‘Moral Explanations’

Thursday, March 31st: Moral naturalism, reconsidered (Day 2).
Reading for March 31st: Leiter, ‘Normativity for Naturalists’

Tuesday, April 5th: Moral skepticism, reconsidered.
Readings for April 5th:
- Sinnott-Armstrong, ‘Moral Intuitionism Meets Empirical Psychology’;
- Joyce, excerpt from The Myth of Morality

Thursday, April 7th: Moral error theory, reconsidered.
Readings for April 7th:
- Joyce, ‘Moral Fictionalism: when falsehoods are too useful to throw out’;
- Joyce, ‘The Skeptic’s Tale’

Tuesday, April 12th: Reasons internalism, reconsidered.
Reading for April 12th: Markovits, ‘Why Be An Internalist about Reasons?’

Thursday, April 14th: The implications of the ‘partners in crime’ move.
Reading for April 14th: Loeb, ‘Gastronomic Realism: A Cautionary Tale’

Tuesday, April 19th: Evolutionary debunking (Day 1).
Reading for April 19th: Street, ‘A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value’

Thursday, April 21st: Evolutionary debunking (Day 2).
Reading for April 21st: Vavova, ‘Debunking Evolutionary Debunking’

Tuesday, April 26th: Relativism, reconsidered (Day 1).
Reading for April 26th: Loeb, ‘The Argument from Moral Experience’

Thursday, April 28th: Relativism, reconsidered (Day 2).
Reading for April 28th: Kalef, ‘Sympathy for the Relativist’

** THIRD-ROUND PEER REVIEWS due by email by Noon on May 2nd **

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