

Philosophy 305
ETHICS
Fall Semester 2018

Instructor: Prof David Chan

Department of Philosophy

Office: CCC 422

E-mail: dchan@uwsp.edu

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 2.00 - 3.00 pm; Thursdays, 3.30 – 5.00 pm

WELCOME TO THE CLASS! ☺

Ethics is a subject that is concerned with good and bad, right and wrong. Although it is easy to have strong opinions on moral matters, it is not easy to agree on what the correct view should be. It is easy to believe that one is right, but not easy to provide rational justification. This course is about the many ethical theories and controversies in Western philosophy, and how different philosophers think and debate about ethics. *Students in this course should be prepared to subject their own moral beliefs to critical examination.*

Objectives of the Course

- To examine a variety of philosophical approaches and theories of ethics
- To read and discuss the writings of major moral philosophers
- To understand the different questions raised in meta-ethics and normative ethics, and the relevance of one branch of ethics for the other
- To appreciate the advantages of using philosophical reasoning in moral discourse

What to Expect from this Course

Classes will be run as seminars in which discussion is the main activity. I will assume that you have read the material for each session *before* coming to class, and that you will also have reflected on the discussion of previous sessions. You will be expected to ask and answer questions, and to raise critical points for discussion in class. During most sessions, one of you will serve as a discussion leader (see Required Work below) to provide reflections on the assigned readings, but all of you should be prepared to participate regularly during sessions when you are not the discussion leader.

You are also encouraged to hold follow-up discussions with fellow students outside of the classroom, and to post items on the Discussion forum in D2L. Please note that *regular use of D2L* is a component of the work expected of you in this class. You should therefore be logging on a few times a week to participate in the Discussion forum and to read material that I add to the Content page. I will read all your contributions, and may make use of points that you post on D2L in class discussion!

I welcome comments, suggestions, and questions about the course. If you do not have the opportunity to bring up a point in class, or if you have something to discuss with me

that may not be of interest to the rest of the class, you are encouraged to see me during my office hours.

I have designed the course so that any student who participates in class consistently, does all essential readings, and submits all assigned work on time, will be likely to do well enough to get a decent grade. However, if a topic is especially interesting to you, I will be happy to suggest further readings for you to research and discuss in your written work. *Extra research may be used to your advantage in an essay or in class discussion.*

Required Work and Assessment

Your overall grade for the course is comprised of the following weighted components:

A presentation (20%) in class of about 15 minutes duration will be required of each student. *You should present your reflections on the readings assigned for the session.* You can also add any relevant material gathered through your own research on the topic. Please sign up for a presentation on the first day of class. (Note: You will be allowed to change the session you have signed up for only if someone agrees to switch with you.)

Reading quizzes (10%) will be held at the start of class. (So please be in class on time!) You will answer a question on the readings for the day. Between 20 and 25 quizzes will be held. A correct answer will earn you half a percentage point, so you may exceed 10%.

The First Term Paper (30%) is due on **November 6, 2018**. You will be required to submit a thesis statement for feedback before writing your paper. The thesis statement will be graded and worth 5%, and the full paper will be worth 25%. The essay should be 1,200 to 1,500 words in length, typed double-spaced on one side of the paper in 12-point font, with margins of at least one inch from each border. *Citing of sources using footnotes or in-text referencing is required.* The word-count should be stated on the last page. There is a penalty for late essays, and essays that are too short.

The Second Term Paper (30%) is another 1,200 to 1,500 word essay in the same format as the first term paper. You will again have to submit a thesis statement worth 5%, with the final draft worth 25% due on **December 19, 2018**.

Class participation (10%) is graded with marks earned through (a) regular contributions to class discussion and (b) postings on the course D2L website. Participation during each class and contributions to D2L will be counted. Excused absences will not be taken into account, but an unexcused session will be counted as zero participation for that session.

Note 1: Regular class attendance is essential for doing well in this course. *You should not be surprised if you have difficulty doing the essays if you miss class too often!* I will excuse absences on the basis of illness, family tragedy, or other circumstances at my discretion, and I should be notified within 3 days of your absence. An unexcused absence from class may incur a loss of marks if there is assigned work due on that day.

And if you get a warning from me for repeated absences without excuse, your final grade may be adjusted to a lower grade.

Note 2: You are expected to earn your grade by doing all required work. *Sorry: You should not expect to submit other work for credit to replace any of the above items!* And essays will only be graded once and can't be resubmitted after they have been graded.

Academic Health Warning: You will automatically receive zero marks for the assignment if you commit any acts of dishonesty, such as plagiarism, in your work! (Reference: Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures, UWSP Chapter 14, found at www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf#page=11.)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement: The ADA is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. UWSP's policies can be found at: [www.uwsp.edu/hr/Pages/Affirmative Action/ADA.aspx](http://www.uwsp.edu/hr/Pages/AffirmativeAction/ADA.aspx).

If you require *classroom and/or exam accommodations*, please register with the **Disability and Assistive Technology Center** and then contact me at the beginning of the course. For more information, please visit the Disability Center's office, located at 604 LRC or their webpage at: www.uwsp.edu/datc/Pages/default.aspx.

