

# Philosophy 111-Ethics

**Instructor:** Jon Brammer

**Room:** C-101

**Office Hours:** M-F by appointment

**Time:**

T/TH 2:30 PM to 3:45 PM

**Office:**

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## Course Description:

Philosophy 111 is an introductory survey course designed to expose students to the fundamentals of ethics, including an introduction to the origins and nature of moral rights and responsibilities, sources of ethical paradigms, and historical and contemporary theories of ethical decision-making. Students will be asked to analyze ethical situations through the perspectives provided by common traditions in the field (i.e. utilitarian, Kantian, virtue ethics, religious ethics, etc...). In addition, students will be required to demonstrate understanding of independent scholarship and the ability to apply specific theories to a range of genres and contexts. The goal of the course is not to necessarily decide what is right or wrong for everyone, but rather to provide an understanding of different ways to approach morality and ethics.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate understanding of foundational ethical theories (e.g. deontology, utilitarianism, virtue, etc...) in various contexts
- Apply ethical frameworks to real world situations as well as both hypothetical and personal cases
- Demonstrate understanding of the complexity of current social issues and their ethical components
- Develop an understanding of personal ethical foundations and behaviors
- Collaborate with others on presenting ethical controversies in a rational and logical manner
- Use various critical thinking strategies to analyze and synthesize information from a variety of sources (i.e. primary texts, secondary texts, multi-media presentations, experiential learning, etc...)

## Required Text/Stuff:

*The Moral of the Story: An Introduction to Ethics*, most recent edition, by Nina Rosenstand

*The Right Thing to Do: Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy*, most recent edition, by J. Rachels and S. Rachels

Ability to access a computer/the Internet regularly during the course of the term

## Attendance, Grading, and Due Dates:

*Attendance*- I will be checking attendance for the first couple of meetings, but after that, it is up to you to attend regularly. Because most of the main themes about various traditions will be discussed in class, it is to your advantage to attend regularly. We will also be doing in-class writings on a regular basis that I will use to determine attendance marks. One missed class will probably not result in any kind of huge deficit, but excessive absences (two or more) will most likely impact your work negatively. If you miss more than three classes without a compelling reason, you will most likely not receive a passing grade in the class. If you miss a session, please check the Blackboard site for the class or see me on returning if you want copies of lecture slides, handouts, etc.

*Grading*- The grading for this course is flexible, and the grading contract for the class will be decided during our first meeting. The categories below indicate all the aspects that you will be graded on. The weight that is assigned to each one is up to the class as a whole. There are only a few limitations: 1) the point total for

response papers is not changeable, 2) no category can be worth less than 100 points (besides ethical will), 3) fractional totals or those not rounded to the nearest ten points are not acceptable, 4) in-class writings and discussion can't be more than 200 points, and 5) the total number of points must equal 1000. Please remember that if one category is given fewer points, then another category must be weighted more heavily.

In-class writings and discussion-----	_____	points
Response papers (4) -----	200	points
Wiki project and presentation -----	_____	points
Ethical will -----	30	points
Research project (lifeboat ethics) -----	_____	points
Mid-term and final exams -----	_____	points

Letter grades are then generated at the end of the term based on a strict percentage scale. Grades with an attached "+" or "-" will be given for those point totals which fall within the top or bottom 2% of each grade category (there is no "A+"). For example, a student with 830 points would receive a straight "B" grade. A different student, who had accumulated only 810 points, would receive a "B-" (810= the lowest 2% of the "B" category or  $.81 \times 1000 = 810$ ).

A=	900-1000 points
B=	800-899 points
C=	700-799 points
D=	600-699 points
F=	below 600 points

*Due Dates-* Due dates are included in the syllabus and are not generally flexible. Late papers will *not* be accepted unless a student is experiencing/has experienced a personal tragedy or some other *extreme* situation. In such cases, please speak to me privately as soon as possible. **All students have one "grace period" to use at their discretion** with any of their writings except the research project. The grace period allows you to turn in the paper *any time before the next class meeting*. **If you wish to invoke your grace period, please see the last page of the syllabus- cut on the dotted line and attach the sheet to your essay (see below).**

***Please remember: It is your responsibility to keep up with assigned readings and paper due dates as presented in the syllabus. Check with me or a classmate to keep up with syllabus changes.***

**Writing Papers:**

*MLA format-* **All out of class assignments must be typed and double-spaced with realistic margins according to MLA format.** I will outline this format in class prior to your first written assignment. Any up-to-date English/writing reference will have a section on how to use this set of writing conventions. These are two of the best online resource to use:

- The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL):* <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- Bedford/ St. Martin's Writing and Research:* <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/>

*Returned Papers-* Generally, all graded copies of papers will be returned one class after the due date. I am more concerned about content than grammatical troubles, but papers that are not carefully proofed will receive point deductions accordingly.

