

Syllabus
Introduction to Ethics

MWF 9:30-10:20 AM BRNG 1268

Contact Information**Instructor:** Jonathan Beaver**Office Hours:** Monday, Wednesday, 10:30AM – 11:30AM, and by appointment**Office Location:** BRNG 3268B**Office Phone #:** 494-4276 (department)**Email:** beeverj@purdue.edu**Office Hours**

My office is located on the third floor of Beering Hall inside the Academic Success Center. I am in my office considerably more than the two hours per week listed above, so feel free to stop by at your leisure to talk. However, you are guaranteed to find me in my office during the listed hours. If I need to cancel or change my office hours during the semester, I will make that announcement in class and on our Blackboard site. I am also available by email, if you give me sufficient time to respond. I encourage you to speak with me about course material and related topics.

Course Description

How *should* we live? This is one of the most important, least understood, and most contested questions human beings must address. Many have spent scholarly energy seeking answers to question like “how *do* we live” through scientific inquiry and empirical study. Philosophical ethics is uniquely placed to advance responses to the larger normative and imperative question of right and wrong and of good and bad. In this course, we will critically evaluate some of the myriad responses that have been offered to this important philosophical query by engaging the work and writings of philosophers both ancient and modern – questions concerning the nature of *the good*. The ethical theories we’ll outline will give us the foundation to frame debates and responses to important contemporary ethical problems. Your work in this course may very well help you become reasonable thinkers, able citizens, and – dare I say it – better people.

Required Text

The required text for our course will be available at the bookstore. Supplemental required readings will be available in electronic format on Blackboard. You may want to refer to the readings during discussion, so please bring your texts to class.

- ✓ Timmons, Mark. *Conduct and Character: Readings in Moral Theory*, 6th Edition. Cengage Publishing. 2012. ISBN-10: 0495502375 ISBN-13: 9780495502371 (“T” in the below schedule).
- ✓ readings posted as required on the course Blackboard site

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

- 1) **Attendance (10%)** – Attending this class is part of taking this class. Merely being in the classroom, however, is a necessary but not sufficient condition of your attendance. Therefore, I will take attendance randomly throughout the semester in the form of single (and very easy) question quizzes. These quizzes will ask you to define or explain the key concept, argument, or idea expressed in that day’s lecture and discussion. Your well-reasoned response to this question will count as your attendance that day. Unexcused tardiness will be counted against your attendance record.
- 2) **Write-ups (10%)** – Each Monday, I will post a reflection question on Blackboard pertaining to that week’s readings. You should respond to eight (8) of these questions over the course of the semester. Your assignment is two part: first, for each question on which you choose to write, you will need to write no less

than 400 words due before the start of class that Friday. You must answer only questions that I have assigned, and you must, prior to the end of the semester, turn in no fewer than eight of these write-ups. Second, you must also respond to a write-up posted by your classmates for each one response you post. See our Blackboard discussion forum for more detailed instructions.

- 3) **In-Class Presentation (10%)** – Once during the semester, you will be asked to prepare a 3-5 minute introduction to the author of the assigned readings. This introduction should offer the class a biographical sketch of the philosopher, a description of his or her contribution to the field, or a summary and questions about key points from the reading. It should be factual. It should be entertaining. These introductions will help us frame a context for the ideas and theories we discuss.
- 4) **2 Unit Exams (40% (20% per exam))** – The exams will be administered during our regular class time, and will consist of fill-in-the-blank and multiple choice questions along with one essay question. NOTE: If you are absent on an exam day, you *must* (A) have contacted me in advance to tell me of the absence, and (B) return with a written excuse, in order to be permitted to make up the exam.
- 5) **Final Exam (30%)** – The final exam will be a comprehensive essay exam, and will be administered during the final exam period, to be announced. **NOTE: You will not do well on this exam if you have not kept up on the readings and regularly attended class.**
- 6) The course grading scale is posted in Blackboard. **N.B.: failure to complete all three of the exams for this course will result in failure in the course.**

Academic Integrity Policy

Absolutely no form of academic dishonesty in any of its various manifestations will be tolerated. Academic dishonesty occurs *any* time you use someone else's ideas as your own. Cheating, copying, plagiarizing, etc. of any sort will result in a failing grade for that particular assignment, and may result in a failing grade *in the course*, as well as a formal letter being written to the Office of the Dean of Students. I strongly encourage you, if you are unsure about what constitutes academic dishonesty, to look it up at

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php>.

Ignorance on this matter is not a valid excuse.

Special Considerations

If you have a disability and would like to speak to someone about accommodations, please visit the Disability Resource Center, located in Room 830 of Ernest C. Young Hall. The telephone number is 765-494-1247. In order to receive accommodations in this class, please provide me with a letter from the DRC as soon as possible and talk with me in person about your learning needs, and about what I can do to help.

