

PHIL 3320

Foundations of Ethics

Spring 2017

Section TY3 RegCode 22064

Tuesday and Thursday 3:40 - 5:20

Professor Vitrano

Theories in normative ethics attempt to explain and systematize our moral judgments. They also provide an account of our moral obligations and duties, suggesting a standard to regulate right and wrong conduct. In this course, we shall examine some of the most influential theories in the history of ethics.

This course begins with a study of the ancient moralists, including the work of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and Epictetus. We also discuss virtue ethics and what it implies about living the good life, psychological and ethical hedonism, and stoicism. Then we discuss the moral theories of Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Bentham, Mill and Sartre. Additional questions we consider include whether we are egoists by nature, whether morality is based on reason or emotion, whether a utilitarian or deontological approach to morality is more plausible and how existentialists differ from all the other moralists we have considered.

If you have any questions or would like to talk about this course, feel free to email me at cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu or stop by my office hours, which are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:15 – 2:15 in room 3315 Boylan.