Grading Scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	59 and below

Essay Grading Criteria

Grade A: Paper is clearly structured, relevant to the question, accurately discussing more than one point of view, showing awareness of strengths and weaknesses of each view, and coming to a conclusion supported by reasoned argument. There should be a clear line of argument running through the paper, without repetition of points. Expression should be precise and concise. The paper should be almost completely free of grammatical, spelling and typing errors. *Evidence of independent or critical thinking is required.*

Grade B: Good organization of material, clarity, relevance, reasoned argument, and grammatical correctness are jointly necessary. A Grade B paper has most of the attributes of a Grade A paper, except that the essay is lacking in originality. But a paper with originality may also be given a B grade if there are some faults, such as inaccuracies in presenting the views under discussion, or if the paper lacks balance and is too one-sided.

Grade C: Paper has attributes of a Grade B paper, except that the essay has not answered the question in a relevant and thorough way, or the ideas are poorly organized, or there are unsupported claims, or there are too many grammatical mistakes, or a combination of some but not all these factors.

Grade D: Paper falls short of the requirements for a Grade C paper in a number of ways, but deserves a passing grade because the writer shows some engagement with the material on the topic, although he or she has failed to make good use of this knowledge.

Grade F: A paper will be awarded a failing grade if the writer does not display any evidence of engagement with the material on the topic, or seems to have put in little effort in writing, or falls badly short of most of the requirements of good writing, or parts of the paper are copied from readings without attribution (plagiarism).

Required Textbooks

Purchase: Mark Timmons, *Moral Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd edn. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013)

Rental: *Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues*, 6th edn., ed. Steven M. Cahn & Peter Markie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Sep 4 Course introduction (including scheduling of presentations)

Sep 6 Timmons, Chapter 1

Relativism versus Naturalism

Sep 11 Timmons, Chapter 3, pp. 41-59

Plato, *Republic*, Bk I, 338c-344c (CM 53-57)

Sep 13 Timmons, Chapter 3, pp. 59-67

Harman, *The Nature of Morality* (CM 730-740)

Moral Skepticism

Sep 18 Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (CM 757-767)

Emotivism

Sep 20 Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (CM 508-514)

Stevenson, "The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms" (CM 514-524)

Egoism and Altruism

- Sep 25 Timmons, Chapter 7, pp. 177-188
 Plato, *Republic*, Bk II, 357b-367e (CM 65-72)
 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch XIII (CM 240-242)
 Butler, *Sermon XI* (CM 261-268)
- Sep 27 Timmons, Chapter 7, pp. 188-202
 Hume, *Enquiry*, Section V (CM 302-309)
 Rachels, "Egoism and Moral Skepticism" (CM 802-808)

Natural Law Theory and Moral Absolutism

- Oct 2 Timmons, Chapter 4, pp. 71-86
 Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Bk III, Ch 2 & 3 (CM 223-225)
- Oct 4 Timmons, Chapter 4, pp. 86-104

Contractarianism

- Oct 9 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch XIV & XV (CM 242-245)
 Gauthier, "Why Contractarianism?" (CM 593-603)
- Oct 11 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Sect 3, 4, 5 (CM 571-579)
- Oct 16 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Sect 11, 13, 17, 24, 26 (CM 579-587)

Consequentialism

- Oct 18 Timmons, Chapter 5, pp. 111-126
 Bentham, *An Introduction to Principles of Morals & Legislation*, Ch I & IV
 (CM 354-356, 360-362)
 Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch II (CM 366-376)
- Oct 23 Timmons, Chapter 5, pp. 126-138
 Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch IV (CM 381-384)
- Oct 25 Timmons, Chapter 6, pp. 143-161, 169-172
- Oct 30 Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism" (CM 544-560)

Kantianism

- Nov 1 Timmons, Chapter 8, pp. 205-210
 Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals* (CM 314-326)
- Nov 6 Herman, "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty" (CM 633-647)
- Nov 8 Timmons, Chapter 8, pp. 210-232
 Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals* (CM 326-335)
- Nov 13 Timmons, Chapter 8, pp. 233-240
 Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" (CM 647-653)

Virtue Ethics

- Nov 15 Timmons, Chapter 10, pp. 269-278
 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.1-4, 7-8, I.13-II.6 (CM 124-126, 128-131, 133-139)
- Nov 20 Timmons, Chapter 10, pp. 278-289
- Nov 27 Timmons, Chapter 10, pp. 289-299
 Annas, "Being Virtuous and Doing the Right Thing" (CM 703-713)

Feminist Ethics

Nov 29 Held, "Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory" (CM 714-729)

Intuitionism

Dec 4 Moore, *Principia Ethica* (CM 491-497)

Prichard, "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" (CM 498-507)

Moral Pluralism

Dec 6 Timmons, Chapter 9, pp. 245-255

Ross, *The Right and the Good* (CM 561-570)

Dec 11 Timmons, Chapter 9, pp. 255-265

Moral Particularism

Dec 13 Timmons, Chapter 11

Dec 19, 10:15am - 12:15pm Final Exam (Submit your second term paper in CCC126.)

UWSP Emergency Procedures

In the event of a *medical emergency*, call 911 or use red emergency phone located **across from the classroom exit**. Offer assistance if trained and willing to do so. Guide emergency responders to victim.

In the event of a *tornado warning*, proceed to the shelter area in the **hallway outside the classroom**.

In the event of a *fire alarm*, evacuate the building in a calm manner. A suggested meeting place outside the building is at the Isadore Street side of Lot E between CCC and NFAC Buildings. Notify instructor or emergency command personnel of any missing individuals.

Active Shooter – Run/Escape, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Follow instructions of emergency responders.

See *UW-Stevens Point Emergency Management Plan* at www.uwsp.edu/rmgt for details on all emergency response procedures at UW-Stevens Point.