

(HONORS) INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Text

J. Arthur and S. Scalet (eds.), *Morality and Moral Controversies*, Ninth Edition (Prentice-Hall, pb).

The course handouts and other postings will be on Sakai.

Office hours and contact information

T 3:00 – 5:00, or by appointment; Caldwell 215B. E-mail: ujanel@email.unc.edu. Web site: www.unc.edu/~ujanel. (The web site is a couple of years out of date because it is no longer supported by UNC.)

Course objectives

This course is an introduction to the elements of moral reasoning and deliberation. What sorts of factors should I consider in making a moral decision?

We will examine some of the classic theories of moral right and wrong, such as Bentham and Mill's Utilitarianism and Kant's Categorical Imperative. Then we shall investigate a number of controversial moral issues, applying the classic theories and also seeing what they overlook. The special topics will be chosen by you the students collectively, but may well include abortion, capital punishment, or gender equality.

Written work

One very short exercise, ungraded; two short papers (1000-1250 words each), with a rewrite opportunity on the first (40% and 45% respectively). There will be some choice of topic.

Class participation, 15%. This is important; see "Course Policies."

By law, there will be a final examination; its weight is negligible, but attendance is required.

Syllabus

January 12, 14: Introductory matters. A look at a sample moral issue: euthanasia. *Reading:* Dyck, “An Alternative to the Ethic of Euthanasia” (pp. 310-14); Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (pp. 314-18); Court opinion in *Gonzales v. Oregon* (pp. 306-09); Court opinion in *JFK Memorial Hospital v. Heston* (pp. 319-24); Godwin, “Comparing Human Lives: The Archbishop and the Chambermaid” (pp. 309-10); Callahan, “Aging and the Ends of Medicine” (pp. 324-31); Harris, “The Survival Lottery” (pp. 331-36).

January 19, 21: The Utilitarian theory of ethics. *Reading:* Mill, “Utilitarianism” (pp. 90-97). **Exercise due, Thursday the 21st, in class.**

January 26, 28: Utilitarianism, continued. *Reading:* Brandt, “The Real and Alleged Problems of Utilitarianism” (pp. 108-14).

February 2, 4: Kant’s moral theory. *Reading:* Kant, “The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals” (pp. 81-90).

February 9, 11: Kant, continued; respect for persons. *Reading:* O’Neill, “Kant and Utilitarianism Contrasted” (pp. 103-07).

February 16, 18: Vs. rules. *Reading:* Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics” (pp. 74-80); Held, “The Ethics of Care as Moral Theory” (pp. 115-20). **Paper #1 due, Tuesday the 16th, in class.**

February 23, 25: Abortion. *Reading:* Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion” (pp. 268-75); Warren, “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion” (pp. 276-82).

March 1, 3: Abortion, continued. *Reading:* English, “Abortion and the Concept of a Person” (pp. 282-88); Marquis, “An Argument that Abortion is Wrong” (pp. 289-97); Harris, “Fathers and Fetuses” (pp. 298-304). **Rewrite of Paper #1 due, Tuesday the 1st, in class.**

March 8, 10: Genetic engineering. *Reading:* President’s Council on Bioethics, “The Ethics of Cloning-to-Produce-Children” (pp. 248-63).

Spring Break (wine, significant others, and song).

March 22, 24: Moral conceptions of sex. *Reading:* Kant, “Duties toward the Body in Respect to Sexual Impulse” (distributed); Goldman, “Plain Sex” (distributed); Wasserstrom, “Is Adultery Immoral?” (pp. 339-46).

March 29, 31: Sex, continued: Homosexuality; date rape. *Reading:* Finnis, “What’s Wrong with Homosexuality?” (distributed); Mohr, “Gay Basics: Some Questions, Facts, and Values” (distributed); Pineau, “Date Rape: A Feminist Analysis” (distributed); Paglia, “An Interview About Date Rape” (distributed). **Paper #2 due, Tuesday the 29th, in class.**

April 5, 7: Racism and sexism; Affirmative Action. *Reading:* Wasserstrom, “On Racism and Sexism: Realities and Ideals” (pp. 596-602); Young, “Social Movements and the Politics of Difference” (pp. 602-08); Rachels, “Reverse Discrimination” (pp. 633-36).

April 12, 14: Gender equality. *Reading:* Mill and Taylor, “The Subjection of Women” (pp. 585-91); Kymlicka, “Sexual Equality and Discrimination: Difference vs. Dominance” (pp. 592-96); Radcliffe Richards, “Freedom, Conditioning, and the Real Woman” (pp. 608-18).

April 19, 21: Liberty, drug use, and free speech. *Reading:* Szasz, “The Ethics of Addiction” (pp. 525-32); Goodin, “The Ethics of Smoking” (pp. 533-42); Shapiro, “Addiction and Drug Policy” (pp. 543-48); Mill, “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion” (pp. 549-51); Williams, “Feminist Theory and Freedom of Speech” (pp. 552-60).

April 26: Catch up, general discussion.

Final exam, Tuesday, May 3, noon.

Honor code

Chancellor Folt has asked faculty to include the following statement in all course syllabi.

Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable, because any breach in academic integrity, however small, strikes destructively at the University’s life and work.

The Honor Code and the Campus Code, embodying the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship, have for over 100 years governed the performance of all academic work and student conduct at the University. Acceptance by a student of enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in these codes and a respect for this most significant University tradition.

Your participation in this course comes with my expectation that your work will be completed in full observance of the Honor Code.

If you have any questions about your responsibility or my responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code and as the instructor in this course, please bring them to me, or consult with someone in either the office of the Student Attorney General or the Office of the Dean of Students.

I endorse this statement emphatically. Thank you.