

**PHL K111 Ethics (50121)**  
Summer 2007 Course Syllabus, Policies, and Schedule

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Course meetings: Mondays, 1:00-4:00pm, June 25-August 6, 2007 in KMOH P1

### Course Description

This course will cover the fundamentals of ethics, including an introduction to the origins and nature of moral right and responsibility. Students will analyze and formulate positions on contemporary ethical issues. (*Prerequisite: ENG\* K101.*)

There exists a common and popular misconception that the study of philosophy and ethics are purely abstract and impractical endeavors. This course in Western philosophy will hopefully dispel this conception, as we will be dealing with two very practical aspects of all of our lives: (1) how we live and (2) how we should, or ought to, live. We will be reading and engaging with primary and secondary texts in moral philosophy, as well as watching and discussing contemporary American films, in this course. Toward this end, we will fulfill the purpose of this course: to critically – i.e., philosophically – engage with the commonly taken for granted fields of ethics and moral theory.

### Course Objectives

1. To critically examine our own moral beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.
2. To be able to identify, understand, and critically analyze important theories and arguments in the domains of ethics, moral philosophy, and value theory.
3. To discover, understand, and appreciate the practicality of ethical theories and moral thinking in a wide range of fields and contemporary issues.

### Course Text

Nina Rosenstand. *The Moral of the Story: An Introduction to Ethics*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006. (Hereafter abbreviated *MS*)

### Course Requirements

1. Participation and Attendance (15%): Attendance is required at all class meetings. Students are allowed one unexcused absence. Accrual of two tardinesses equals one unexcused absence.
2. Questions (30%): Asking critical questions and carefully thinking thoughts through are skills that are essential for all students and scholars of philosophy. For every class meeting, students are to come to class having carefully read through the assigned materials, and they are required to write **three (3) critical and substantive questions** of the text(s) and the ideas contained therein (preferably typed). These will be discussed during the class session, and collected and evaluated by the instructor. Not turning in a question will severely affect a student's participation grade.
3. Quizzes (55%): There will be five quizzes, covering both in-class discussions and all assigned readings.

\* **Note:** All requirements are to be met in order to pass this course. \*

### Grade Breakdown

A+: 97-100	B+: 87-89.9	C+: 77-79.9	D+: 67-69.9	F: <59.9
A: 93-96.9	B: 83-86.9	C: 73-76.9	D: 63-66.9	
A-: 90-92.9	B-: 80-82.9	C-: 70-72.9	D-: 60-62.9	

### Course Policies

1. **Participation:** Mere physical attendance does not necessarily equal active course participation. A student's *active* presence is a necessary precondition for success in this course, both individually and collectively. During every class session, students are expected to come to class having carefully read the assigned materials, with an open mind, and prepared to philosophically engage in class discussions. The classroom atmosphere will be one of openness, creativity, and respect, where all will be able to share their ideas, opinions, questions and information.
2. **Attendance:** If a student needs to miss any class, s/he is expected to inform the instructor as soon as possible prior to the missed class. Students are responsible for any material missed, so it is highly suggested that students exchange pertinent information (phone number, email address) with one another so that they can find out what they missed in the event that they have to be absent from a class, or if they are tardy to a class session. If a student misses more than one (1) class without proper justification, that student could automatically fail the course. Being tardy twice equals one absence. Unexcused absences and/or being late to class will significantly decrease one's chances of doing well in this course.
3. **Readings:** Students will be assigned new reading material for each class. A tentative schedule of readings and general discussion topics can be found below. The typical class will include serious conversations regarding the assigned readings and films, and emphasis will be placed on (1) the philosophical arguments and ethical positions being discussed and examined, as well as (2) the practical import of these arguments and theories.
4. **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** There is absolutely **no excuse** for any form of academic dishonesty, especially in a course entitled "Ethics." Dishonest behavior on the part of the student **will** result in automatic failure of this course and referral to the Office of the Dean of Students. For further information, see the "Academic Integrity" section of the student handbook, the Academic Catalog, or the "Academic Misconduct" section of the Academic Planner. If you have questions regarding academic honesty in your writing, you are highly recommended to see the instructor.
5. **Mutual Respect:** This class will be intensive, so it would be best for all involved if we treated one another with more than a modicum of respect. While reasonable amounts of food and drink are acceptable to have in class, please do not bring newspapers into class or have cell phones engaged in the "ring" mode. Students who violate this policy will be asked to leave class, and will be considered absent that day.
6. **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** There is no excuse for any form of academic dishonesty. Dishonest behavior on the part of the student will result in automatic failure of this course and referral to the Office of the Dean of Students.
7. **Students with Special Needs:** If a student has proper documentation that shows evidence of his or her needing special accommodation(s), he or she is required to make the instructor aware of this as soon as possible, preferably during the first week of class, so as to meet these needs.

\* **Note:** Your continued enrollment in this course declares your agreement to these policies.\*

**Schedule**

Date	Topic	Assignment
M: June 25	Introductions: students, instructor, course Thinking about philosophy, morality, and values	MS ch. 1
M: July 2	Ethics of egoism and relativism	Quiz #1 MS chs. 3-4
M: July 9	Ethics of virtue and character Film: <i>As Good as It Gets</i>	Quiz #2 MS ch. 8-9
M: July 16	Ethics of consequence Film: <i>X-Men III</i>	Quiz #3 MS ch. 5
M: July 23	Ethics of duty	Quiz #4 MS ch. 6
M: July 30	Ethics of existence Film: <i>I ♥ Huckabees</i>	Quiz #5 MS chs. 10-12
M: August 6	Course wrap-up	—



"It's just us today. Campbell called in ethical."

THE NEW YORKER, 11/25/02, P. 94

