
PHILOSOPHY 104.005 INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS SPRING 2007

Class Hours: T, F 12:45–2:00 pm in HW505

Instructor: David Morrow (david.morrow@hunter.cuny.edu)

Instructor's Office Hours: W 11:10 am – 12:00 noon in HW1447, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines philosophical approaches to standards of right conduct and the good life through the study of selected important thinkers from ancient Greece, ancient China, and modern Europe. The course will help you understand how important philosophers have answered the question, “How should I live?” The purpose of this course is to help you learn to develop your own answer to that question.

TEXTBOOK

Morgan, Michael L. *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, Fourth Edition. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2005). [ISBN: 0872207765]

The textbook is available through Shakespeare & Co., the bookstore on Lexington Ave between 68th & 69th Streets (across Lexington Ave from Hunter North). You might find cheaper used copies online through sites like textbooks.com, half.com, or amazon.com.

IMPORTANT DATES

Friday, March 2: Midterm exam.

Friday, March 9: In-class peer review session for first paper.

Tuesday, March 13: First paper due by email to david.morrow@hunter.cuny.edu.

Tuesday, May 8: In-class peer review session for second paper.

Friday, May 11: Second paper due by email to david.morrow@hunter.cuny.edu.

Friday, May 25 (11:30 am – 1:30 pm): Final exam.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Assignments. You are expected to read specific sections from the textbook prior to most classes. A tentative schedule of reading assignments appears on page 3 of the syllabus. I may announce changes to this schedule in class.

Many of these readings are difficult, but learning to read and understand them is a valuable educational experience. For the exams, you will be expected to be familiar with all of the material in the readings, including material that we do not cover in class. Therefore, coming to class is not a substitute for doing the reading assignments.

In-Class Writing Assignments. During most classes, you will be asked to spend a few minutes writing a response to a prompt given in class. These assignments will not be graded, although you are expected to complete them as part of your class participation. Their purpose is to give you a chance to reflect on the material and help you prepare for exams.

Reading Summaries. For most reading assignments, you are expected to write a summary of a specific passage from the reading. The goal of these assignments is for you to explain what you read in your own words. See page 6 for details about these assignments.

I will collect three reading summaries during the semester. I will not warn you in advance which summaries I will collect, and I will not accept late summaries for any reason. If you are absent on the day I collect a reading summary, I will accept a summary from another day (of my choosing) in place of the summary from the day you were absent.

I will drop the lowest of your three reading summary grades.

Papers. You are expected to write two 500–800 word papers during the semester. You will receive instructions for these papers in February and April. These papers are to be turned in by email to david.morrow@hunter.cuny.edu on the dates listed in this syllabus.

Paper Peer Review Sessions. Before each paper is due, you and your classmates will critique one another’s papers in small groups during class. You will receive instructions for this assignment before the peer review. It is very important that you attend class on these days.

Exams. You will have one in-class midterm exam and one cumulative final exam. These exams will consist of short essay questions. Make-up exams will be permitted only if you arrange them with me in advance or if you have written documentation of a valid reason for missing an exam.

GRADING

Your final grade is based on the following criteria.

Assignment	% of Final Grade	Date
Reading Summaries*	10%	TBD
First Peer Review Session	5%	Friday, March 9
Second Peer Review Session	5%	Tuesday, May 8
First Paper	20%	Tuesday, March 13
Second Paper	25%	Friday, May 11
Midterm Exam	10%	Friday, March 2
Final Exam	25%	Friday, May 25

* I will collect and grade three reading summaries. I will drop the lowest of these three grades.

BLACKBOARD

There is a Blackboard site available for this course, to which I will post course materials and announcements. To sign up for or log in to Blackboard, go to <http://bb.hunter.cuny.edu>.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/ or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations.

For further information and assistance please call (212-772-4857)/TTY (212-650-3230).

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

I am personally committed to enforcing this policy on all assignments. To learn how to avoid plagiarism, please see me or visit <http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/reading-writing/on-line/qpp.html>.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Note that this schedule is subject to change as needed. You are responsible for any keeping track of changes that are announced in class and on Blackboard, even if you have been absent.

Some reading assignments begin or end in the middle of a page. Pay attention to section and paragraph numbers in the assignments below. If you are confused about where to start or stop, see the Assignments section on Blackboard. There are links there to images showing the beginning and end of selected readings.

T 1/30	Introduction to Ethics
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F 2/2	Plato and the Euthyphro Problem <i>Due Today:</i> Read Plato, “Euthyphro” (pp. 35–45).
T 2/6	Plato and Socrates’ Chance to Escape Execution <i>Due Today:</i> Read Plato, “Crito” (pp. 64–71). <i>Due Today:</i> Write a summary of Socrates’ speech that begins in the second column of p. 69 (“Consider then, Socrates, the Laws might perhaps continue...”) and ends in the second column of p. 70 (“What are we to reply to that, Crito?”).
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F 2/9	Introduction to Aristotle and Virtue Ethics <i>Due Today:</i> Read Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I.7; II.1–4,6–9; V.3; X.6–8 (pp. 259–260; 265–268; 269–273; 298–299; 354–357). <i>Due Today:</i> Write a summary of <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> X.6 (pp. 345–355).
T 2/13	Topics in Aristotle <i>Due Today:</i> Read Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I.5,7,8; III.1; X.9 (pp. 257, 259–261; 273–275; 357–360). <i>Due Today:</i> Write a summary of <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I.5 (p. 257).
F 2/16	Virtue Ethics and Moral Issues <i>Optional:</i> Read Hursthouse, selections from “Virtue Ethics and Abortion.” (See Blackboard.)

T 2/20 Introduction to Confucius
Due Today: Read Confucius, selections from *The Analects*. (See Blackboard.)

