

## **Philosophy 200: Ethics: Great Traditions**

Professor Matthew Strohl

Office: LA 147

Office hours: TR 3:35-4:05

Office phone: (406) 243-6234

Email: matthew.strohl@mso.umt.edu

### **Course description:**

This course is a broad introduction to moral philosophy. We will cover topics in metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Readings will be drawn from both historical and contemporary sources.

### **Required textbook:**

*Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, ed. Steven M. Cahn and Peter Markie, Oxford University Press 2009

I realize the book is expensive. I apologize for this, but there aren't any cheap anthologies that I know of with an appropriate range of readings. If you can't afford to buy the book I suggest you arrange with someone who has a copy to make photocopies.

### **Grading and exams:**

There will be 4 short answer exams. The first 3 exams will each be worth 20% of your grade. The first 3 exams will be non-cumulative. The final exam will be worth 40%. It will be cumulative but will emphasize material from the last part of the course.

Unless you receive permission from me at least two weeks in advance, make up exams will be given only in extreme circumstances (family death, severe illness, car accident, etc.). *Proof of extreme circumstances is required in order to make up an exam.* Oversleeping is not an acceptable excuse, nor busses running late, sudden conflicting obligations, stuck in detox, etc. Take extra precautions on exam days to avoid these problems. Exams not taken, for any reason, will receive a zero. *If you have a problem, contact me as soon as you know you have a problem!*

### **A note about attendance and etiquette:**

I will not be keeping track of attendance, because it would be a giant hassle and (more importantly) because I'd like to treat you like adults. It's just two hours and forty minutes a week. Someone is paying a lot of money for you to be here. Take advantage of the opportunity. Come to class.

Also, please remember to turn off or at least silence your cell phone, and ***please don't read or send text messages or have a laptop on during class*** (unless you need to use a laptop because of a documented special need). If I notice you texting, looking at Facebook, reading the news, etc. you will be asked to leave. If you need to leave early, please sit somewhere where you can leave without causing a commotion.

### **Academic misconduct:**

You are strictly held to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu.SA>). The in-class exams are closed-note: you may not consult anything but your own mind in order to answer questions on the exam. You may not use cell-phones, or any electronic devices to aid you, nor fellow students, nor fellow students' answers on exams, etc. You will receive no credit for any exam that you cheat on. Your conduct will also be reported to the Dean.

### **Special needs:**

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours to discuss the details. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at [www.umt.edu/dss/](http://www.umt.edu/dss/)

### **Readings:**

Unless otherwise noted, read the entire selection

1/27 no reading

## **Unit 1: Ancient vs. Modern ethics: are self-interest and morality opposed?**

1/29 Plato, *Republic*, Book II, 357a-369c

2/3 Plato, *Republic*, Book IV

2/5 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 1, sections 4, 5, 7, and 13

2/10 Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus," "Leading Doctrines."

2/12 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters XIII-XIV; Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism"

2/17 Butler, *Fifteen Sermons*

2/19 Exam on Unit 1

## **Unit 2: Utilitarianism and Kantianism**

2/24 Mill, *Utilitarianism* I, II

2/26 Mill, *Utilitarianism* III, IV

3/3 Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism"

3/5 Kant, *Groundwork* I

3/10 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 3, 4, 11, 24

3/12 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 5, 40; Review for exam

3/17 Exam on Unit 2

## **Unit 3: Contemporary Challenges for Ethics; The Abortion Debate**

3/19 Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"

3/24 Harman, *The Nature of Morality*

3/26 Mackie, "Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong"

3/31-4/2: Spring Break

4/7 Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

4/9 Marquis, "An Argument that Abortion is Wrong"

4/14 Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"

4/16 Exam on Unit 3

**Unit 4: More Applied Ethics**

4/21 Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

4/23 Arthur, "Famine Relief and the Ideal Moral Code"

4/28 Wolf, "Moral Saints"

4/30 Shue, "Torture"

5/5 Hill, "Ticking Bombs, Torture, and the Analogy with Self-Defense"

5/7 Nagel, "Moral Luck"

5/13: FINAL EXAM, 1:10-3:10. This exam will cover Units 1-4 but will emphasize Unit 4.