

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a general introduction to ethics. We will study 'foundational' texts such as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, and J.S. Mill's *Utilitarianism*. We will focus both on the philosophical reflection about 'ethics' - namely on ethical theories and concepts - and on the morality embodied in and defined by ethical concepts. I will give an outline of the major problems of philosophical ethics as well as an introduction to the history of ethics, pointing out that ethics is a constitutive part of social life, and that its forms vary according with the changes in society. Selected texts taken from the history of ethics as well as from different ethical traditions (India, China) will be the basis of our discussions. The course will give the students an opportunity to think about the integration within ethical theory of contemporary moral issues that have a gendered, multicultural focus. The format of the course includes both lecture and class discussion on major ethical issues. Students are requested class presentation work (individual and group work). **Objectives:** The course will teach (i) how to read, explain, analyze, and critically interpret philosophical texts; (ii) how to extend the discussion to touch upon contemporary philosophical issues and problems; (iii) how to follow historical development of ideas. Students will be taught to explain selections from a philosophical text, theory, issue, or argument.

## II. REQUIRED TEXTS \*(course packet to be purchased at Far Better Copies, Campus Rd.)

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Loeb, Harvard (course pack)\*. - J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- I. Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. by H.J.- *Ethics: The Classic Readings*, ed. by David Cooper, Blackwell, Paton, Harper. 1997.
- G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (course pack).

## III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *Midterm exam* and *Final paper* (30% of final grade each). **Final paper due Fri. Dec. 14. No late papers accepted.**
  2. *Oral Presentation* (20% of final grade). You will be responsible for an oral presentation on an assigned text. In your presentation you should offer to the class a critical exposition of the material to be discussed. You should formulate at least three major questions to be investigated in the discussion. A copy of the presentation is to be turned in to me **before** class in typewritten form (3-4 pp.). When you are in charge of a presentation you are expected to make yourself understandable to the whole class, **not to read mechanically from a manuscript**, and to stimulate discussion. The assignment is evaluated according to the student's capacity (a) of presenting the material to the class and (b) of raising critical questions. In the case that more than one student presents on the same material, the presentation **is evaluated individually**. Once you sign up for a presentation for a given date you commit yourself for that date. Failure to present on that date results in an F grade for that assignment.
  3. *Protocol* (10% of final grade). You are responsible for one *protocol* in which you will present what we discussed in the previous class (1 page typewritten summary in a coherent narrative, not an outline). At the beginning of the class you should give a copy of the protocol to all participants, then read it.
  4. *Attendance, participation, and class group work* (10% of final grade). Attendance is required with two exceptions. Coming to class late or leaving early **counts as an absence**. In exceptional cases, if you need to come late/leave early you should previously talk to me. Active and informed participation to class discussion is an essential element toward the final grade. We will have group-work sessions on readings as well as on current ethical issues. This assignment is evaluated according to the capacity of group working.
  4. *Plagiarism* and any other form of cheating is not tolerated. Anyone caught plagiarizing will fail the course.
- All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. You are responsible for keeping a copy of your written assignments and for checking with me about grades.

## IV. SCHEDULE

- Week 1-2 MW Aug. 27:** Introduction. **W Aug. 29/W Sept 5:** Plato, *Gorgias*, Classics, 11-28.  
**Week 3 MW Sept. 10, 12:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, 3-35. **W Pres. 1:** Epicurus, Classics, 47-59.  
**Week 4-5 W Sept. 19, M 24:** Aristotle, *Nic.Eth.*, I, 35-69. **W Pres. 2:** *Nic.Eth.*, Book I, 47-55.  
**Week 6 MW Oct. 1,3:** Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, II, 71-97. **W Pres. 3:** Th. Aquinas (Classics, 125-136).  
**Week 7 W (conv. M) Oct. 10:** Kant, *Groundwork*, 65-71.  
**Week 8 MW Oct. 15,17:** Kant, *Groundwork*, 65-71. **W Pres. 4:** Hume (Classics, 149-166).  
**Week 9 MW Oct. 22,24: M: Review. W 24: Midterm.**  
**Week 10 MW Oct. 29,31:** Kant, *Groundwork*, 74-84. **W Pres. 5:** Bhagavad Gita (Classics, 93-110).  
**Week 11 MW Nov.5,7:** Kant, *Groundwork*, 84-92. **W Pres. 6:** Mencius/Hsun Tzu (Classics, 59-77).  
**Week 12 MW Nov.12,14:** Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, selections course pack. **W Pres. 7:** Kierkegaard (Classics, 181-194).  
**Week 13 MW Nov. 19,21:** Nietzsche (Classics, 212-230). **W Pres. 8:** Compare the argument of Gorgias and Nietzsche.  
**Week 14 MW Nov. 26,28:** Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch. 1-2. **W Pres. 9:** Compare *Utilitarianism* ch. 2 and Epicurus.  
**Week 15 MW Dec. 3,5:** Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch. 3-4. **W Pres. 10:** *Utilitarianism* Ch. 4.  
**Week 16 MW Dec. 10,12:** Review for final assignment

**All the above items are subject to change for educational reasons**