F 2/23 Topics in Confucianism

T 2/27 TBD

F 3/2 Midterm Exam: Plato, Aristotle, and Confucius

T 3/6 From Ancient to Modern Ethics in the West, Part I: Epicureans & Stoics
Due Today: Read selected readings on Blackboard.

F 3/9 Peer Review Session for First Paper

Due Today: Bring 4 copies of the rough draft of your paper to class today.

T 3/13 From Ancient to Modern Ethics in the West, Part II: Christians & Muslims
First paper is due by email to david.morrow@hunter.cuny.edu.

F 3/16 Introduction to Hobbes and Contractarianism
Due Today: Read Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 13 (¶¶8–14); Ch. 14 (¶¶1–14); Ch. 15 (¶¶1–3) [pp. 592–595, 598].
Due Today: Write a summary of ¶¶1–6 of Chapter 14 in *Leviathan*.

T 3/20 Topics in Hobbes
Due Today: Read Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 13 (¶¶1–8), Ch. 15 (¶¶4–6), Ch. 6 (or selections from Chapter 6 on Blackboard) [pp. 591–592, 598–599, 566–570].
Due Today: Write a summary of ¶¶4–5 of Chapter 15 in *Leviathan*.

F 3/23 Contractarianism and Moral Issues
Due Today: Complete the Ecological Footprint assignment in the Assignments section of Blackboard. When you finish the assignment, write down your Ecological Footprint.

T 3/27 Introduction to Hume and Sentimentalism
Due Today: Read Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, III.i.2 (pp. 761–764).

F 3/30 Topics in Hume
Due Today: Read Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* II.iii.3, III.i.1 (pp. 752–761).
Due Today: Write a summary of the last four paragraphs of *THN* III.i.1 (from “But to make these general reflections more clear...” on p. 760).

4/2–4/10 No Class—Spring Break

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- F 4/13 Introduction to Mill and Utilitarianism
Due Today: Read Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter II (pp. 997–1008).
Due Today: Write a summary of ¶23 of Chapter II of *Utilitarianism*, which begins on page 1006 with the words “Again, Utility is often summarily stigmatized.”
- T 4/17 Topics in Mill
Due Today: Read Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch. II (¶¶1–8), Ch. IV (¶¶1–10), Ch. V (¶¶1–16) [pp. 997–1000, 1012–1014, 1015–1020].
Due Today: Write a summary of ¶16 of Chapter V of *Utilitarianism*, which begins on page 1020 with the words “This, therefore, being the characteristic difference.”
- F 4/20 Utilitarianism and Moral Issues
Optional: Read Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality.” (See Blackboard.)
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- T 4/24 Introduction to Kant and Deontology
Due Today: Read Kant, *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, First Section, §§393–395; Second Section, §§420–424, 428–431 (pp. 896–897, 910–912, 914–916).
- F 4/27 Topics in Kant
Due Today: Read Kant, *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, Third Section, §§446–449, Second Section, §§420–422, 428–431 (pp. 924–925, 910–912, 914–916).
Due Today: Write a summary of §§428–431 of the *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, beginning with “But let us suppose...” on page 915 and ending with “...a will that legislates universal law” on page 916.
- T 5/1 Deontology and Moral Issues
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F 5/4 Overview of 20th Century Ethics

T 5/8 Peer Review Session for Second Paper

Due Today: Bring 4 copies of the rough draft of your paper to class.

F 5/11 TBD

Second paper is due by email to david.morrow@hunter.cuny.edu.

T 5/15 Review & Synthesis

Friday, May 25 (11:30 am – 1:30 pm)
Final Exam: Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Hobbes, Hume, Mill, and Kant

READING SUMMARIES

The schedule on the preceding pages lists nine reading summary assignments. The following instructions apply to all of those assignments.

Task. For each assignment, you are to write a summary in your own words of the passage specified in the schedule on the preceding pages. This summary should explain the passage or argument so that a classmate of yours who has not done the reading could understand it. Your summary should be between 100–200 words. Be clear, concise, and accurate.

Purpose. These summaries are designed to accomplish several things. The first is to help you understand the assigned passages. There is no better way to learn something than to learn to explain it to someone else. The second is to help you remember important parts of the course material, which will be essential for the exams. The third is to help you develop the important skill of summarizing a piece of writing, which you will use throughout your life.

Grading Criteria. For each summary that I collect, you will receive a ✓+, ✓, ✓–, or X based on the criteria below. I will grade three of your summaries, and I will drop the lowest of these three grades. Each of your other two summaries will count for 5% of your final grade. A ✓+ is worth 5%. A ✓ is worth 4%. A ✓– is worth 2%. An X is worth 0%.

Grade	Criteria
✓+	The summary clearly displays and communicates a complete, accurate understanding of the passage. It does not omit any important parts of the passage. The summary is within the word limit.
✓	The summary displays and communicates an adequate understanding of the passage. It may omit or misinterpret one or two important parts of the passage. It is within or nearly within the word limit.
✓–	The summary displays or communicates only a weak understanding of the passage or argument. It may omit crucial parts, contain major errors, or exceed the word limit.
X	The summary displays no significant understanding of the passage or argument.

Due Dates. The assignments are due on the dates listed in the schedule on the previous page. I will collect summaries from the class on three unannounced dates during the semester. If you are absent on the day I collect a summary, you may not turn in that summary for credit. I will collect another summary from you on a day of my choosing. I will not accept late summaries.

Help! Writing good summaries—especially of challenging texts like the ones covered in this course—is difficult, but it does not require a mystical talent that you either have or you don't. It is a skill that you will improve through practice. If you are having trouble, try reading about paraphrasing at <http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/reading-writing/on-line/qpp.html>. If you're still stuck, please visit the Reading/Writing Center in person or come see me during my office hours.