

Phil 206 - Ethics (3 credits)

Asynchronous/Online

Instructor: Thomas Morrison

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Office: South College E314

Zoom Office Hours: By appointment only (**email** me to set up additional time). I typically set aside Wednesdays 11:00 - 12:00 pm (but must email me if you want to attend).

Course Overview

Course Description: This course introduces students to foundational and contemporary texts in moral philosophy. Besides providing familiarity with the primary questions addressed within moral philosophy and the most influential answers given by well-known philosophers, this course is designed to help students develop their abilities to read, explicate, analyze, and evaluate philosophical literature, write and express themselves well about their own ethical positions, and think critically and analytically about ethical issues.

Required Text: Gordon Marino ed., *Ethics: The Essential Writings*. New York: Modern Library. 2010. *All readings are available on Blackboard*. If you get alternative copies, make sure they are the **same editions** as those available on Blackboard.

Course Objectives: The student learning objectives of this course are the following. The first is to introduce students to problems and important works in moral philosophy. The second is to develop the philosophical skills and the intellectual and interpersonal tools necessary in approaching ethical debates.

Assignments/Grades

Weekly Quizzes	30%
Response Papers (6)	30% (3.75% each; <u>8</u> total)
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

Weekly Quizzes: **Each week you must complete a short reading quiz** (multiple choice questions). These are not meant to be challenging; they are meant to check that you are reading and keeping up with the class. The **weekly quiz must be finished and submitted on Canvas by Sunday 11:59pm**.

Response Papers: **You must write eight (8) reading response papers** (one page, single or double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman). You must write **4 prior to the midterm** and **4 prior to the final exam**. **You can only write 1 per week**, and the response **must be on the reading for that week**. (For further instructions, watch the Reading Response Instructions video on blackboard). It is your choice on which weeks you write a response paper.

In a **response paper**, you must respond to the reading for that week; that means that it ***must be tied to that reading*** (and not just loosely connected or “some thoughts” related to ethics generally). To do this, try to include paraphrases or short quotes of the text to show what parts you are responding to. A response can include things like questions about parts of the text, your thoughts on whether an argument is good or bad and (importantly) why, raising interesting new examples, etc. If you raise questions, say why you think the question is important and why it should matter to the author’s argument.

Midterm/Final Exams: Two times during the semester we will be taking **Exams on Canvas**. **These Exams will be short essay questions** covering specific terms, topics, and readings that we have discussed in class. The Midterm will cover the first half of the course and the Final Exam will cover the second half (not cumulative). Students will have **until Sunday 11:59 pm of the exam week** to take and submit their Midterm and Final on Canvas.

Late Work Policy: For unexcused late work, you **lose 5% per day** of the total grade for an assignment that is late. **I will not accept late quizzes after two weeks. I will not accept a late Midterm after one week. I cannot accept a late Final Exam after the due date for grades.** Please email me if you think you have a warranted excuse for late work.

Additional Information

Communication: If you need to contact me outside of office hours, you can reach me by email. You must use your UMass email when emailing me. During the week, I will respond to emails within 24 hours and try to reply to emails sent during business hours the same day. If you send me an email outside of business hours, do not expect a same-day response.

Accommodation: If you find the course in any way inaccessible, please let me know. If you need academic accommodation, please contact [Disability Services](#). The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism (including the use of AI). UMass has a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. If you have any questions, look [here](#) or ask me. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent

Title IX Policy: In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that prohibits gender-based discrimination in educational settings that receive federal funds, the University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students, free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation. This includes interactions in person or online through digital platforms and social media. Title IX also protects against discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, or related conditions, including recovery. There are resources here on campus to support you. A summary of the available Title IX resources (confidential and non-confidential) can be found at the following link: <https://www.umass.edu/titleix/resources>. You do not need to make a formal report to access them. If you need immediate support, you are not alone. Free and confidential support is available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week / 365 days a year at the SASA Hotline 413-545-0800.

***Note: The syllabus/schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**

Readings and Assignments Schedule

Week	Day	Readings	Pages	Due Dates
1	8/18	Aristotle <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	(marino) 43-65	
2	8/25	Aristotle <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	(Marino) 66-84	
3	9/2	Epictetus <i>The Enchiridion</i>	(Marino) 85-106	
4	9/8	Immanuel Kant <i>Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>	(Marino) 188-204	
5	9/15	Kant <i>Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>	(Marino) 204-224	
6	9/22	John Stuart Mill <i>Utilitarianism</i>	(Marino) 225-255	
7	9/29	Nel Noddings <i>Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education</i>	(Marino) 425-445	

8	10/6	Midterm Exam	Reading Responses # 1-4 must be completed	Due 10/10 11:59 pm
9	10/13	Mary Midgley <i>Trying Out One's New Sword</i>	(Marino) 321-327	
		JP Sartre <i>Existentialism and Human Emotion</i>	(Marino) 328-332	
10	10/20	Peter Singer <i>Rich and Poor</i>	(Marino) 506-529	
11	10/27	Susan Wolf <i>Moral Saints</i>	(Marino) 462-485	
12	11/3	Judith Jarvis Thomson <i>A Defense of Abortion</i>	(Marino) 567-588	
13	11/10	Aldo Leopold <i>A Sand County Almanac: The Land Ethic</i>	(Marino) 486-505	
14	11/17	Tom Regan <i>The Case for Animal Rights</i>	(Marino) 530-544	
15	11/24	Thanksgiving Break (No Class)		
16	12/1	Michael Walzer <i>Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands</i>	(Marino) 545-566	
17	12/8	Final Exam	Reading Responses #5-8 must be completed	Due Fri 12/12 11:59 pm