



PHIL 3320

Foundations of Ethics

Prof. Christine Vitrano

ONLINE – Asynchronous Format

Ethics (or morality) is concerned with evaluating whether our actions are good or bad, right or wrong. This course examines some of the most influential moral theories in the history of philosophy.

A person's character plays a central role in ancient moral theories, and that is where this course begins. Starting with virtue ethics, we focus on readings by Plato and Aristotle, and then we turn to the work of Epicurus (hedonism), and Epictetus (stoicism).

Next, we consider Hobbes (egoism) and Hume (on the nature of morality). Then we review the moral theories of Kant (deontology) and Mill (utilitarianism), and the course ends with a discussion of Camus and Sartre (existentialism). Other issues we may touch upon (depending on time) include moral relativism, the nature of wickedness, moral luck and the desirability of being a moral saint.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about this course, feel free to email me at cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu.