

Introduction to Ethics Honors—PHI 106
Section DAH, M 9:30-10:45, TH 10:00-11:15 am
Nassau Hall, Room M205

INSTRUCTOR | Amanda Favia
OFFICE HOURS | T 10⁰⁰-11¹⁵ am, W 12³⁰-1⁴⁵ pm, & *By Appointment*
ROOM | Nassau Hall M217 Rm. G
EMAIL ADDRESS | Amanda.Favia@ncc.edu

Course Description:

Are some terrorist acts justified? Do we have an obligation to help eradicate poverty? Is it ever morally acceptable to break the law? What are the ethical implications of what we choose to eat? In this course, we will explore these and other ethical questions confronting contemporary society. We will begin by looking at several traditional ethical theories to establish the foundations needed for thoughtful analysis and evaluation of issues in ethics. The second part of the course focuses on the application of these foundations to a variety of ethical challenges encountered in society. Issues we will cover include economic justice, food justice, civil liberties, terrorism, environmental pollution and more.

Course Objectives:

- Establish a basic understanding of several significant ethical theories
- Develop an awareness of the various ethical challenges confronting society
- To build critical thinking skills required to carefully examine and evaluate others, as well as your own, views regarding significant ethical issues that confront society
- To build skills in philosophical writing, including interpreting, analyzing, and responding to various texts

Required Texts: All readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Blackboard: All course information, including syllabus, announcements, reading assignments, handouts, and paper instructions, will be posted on Blackboard.

Grades: Your final grade will be determined in the following manner:

Class Participation: 15%
Eight Reading Quizzes: 25%
Two Papers: 50%
Presentation: 10%

Class Participation (15%): The class participation grade has three aspects: classroom activity, attendance and homework. Participation in class discussions includes raising relevant questions and making comments that pertain to the topic being discussed and to the assigned readings. Participation also includes in-class assignments (group work) and homework. Excessive absences and consistent lateness to class will affect your grade negatively.

Attendance and Lateness Policy: There is **NO** distinction between “*excused*” and “*unexcused*” absences—if you do not attend class then you are considered absent. More than **THREE (3)** absences will result in a reduction of your **FINAL GRADE**. Excessive absences, **FIVE (5)** or more, will result in automatic **FAILURE of the course**. Consistent lateness to class will also affect your grade negatively. It is the student’s job to keep track of his or her absences.

Please be aware: if you are absent from class, and you miss classroom/assignment details, it is *your responsibility* to check *Blackboard* for announcements and assignments or contact another *classmate*.

Reading Quizzes (25%): Quizzes will consist of 5 short answer questions regarding the content of the day's reading. They will begin at the beginning of class. **If you are late, you will not be able to take the quiz.** There are **no** make-ups.

Papers (50%): In your papers, you will defend a clear and well-supported response to an article from a particular section of the class-reading list. More details will be distributed in class and available on Blackboard. All assignments must be handed in **ON TIME. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Presentation (10%): At the end of the semester, you will give a ten to fifteen minute presentation based on one of your papers. More details will be distributed in class and available on Blackboard.

Cell Phones: Turn *OFF* all cell phones and electronic devices before class begins. Students who do not abide by this may be asked to *leave the class* and consequently counted as *absent* from class.

Academic Integrity: Cheating and Plagiarism will result in automatic **FAILURE** of the course! Student Code of Conduct: http://www.ncc.edu/administration/policies/code_conduct.htm.

Please Note: If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may have an impact on your ability to carry out the assigned coursework, I urge you to contact the staff at the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD), Building U, (516)572-7241, TTY (516)572-7617. The counselors at CSD will review your concerns and determine to what reasonable accommodations you are entitled as covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. All information and documentation pertaining to personal disabilities will be kept confidential.

Class Schedule

subject to revision

Week 1: TH 1/21

Introduction

Week 2: M 1/25 & TH 1/28

What is Morality?

Reading: *Euthyphro*, Plato

Week 3: M 2/1 & TH 2/4

Virtue Theory

Readings: *Virtue Theory*, Hursthouse & *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle

Week 4: M 2/8 & TH 2/11

Deontology

Readings: *Deontology*, McNaughton and Rawling & *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant

Week 5: M 2/15 & TH 2/18

Winter Break —no class—

Week 6: M 2/22 & TH 2/25

Consequentialism

Readings: *Consequentialism*, Vallentyne & *Utilitarianism*, Mill

Week 7: M 2/29: *Writer's Workshop*
TH 3/3: Paper #1 Due

Week 8: M 3/7 & TH 3/10

Economic Justice

Readings: *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls, *Anarchy, the State and Utopia*, Nozick & Robert Nozick and *Wilt Chamberlain: How Patterns Preserve Liberty*, Cohen.

Week 9: M 3/14: & TH 3/17

Food Justice

Readings: Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma & Food Deserts, Justice, and the Distributive Paradigm*, Szende

Week 10: Spring Break – No Class – M 3/21 & TH 3/24

Week 11: M 3/28 & TH 3/31

Civil Liberties

Readings: *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau & *Notes on Anarchism*, Chomsky

Week 12: M 4/4 & TH 4/8

Terrorism

Readings: *Can Terrorism be Morally Justified?* Nathanson & *What is Terrorism, Why is it Wrong, and Could it Ever be Morally Permissible?* Jaggard

Week 13: M 4/11 & TH 4/14

Film & Discussion: *The Weather Underground*

Week 14: M 4/18 *Writer's Workshop*

TH 4/21 Paper #2 Due

Week 15: M 4/25 & TH 4/28

Environment & Sustainability

Reading: *Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism*, Sober

Week 16: M 5/2: *Presenter's Workshop*

TH 5/4: Presentations

Week 17: M 5/9: **Presentations**

TH 5/12: Presentations

Week 18: M 5/16: Grade Conferences