

Philosophy 107: Introduction to Ethics Summer 2016

Instructor: Cameron Domenico Kirk-Giannini

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00-11:00 am (or by appointment)

Email: iesum2016@gmail.com (all assignments should be submitted to this address)

Class Description and Learning Objectives

This course is an introduction to ethical theory from the perspective of practical ethics. Topics covered will include equality, the value of human and animal lives, and the permissibility of causing death. Students will, first, gain an understanding of some of the most important issues in practical ethics, and, second, develop crucial philosophical abilities like reconstructing and evaluating arguments, articulating ideas precisely, and writing cogently.

Textbook

Singer, Peter. *Practical Ethics*, Third Edition. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Assignments and Grading

There will be three significant course requirements. First, you will be required to write a short (150 word) response to each reading. These responses must *not* merely summarize the reading — they must either describe a weakness in the author's argument or articulate a sophisticated question about the reading. Second, there will be two 900-1200 word papers. Third, each of you will be required to meet with me personally via Skype for a 20-minute assessment of your understanding of the course material. This meeting will be treated as a final examination for the course.

Grades will be determined as follows:

- Reading responses: 30%
- First Paper: 20%
- Second Paper: 20%
- Online Assessment: 30%

Course Structure

We will have two readings each week, with the exception of the first week, in which we will have only one. After the first week, **your reading responses will be due on Tuesday**

and Friday each week at 5 PM EST. Reading responses must be typed and submitted in .pdf format. I will upload two video lectures each week discussing the readings. These will usually be available to view before your reading responses are due — but you should not use them as a substitute for detailed reading of the assignments!

Semester Overview

Week 1 (Week of Friday 6/3): Singer, Chapter 1

Week 2 (Week of Friday 6/10): Singer, Chapter 2; Singer, Chapter 3

Week 3 (Week of Friday 6/17): Singer, Chapter 4; Singer, Chapter 5

Week 4 (Week of Friday 6/24): Elizabeth Anderson, “Animal Rights and the Values of Nonhuman Life”; Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”

Week 5 (Week of Friday 7/1): Singer, Chapter 6; Judith Jarvis Thomson, “Physician-Assisted Suicide: Two Moral Arguments”;

Week 6 (Week of Friday 7/8): Singer, Chapter 7; Singer, Chapter 8

Lateness Policy

Reading responses may not be turned in late (there are **no** exceptions to this rule — do not bother to ask). Essays may be turned in late, but will be subject to a one-letter-grade penalty per date of lateness.

If you would like an extension on an assignment, you must notify me at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline for that assignment. Extensions will be granted on a discretionary basis.

No Extra Credit

There are no opportunities for extra credit in this course.

Corrupt Files

It is your responsibility to ensure that you provide your written work to me in a format I can access. If you submit a corrupt file, I will do my best to notify you as soon as possible. It is then your responsibility to send me another copy of the file in a timely manner. This means it is very important that you open and read emails from me. If I request a second copy of a file and you do not reply in a timely manner, I will regard the assignment as not having been submitted.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism of any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. For more information on what constitutes plagiarism, see: <http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/plagiarism>. Please note that submitting the same material for credit on more than one assignment, whether in the same class or in different classes, is self-plagiarism and will be treated like any other form of plagiarism.

Collaboration

There are two kinds of collaborators. *Reviewers* offer comments on a pre-existing piece of writing. They are not responsible for the writing or major aspects of the argument of the pieces on which they comment. You are encouraged to seek reviewers for your pieces of writing. Please acknowledge your reviewers by name in a footnote at the end of your essay.

Co-authors enter into the creative process with the author. They are responsible for significant parts of the writing and/or argument of the pieces which they co-author. You are not permitted to submit co-authored work for credit in this course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Every effort will be made to accommodate students who present a valid Letter of Accommodations. For more information, see: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/my-accommodations/letter-of-accommodations>

Religious Observance

I am happy to accommodate special needs related to students' religious practices. However, I require that you notify me in writing within the first two weeks of class if you will need such accommodation at any point during the semester.

Confidentiality

Please note that I am required to report certain sensitive information you might relate to me to the University. If you would like to confidentially report sensitive information, you may do so through CAPS. For more information, see: <http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/>.