*Computers-* It is *strongly recommended* that you use a computer in the writing process (either your personal machine or one in a campus computer lab), as it will greatly reduce the time you spend on revision. Try to get into the habit of using a word processing program when you initially compose your work and save to a separate

flash drive or diskette frequently. It will make revisions more convenient, and it will also give you experience using the technology. All papers should be proofed thoroughly *by a human!* Computer spell-checks and grammar checks are notoriously fallible! You can also take advantage of the writing tutors in TASC/Writing Center by making a face-to-face appointment or submitting a paper via e-mail at [TRWritingCenter@trcc.commnet.edu](mailto:TRWritingCenter@trcc.commnet.edu)

### Campus Policies:

*Plagiarism*- Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's words or ideas in your writing. **Conscious plagiarism is an unacceptable academic behavior that will result in a "0" for the plagiarized assignment, with no re-write possibilities. Any repeat offense will result in a failing grade in the course.** Plagiarism by omission or "unconscious" plagiarism will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

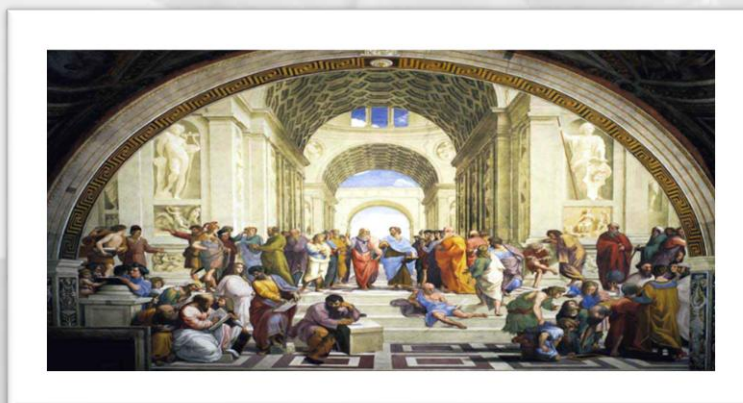
*Withdrawal policy*- A student who finds it necessary to discontinue a course once class has met must provide written notice to the registrar. Withdrawal forms are available at the Registrar's office. No punitive "W" grades are assigned to any withdrawal requested before the unrestricted withdrawal deadline for the semester. Withdrawal requests received after this deadline must bear the signature of the instructor. No withdrawals are permitted after the last class preceding the final exam. Those who do not obtain an official withdrawal, but simply stop attending classes, run the risk of receiving an "F" grade for the course

*Students with disabilities*- If you have a hidden or visible disability that may require special accommodations, please see me as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, please be sure to register with Chris Scarborough in order to find out what services are available for you.

*Cancelled classes*- There is a possibility that class might be cancelled unexpectedly due to weather or another unforeseen circumstance. In such cases, check the college web site for official closing notifications. I will also post updates on Blackboard or through the e-mails that are on file with the registrar. If your e-mail address has changed, please update it as soon as possible.

### Revisions to Syllabus:

The information contained in the syllabus is subject to revision at my discretion. I will inform the class of any changes that are made. If you miss a class, contact me or talk to a classmate upon your return to verify that you have the most up-to-date information.





**Grace Period Slip**

***(Please attach this piece of paper when you turn in your assignment)***

This sheet entitles me to one grace period of one class session. I realize that once this slip is used for the semester, I *do not* get another one!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment Description and due date:

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## Reading and Assignment Schedule for Philosophy 111- fall 2012

### Week 1- 8/28 and 8/30

- Introduction to the course, active reading strategies, writing responses, syllabus quiz, themes, course ground rules; centering exercises; in class dilemmas; an ethical current event

### Week 2- 9/4 and 9/6

- *Moral of the Story*- Chapter 1- thinking about values, narrative for ethical study, sources of values; Aesop and "Thumbcutter" narratives
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapter 1

### Week 3- 9/11 and 9/13

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapter 2- examples of narrative, seeing personal experience as ethical narrative, Plato and Aristotle intro readings; *Pulp Fiction* narrative
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapter 2

### Week 4- 9/18 and 9/20

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapter 3- ethical relativism, cultural differences, anthropological concerns, multiculturalism; Benedict reading; *Do the Right Thing* narrative
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapter 17
- **Response paper #1 due by end of the week**

### Week 5- 9/25 and 9/27

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapter 4- versions of egoism, altruism, *Lord of the Rings* narrative example, Katz reading
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapter 3

### Week 6- 10/2 and 10/4

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapter 5- introduction to utilitarian theories, Bentham, Mill, act and rule utilitarianism, Dostoyevsky reading, LeGuin reading; using matrices
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapter 5
- **Response paper #2 due by end of the week**

### Week 7- 10/9 and 10/11

- Take midterm exam parts I and II

### Week 8- 10/16 and 10/18

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapter 6- Kantian deontology, the categorical imperative, Kant excerpt readings, *High Noon* narrative
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapter 7

### Week 9- 10/23 and 10/25

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapter 7- Personhood, human rights, perspectives on justice, UN declaration of human rights, King reading, *Gattaca* narrative; Nussbaum handout
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapter 14
- **Ethical Will due by the end of the week**

### Week 10- 10/30 and 11/1

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapters 8 and 9- Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and introduction to virtue ethics; objections to virtue theory, changing or situational virtues, Nicomachean Ethics reading
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapter 8

**Week 11- 11/6 and 11/8**

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapters 10 and 11- more contemporary perspectives, existentialism, Nussbaum and human capacities
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapter 31
- **Response paper #3 due by end of the week**

**Week 13- 11/13 and 11/15**

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapter 13 (just war section and media ethics section)
- SR- just war packet- Intro to just war theories
- SR- examples of spin and media bias
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapters 21 and 24

**Week 14- 11/20 and 11/22**

- No class- Thanksgiving Break
- Work on response paper #4

**Week 15- 11/27 and 11/29**

- *Moral of the Story* - Chapter 13 (bioethics topics and animal rights topics)
- SR- bioethics mixed reading packet; just war theories continued; bioethical issues, animal rights and Singer's "speciesism"
- *The Right Thing to Do*- chapters 36, 38, 39
- **Response paper #4 due by end of the week**

**Week 16- 12/4 and 12/6**

- Share resource pages; wiki project presentations

**Week 17- 12/11 and 12/13**

- Take final exam
- **"Lifeboat" paper due by 12/15/2012**

**All research papers and any remaining pieces of work  
are due by 3pm on Friday, 12/14/2012.**