

PHILOSOPHICAL ETHICS

PHIL 3000-11, Fall 2012

Tuesday/Friday 10:00-11:15, Keating 208

Professor: Dr. Stephen Grimm

Office: Collins 133

Office Hours: Wed 12-3 p.m., and by appointment

Office Tel.: 718-817-3282

e-mail: sgrimm@fordham.edu

Course Description

In this course we will mainly focus on three questions of central importance to any human being. First, what sorts of things are good or valuable? Second, what is it that makes an action right? And third, what is the best sort of life to live (i.e., the most desirable or fulfilling sort of life)?

Readings will be drawn from classics in philosophy as well as from influential contemporary works.

Texts for the Course

Ethics: The Essential Writings. Ed. Gordon Marino. New York: Modern Library.

Additional readings will be available via Blackboard.

Requirements for the Course

Quizzes

Eight brief, multiple-choice quizzes will test your knowledge of the reading and class discussion. From among these eight quizzes, I will count your top *seven* grades. In other words, I will drop your lowest grade. If you miss class, or are late for the quiz, you will receive a zero for that assignment. Make-ups will not be available.

Questions for the quizzes will be taken from the reading for that day, as well as from the material covered since the previous quiz (with the exception of the first quiz, of course; that will be based on everything since the first day). By “the material covered,” I mean all of the relevant reading assignments, as well as any material covered in class discussion during the relevant period.

NB: As you can see below, taken together the quizzes count for 35% of your grade—in other words, a large portion! Take the quizzes seriously from the outset, then, by doing the reading carefully and taking good notes in class.

Exams

There will be a midterm on **October 12th** and a final (tentatively) on **December 14th**. The exams will be essay-based, and additional information about the essays will be provided in advance. Unless evidence of a serious emergency (death in the family, etc.) or medical crisis is provided, make-up exams will not be available.

Participation

Participation will count for 5% of your grade, and grades will range from 5 (highest) to 0 (lowest). This is the easiest place to do well in the class, so I encourage you to participate regularly. Asking questions, raising objections, expressing puzzlement, etc. are all good forms of participation.

Classroom Courtesy

Cellphones should be turned off for the duration of the class, and texting during class is not permitted. If you cannot wait until the end of class to send or receive a text, you should not be in class. Because they tend to be used for non-class related purposes, laptops will also not be allowed in class. If you have a special reason to use a laptop please see me and I will try to accommodate you.

Also, make it a point to be on time for class: walking into class late is disruptive both to the instructor and to your fellow classmates.

Academic Misconduct

You will be strictly held to the Fordham University code of conduct. At a minimum, you will receive an “F” on any work that involves academic misconduct, and you may very well fail the course, depending on the circumstances.

Grading

Quizzes=35% (5% each)

Midterm=25%

Final=35%

Participation=5%

Note: All of your grades for the semester will be posted on Blackboard as the course progresses.

Tentative Schedule of Readings

August

31 Welcome and overview

September

4 Mary Midgley, "Trying Out One's New Sword" [Marino book]

7 Plato, *Crito*; *Republic* Book II

- **Quiz #1**

11 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1 (except ch. 6)

14 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2

- **Quiz #2**

18 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 3 (chs. 6-12) and Book 4 [Blackboard]

- **Group virtue assignments**

21 Epictetus, "Enchiridion"

25 Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIX; David Foster Wallace, "Kenyon Address" [Blackboard]

- **Quiz #3**

28 Kierkegaard "The Sickness Unto Death"; Coles, "Character and Intellect"

October

2 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*

- **Quiz #4**

5 **No class:** SRG at conference

9 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Q. 94

12 **MIDTERM EXAM**

16 Kant, *Groundwork*, Preface and Section I

19 Kant, *Groundwork*, Section II (through bottom of p. 219)

- **Quiz #5**

23 Kant, *Groundwork*, Section II (to end of section); supplement on Blackboard

26 Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*

30 Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch. 2

- **Quiz #6**

November

2 **No class:** SRG at Conference

6 **No class:** Election Day

9 Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch. 2 (re-read)

13 Singer, “Rich and Poor”

16 Noddings, “Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics”

20 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (selections)

- **Quiz #7**

23 **No class:** Thanksgiving

27 Leopold, “The Land Ethic”

30 Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”

- **Quiz #8**

December

4 Class choice

7 Last class

FINAL EXAM (tentative): Friday, December 14th, 9:30 a.m.