

## **PHIL-0300: Introduction to Ethics.**

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Spring 2017

John Lawless, CL 1009A

Office Hours: T 4:00-5:00, Th 1:00-2:00

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**Course summary.** In this course, we will explore three things that might contribute to a good life: happiness, virtue, and justice. We will draw on historical and contemporary sources to think about what each is, about what it takes to be happy, to be virtuous, or to be just. And we will explore the ways in which happiness, virtue, and justice support one another, and the ways in which they stand in tension. Must we be virtuous or just to be happy? If not – if happiness can come apart from virtue or justice – which ought we pursue?

- Lecture will meet Tu/Th 3:00-3:50 in CL 324.
- Recitations will meet:
  - M 12:00-12:50 in CL 236 (Garadja),
  - M 1:00-1:50 in CL 339 (Garadja),
  - M 3:00-3:50 in WWPH5404 (Garadja),
  - W 9:00-9:50 in CL 204 (Purdy),
  - W 10:00-10:50 in CL 204 (Purdy),
  - W 12:00-12:50 in CL 135 (Purdy).
- Writing recitations will meet:
  - Tu/Th 10:00-10:50 in CL 113 (Driver)
  - Tu/Th 12:00-12:50 in PUBHLOA 552 (Driver)

**Course goals.** In this course, we will work to cultivate students' capacities to read philosophical articles; to think critically about justice, virtue and happiness; to communicate their thoughts on these matters to others both in conversation and writing; and to engage with others' moral views – even when they apparently diverge from one's own.

*Two short papers* (each worth 20% of the final grade). We will evaluate your papers by attention to three criteria: first, your abilities to present particular philosophical views clearly; second, your comprehension of these philosophical views; and third, your abilities to respond creatively to these philosophical views. These skills build on one another. A strong capacity for moral thinking is nothing without a capacity to communicate one's thoughts to others. As such, a well-written, well-structured paper is a prerequisite for a grade of B- or higher. Good philosophy will boost your grade beyond that.

*Mid-term and final exam* (20% and 25%, respectively). These exams will consist in a set of short answer and short essay prompts testing your comprehension of the philosophical views we have discussed in class. If you cannot attend either exam on the dates scheduled, it is your responsibility to reschedule it.

*Participation* (15% of your final grade). We take this component of your grade quite seriously. Good philosophy involves the practice of a set of skills that we cultivate best in conversation with others. As a result, your success in this course will depend on your active engagement with the material during your recitation sections. You will need to be prepared to contribute each day,

and to help make the environment conducive to everyone's participation – one that is open, respectful, and positive.

*Attendance.* We expect students' regular attendance, both in lectures and in recitations. We will allow each student one free absence from her or his recitation section per semester. Beyond that, you must speak to your recitation leader about any absence, preferably beforehand. For each unexcused absence, you will be docked 1 point off of your final grade. For each failure to speak with your recitation leader, you will lose an *extra* point off of your final grade.

*Late work.* Papers are due at midnight on the relevant dates. Unexcused late work will drop one full letter grade for each day past the due date, beginning at 12:01 am. Recitation leaders may waive these penalties at their discretion, but their decisions on these matters will be final.

**Required texts.** All students should have a copy of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day*. All other assigned readings will be posted on CourseWeb.

Notice that the following reading schedule is tentative. It is subject to change, for instance, if we discover that we need more time to cover particular materials.

**Your rights.** All students have the right to an environment that is conducive to success. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services \(DRS\)](#), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, [drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu), (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

**Your responsibilities.** Academic integrity is essential to all of your work at the University of Pittsburgh. You must do your utmost to ensure that you submit only your own work, that you do nothing to compromise other students' integrity, and that you do not threaten others' opportunities for success. For more information, please visit <http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity>.

## Tentative Schedule

- Jan 5* Introduction to the course  
*Jan 10* Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

### Unit 1. Duty and Fulfillment

- Jan 12* Plato, *Republic* (Book 1)  
*Jan 17* Joel Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism"  
*Jan 19* Epicurus (selections)  
*Jan 24* Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (selection)  
*Jan 26* Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (selections)  
*Jan 31* Foot, "Virtues and Vices"  
★ *First paper assigned*  
*Feb 2* Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"  
Leguin, "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas"  
*Feb 7* Wolf, *Meaning in Life* (I)  
*Feb 9* Wolf, *Meaning in Life* (II)  
Srinivasan, "Stop the Robot Apocalypse"

### Unit 2. Respect and Self-Respect

- Feb 14* Feinberg, "The Nature and Value of Rights"  
★ *First paper due.*  
*Feb 16* Feinberg (continued)  
*Feb 21* ★ *Midterm.*  
*Feb 23* Frye, "Sexism"  
*Feb 28* Frye, "A Note on Anger"  
*Mar 2* Srinivasan, "The Aptness of Anger"  
★ *Second paper assigned.*  
*Mar 5* *Spring Break*  
*Mar 14* Hill, "Servility and Self-Respect"  
King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"  
*Mar 16* Murphy, "Forgiveness and Resentment"  
*Mar 21* Hampton, "Forgiveness, Resentment, and Hatred"  
★ *Second paper due.*

### Unit 3. Love and Friendship

- Mar 23* Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (selections)  
*Mar 28* Aristotle (continued)  
*Mar 30* Shildrick, *Leaky Bodies and Boundaries* (selection)  
*Apr 4* Frye, "In and Out of Harm's Way" (selections)  
*Apr 6* Friedman, "Romantic Love and Personal Autonomy"  
*Apr 11* Friedman (continued)  
*Apr 13* Wolf, "Moral Saints"  
*Apr 18* *Conclusion.*