

PHIL 13
Introduction to Ethics

Gil Hersch

Summer Session II, 2014

Class schedule: Tuesday and Thursday, 9 am–11:50 pm, CSB 004.

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1–2 pm (and by appointment), HSS 8037.

Class website: ted.ucsd.edu

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Teaching Assistant: Dean Tracy, datracy@ucsd.edu

T.A office hours: Monday and Wednesday 10 am–12 pm (and by appointment), HSS 8089.

This course is an introduction to ethics and we will discuss some of the central questions in ethics:

- What is a good life? Before we discuss what is right and wrong it helps to have a sense of what is good or bad, or more specifically what is good or bad for people. We will discuss some of the main theories of well-being: hedonism, preference-satisfaction and objective-list theories.
- How do we know what is right and wrong? Once we know something about what is good or bad for people, we can discuss some of the main normative theories philosophers have thought could explain right and wrong action: consequentialism, deontology and virtue ethics.
- What is right or wrong in a specific situation? We will look at applied ethics, the subfield of ethics that takes theory and applies it to particular problems we face. We will look at three of these problems: the global poor, animals and the limits of the law.
- Do rightness and wrongness even exist? We will end the course with metaethics, the subfield of ethics that looks at the high-level questions of ethics: whether right and wrong exist and whether they are the same for everyone.

What will I learn in this class?

By the end of this class you will be able to:

- Recognize and explain central ideas and concepts of ethical theory.
- Compare rival ethical theories and evaluate ethical debates.
- See yourself as a moral agent that can value the nuances of moral judgments.

By the end of this class you will improve your skills in:

- Reading and analyzing complex philosophical texts.
- Constructing coherent philosophical arguments.
- Writing papers defending a philosophical thesis.

What do I need to have?

- “The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems, Third Edition” by Russ Shafer-Landau.

The book has a companion website with some self-quizzes, suggested readings summaries, and web links.

I suggest using it: <http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199997275/stud/>

- An iClicker, in case you do not already have one. **Please register your iClicker on the class’s Ted website before Thursday, August 7.**
- Both the book and iClicker can be acquired from the UCSD bookstore, among other places.

What do I need to do to get a grade?

1. *Class participation* (10%): Your participation grade will be determined based on the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions. We will use peer-instruction techniques (with iClickers), so there will be many opportunities for you to contribute throughout the term.
2. *Writing assignments and reading quizzes* (15%): There will be four short writing assignments. These can be found on the schedule at the end of the syllabus. There will be a reading quiz for **every** class on Ted. Students must submit their writing assignments and quizzes through Ted by 11:59 pm on the day before class (e.g. by 11:59 pm on August 11 for the assignment corresponding to the readings assigned for the August 12 class).
3. *Class presentation* (15%): Each student will be expected to do one presentation as part of a group. The presentations will be at the beginning of each class and will be either on the reading for that class or the issues discussed in the prior class. Students are required to meet with Dean (the teaching assistant) prior to their presentation.
4. *Midterm paper* (25%): I will circulate the prompt for the midterm paper by August 12. The paper itself will be due by 8 am on August 21.
5. *Final paper* (35%): I will circulate the prompt for the final paper by August 26. The paper itself will be due by 8 am on September 6.

What are the course policies?

- *Academic integrity:* I take academic integrity very seriously, and I expect you to take it equally seriously. Academic stealing, cheating and fraud are strictly prohibited, as is plagiarism. You can review the University's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship here: <http://senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/appendix2.pdf>. If you violate the University's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, you will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office, and I will seek the harshest penalty permitted.

If you have any concerns about academic integrity, whether questions about the importance of academic integrity or about what is or is not permitted on specific assignments, please talk with me or with the Teaching Assistant.

- *Attendance and classroom behavior:* You are expected to attend every class **on time** and to have read the assigned material ahead of time. Unexcused absences or disruptive classroom behavior will have a negative effect on your participation grade.
- *Laptops and electronics* Use of computers, tablets, smartphones, and other electronic devices is not allowed in class, except with written permission from, for example, the Office for Students with Disabilities.
- *Late papers:* Late papers will **not** be accepted and graded as a 0. Exceptions to this policy will only be made in the case of a serious extenuating circumstance (e.g. emergency medical or family problem) supported by appropriate evidence.
- *Turnitin:* Students agree that by taking this course, their midterm papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism (via the Ted interface). All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the turnitin.com site.
- *Office for Students with Disabilities:* Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to instructors (please contact me privately as early as possible) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. For further information, see the OSD website (<http://disabilities.ucsd.edu>).

What is the schedule? What are the readings? And what are the assignments?

Date	Topic and reading	Assignment
August 5	<i>Course introduction, logic and arguments</i>	
August 7	Well-Being: Hedonism and its critics 2. John Stewart Mill - 'Hedonism' 3. Robert Nozick - 'The Experience Machine'	
August 12	Well-Being: Preference-Satisfaction and Objective-Lists 4. Chris Heathwood - 'Faring Well and Getting What You Want' 5. Jean Kazez - 'Necessities'	Convince a friend why she should or should not plug into the experience machine
August 14	Normative Ethics: Consequentialism 8. J.J.C. Smart - 'Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism'	
August 19	Normative Ethics: Deontology 9. Immanuel Kant - 'The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative'	During the week make 5 utilitarian decisions
August 21	Normative Ethics: Virtue Ethics 12. Aristotle - 'Nicomachean Ethics'	
August 22	Midterm paper due	
August 26	Applied Ethics: Poverty and Hunger 20. Peter Singer - 'The Singer Solution to World Poverty' 21 Jan Narveson - 'Feeding the Hungry'	Who is your moral role-model and why?
August 28	Applied Ethics: The Moral Status of Animals 26. Alastair Norcross - 'Puppies, Pigs and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases' 27. R.G. Frey - 'Moral Standing, The Value of Lives, and Speciesism'	
September 2	Applied Ethics: The Limits of the Law 34. Stephen Nathanson - 'An Eye for an Eye?' 36. Michael Huemer - 'America's Unjust Drug War'	Convince a friend to donate to charity or do some volunteering
September 4	Metaethics: Relativism and Objectivism 17. Harry Gensler - 'Cultural Relativism' 18 David Enoch - 'Why I am an Objectivist about Ethics (And Why You Are, Too)'	
September 6	Final paper due	