If *for any reason* you are concerned about your ability to do well in this course, please make an appointment with me early in the semester so that we can discuss strategies for success. Also, if problems or unusual circumstances arise that interfere with your work, talk with me or someone else who can help (a parent, counselor, religious leader, or coach). The worst thing to do is to wait until the situation spins out of control before letting anyone know about it, and the best is to keep the lines of communication open.

Disclaimer

I reserve the right to change the contents of this syllabus and/or the schedule at any time. If changes are made, you will be notified in advance.

Extra Credit

Optional (but highly recommended) **extra credit** will be offered for attendance to and 500 word write-up of the Bioethics Seminar Series lectures (Spring 2011). Visit www.purdue.edu/bioethics for a complete schedule of talks. These write ups will be due no later than one week from the date of the lecture.

Calendar

<i>Wk</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading (due that day)</i>
Wk 1	Mon.	1/10	course and syllabus - intro to class	n/a
On Moral Theory	Wed.	1/12	course and syllabus - intro to issues	syllabus
	Fri.	1/14	The Nature of a Moral Theory	T 1-8
			The Evaluation of a Moral Theory	T 8-16
Wk 2	Mon.	1/17	No class - MLK Jr Day	
Moral Egoism	Wed.	1/19	Epicurus & Plato	online
	Fri.	1/21	Shoemaker - Egoisms	T 16-35
Wk 3	Mon.	1/24	Benedict & Rachels	T 55-61 & T 61-68
Relativism & Ethics by Authority	Wed.	1/26	Mortimer - God's Commands & Euthyphro	T 37-40 & online
	Fri.	1/28	Timmons - Does Morality Depend on God's Commands?	T 41-54
Wk 4	Mon.	1/31	Aquinas/Harris - The Ethics of Natural Law	T 69-93
Natural Law Theory & Utility	Wed.	2/2	Foot - The Doctrine of Double Effect	T 93-98
	Fri.	2/4	Bentham - The Principle of Utility	T 109-115
Wk 5	Mon.	2/7	Mill - Defense of Utilitarianism	T 115-121
Consequentialism	Wed.	2/9	Robert Nozick - The Experience Machine	T 122-124
	Fri.	2/11	Darwall - Utilitarianism: Act or Rule?	T 124-131
Wk 6	Mon.	2/14	Kant - The Moral Law and Autonomy of the Will	T 140-152
Kant	Wed.	2/16	Glasgow - Kant's Principle of Universal Law	T 152-165
	Fri.	2/18	O'Neill - Kant on Treating People as Ends-in-Themselves	T 166-171
Wk 7	Mon.	2/21	review	
Social Contract	Wed.	2/23	Exam #1	
	Fri.	2/25	Hobbes - the Social Contract	T 178-190
Wk 8	Mon.	2/28	Scanlon: A Contractualist Theory of What We Owe...	T 203-219
Contract Theory & Virtue	Wed.	3/1	Pettit: Can Contract Theory Ground Morality?	T 220-231
	Fri.	3/4	Plato + Aristotle - Virtue and Character	T 232-242 & online
Wk 9	Mon.	3/7	Hursthouse - Normative Virtue Ethics	T 243-253
Virtue Ethics, Ethics of Care	Wed.	3/9	Adams: Excellence in Being for the Good	T 259-275
	Fri.	3/11	Gilligan/Halwani	T 276-284, 299-311
Wk 10	Mon.	3/14	no class	
spring break	Wed.	3/16	no class	
	Fri.	3/18	no class	

Wk 11 Pluralism and Particularism	Mon.	3/21	Ross: What Makes Right Actions Right?	T 312-317
	Wed.	3/23	Gill - Agonizing Decisions and Moral Pluralism	T 317-329
	Fri.	3/25	Jean-Paul Sartre: Moral Choice without Principles.	T 336-339
Wk 12 Applied Ethics	Mon.	3/28	lecture on immanent and applied ethics	n/a
	Wed.	3/30	Kant/Korsgaard - Tanner Lectures on Ethics	Online
	Fri.	4/1	review	n/a
Wk 13 Immanent Ethics	Mon.	4/4	Exam #2	n/a
	Wed.	4/6	Guest Lecture: Immanent Ethics	Online
	Fri.	4/8	Guest Lecture: Geneology of Morals	Online
Wk 14 GMO - Food Ethics	Mon.	4/11	Rauch - Can Frankenfood Save the Planet	Online
	Wed.	4/13	Stokstad - Monsanto Pulls the Plug...	Online
	Fri.	4/15	Thompson - The Opposite of Human Enhancement	Online
Wk 15 Animal Ethics	Mon.	4/18	Rollin - On Telos and Genetic Engineering	Online
	Wed.	4/20	Singer - Animal Liberation, Chapter 1	Online
	Fri.	4/22	Stone - "Should Trees Have Standing?"	Online
Wk 16 Environmental Ethics	Mon.	4/25	Singer - Speciesism & Kant - Non-Human Animals	online
	Wed.	4/27	White, Jr. - The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis	online
	Fri.	4/29	Leopold - The Land Ethic & "Home" available on YouTube	online
FINAL EXAM		TBD	Final Exam TBD	