

ETHICS SYLLABUS

In the event of a significant disruption of course activities because of an extraordinary environmental situation (e.g., COVID-19), this syllabus is subject to change. Any and all changes will be communicated with students in as timely a manner as the situation allows.

Course Description and Overview

As you prepare to go out in the world it is imperative that you fully understand both what is Right and Good. But what do those words even mean? Can someone be truly “Good?” This course is designed to probe those questions and think critically about many problems that are quite serious and some which may seem insignificant (yet are most certainly not!) In this course we will look at some of the greatest works about human ethos and praxis and learn to develop a comprehensive and grounded ethical framework for the world.

Faculty Contact Information

Name of Instructor: Marshall Nelson
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Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify key movements and figures in the history of Ethics.
2. Apply the rules and methods of different Ethical Schools to contemporary moral quandaries.
3. Identify important texts and classic works in the history of Ethics.

Course Materials and Supplies

Textbooks:

After Virtue by Alasdair MacIntyre

Excerpts from various other texts used in class will be available online.

Supplies:

Personal computer access, and notebook/paper as desired.

Activities, Assignments, and Grading Policy

This course will have weekly assignments to be completed online. Every week there will be a discussion board over the assigned readings or ethical case studies we are working through in class. We will also have a weekly quiz at the end of every lecturing week. All assignments and

quizzes need to be submitted online no later than 11:59 p.m. on the Friday of each week. No late assignments, without extenuating circumstances, will be accepted.

Major Course Assignments and Examinations

Paper 1: My School of Ethics- As we go through the first half of the semester, we will be studying all of the major schools of Ethics and their systems of jurisprudence. **By March 20th**, you need to complete a paper outlining which major system *you believe* to be the most capable and functional for promoting and exercising morality in our world. Please remember this is not an *a la carte* approach to Ethics: you are expected to dedicate the paper to *one* school of thought while dealing critically with how it can help you and what concerns you have regarding its potential shortcomings in helping you navigate life. A detailed rubric is available online.

Paper 2: Final Ethical Case Study- As we finish up our class, I want you to apply your ethical schema to a contemporary issue that you are passionate about and able to make a practical difference in. This paper should include not only research pertinent to your ethos, but to the relevant research regarding your issue and practical solutions to it that you consider morally upright. This paper will be deeply *personal*, but should still be written objectively (i.e. in 3rd person with impersonal pronouns), and should have executable solutions that you can participate in to improve the world. A detailed rubric is available online. **The final paper is due April 28th.**

Exams- We will have two examinations for this class. We will have an exam at the halfway mark of the course to review the 4 Major Schools of Ethics on **March 24th** and a comprehensive final exam on the evaluatory and pragmatic applications of ethics on **Finals Week (May 8th-12th)**.

Calendar of Classes, Sessions, Activities, Readings, Examinations & Assignments

Week of Jan. 17th: Syllabus Overview, What is Goodness/Justice? (Republic Books I-IV)

Week of Jan. 23rd: Ethics as Utility (Letter to Menoecus/Bentham Intro. Books I-IV)

Week of Feb. 6th: Ethics as Utility (Mill Utilitarianism)

Week of Feb. 13th: Ethics as Virtue (Nicomachean Ethics Books I-IV)

Week of Feb. 20th: Ethics as Law (Summa Pt. II: 1st Part/Leviathan Pt. I-II)

Week of March 6th: Ethics as Duty (Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals/On Ethics)

Week of March 13th: Spring Break- No Classes

*Week of March 20th: A Post-Ethical World **Midterm Exam and First Paper Due***

Week of March 27th: Case Study- Lying and Accountability

Week of April 3rd: Case Study- Consciousness and Animal Life

Week of April 10th: Case Study- When Can We Break the Law? (Plato Crito)

Week of April 17th: Case Study- Economics and Business (Summa Pt. II: 2nd Part Question 78)

Week of April 24th: Case Study- Taking Life: Just War/Self-Defense/Euthanasia/Abortion

Week of May 1st: Case Study- God and Goodness (Euthyphro/Fear and Trembling)

*Week of May 8th: **Final Exam Week***

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism comes from the Latin word *plagium*, which meant to steal or kidnap, and I will treat instances of it with the same severity as those crimes. To steal another person's intellectual work, whether it is your classmate's or anyone else's, is no different to me than if you stole any of their other possessions. Not only does it show a lack of moral character on a student's part, which is a quintessential aspect of being a scholar at a classical academy, but it demonstrates that they have no respect for their peers, their school, or themselves if they are willing to mar their own educational and ethical growth over something as small as a grade. All plagiarized work will receive an automatic zero and further punitive measures (detention, suspension, etc.) will be explored. If you are struggling to develop your thoughts or complete assignments: *please* seek me out. It is why I am here, and I want to help you create the best work that *you* can produce: not someone else. Assignments will be randomly checked for plagiarism using Turnitin.com.

Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is vital to academic success and is expected of all students. Grades are determined by academic performance, and instructors may give students written notice that attendance related to specific classroom activities is required. Absences do not exempt students from academic requirements. Excessive absences, even if documented, may result in a student failing the course. Excused absences are within the purview of the instructor. Students must consult with instructors regarding make-up work.