

**INSTRUCTOR:**

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**GOALS:** By the end of the quarter students will be able to: (1) distinguish normative and non-normative approaches to ethics; (2) identify teleological and deontological ethical theories; (3) demonstrate advanced knowledge of Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, and perfectionism; (4) demonstrate basic knowledge of metaethical theories, including relativism, subjectivism, objectivism, absolutism, nihilism, and skepticism; (5) use philosophical methods of analysis and argument; (6) demonstrate awareness of social, cultural and historical assumptions in ethical reasoning; (7) appeal to ethical theories and principles to justify alternative viewpoints; (8) serve as peer reviewers for colleagues (graduate students); (9) prepare a research paper (graduate students).

**MEETINGS:** In-class meetings are Tuesday & Thursday 2:30-4:20 in GNOM-SO60. This class combines in-person & online learning. Refer to the daily schedule (below) for more information.

**DESCRIPTION:** This course introduces you to some of the most influential ethical theories to date and, with a critical eye, studies the source and ground of their influence. Readings will be from historically prominent Western philosophers, such as Bentham, Mill, Nietzsche, and Kant, as well as from contemporary scholars. Cross-cultural perspectives are incorporated throughout, with a focus on sub-Saharan African, East Asian and feminist perspectives.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**Undergraduate Students:** Undergraduates are required to take 2 in-class examinations, participate in 4 in-class group assignments, and complete 10 philosophical reflections.

- In-Class Group Projects (25 points each, 100 total points, 25% of course grade)
- Online Philosophical Reflections (10 points each, 100 total points, 25% of course grade)
- Examinations (100 points each, 200 total points, 50% of course grade)

**Graduate Students:** Graduate students are required to complete the same assignments as undergraduate and in addition to complete a research paper. Grades for graduate students are based on:

- In-Class Group Project: (25 points each, 100 total points, 20% of course grade)
- Online Philosophical Reflections: (10 points each, 100 total points, 20% of course grade)
- Examinations: (100 points each, 200 total points, 40% of course grade)
- *Graduate Student Research Paper (100 points total, 20% of course grade)*

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignment submissions are online only at the Canvas Course Website.

**Philosophical Reflections** are 250-500 word assignments that engage you in formulating your own philosophical stance in response to a query posed by the instructor. Full credit for on-time postings that show reasonable quality & effort; no credit for unsatisfactory or late work

**Group Projects** are in-class assignments that facilitate working with classmates in small groups to debate a contemporary ethical problem using a case study. Groups discuss issues, develop arguments, prepare slides, & present material to classmates.

**Exams** test mastery of online and in-class lectures using a combination of multiple choice and essay. Review sheets will be available online to assist with exam preparation and the class prior to the exam will be devoted to review.

**Graduate Student Papers** are 8-10-page research papers dealing in more depth with a topic discussed in class. Prior to submitting the final paper, students must submit a proposal to the instructor for approval and a draft paper to colleagues for structured online and in-class peer review.

**Extra Credit** in the form of unannounced, 1-minute papers may be assigned during class. 1 point/ paper will be added to scores at the end of the quarter. For example, if your course grade is 78/100 and you earn 2 extra credit points, your grade will be raised to 80/100.

### **POLICIES:**

*UW, Student Academic Responsibility Policy*

*BH Department, Academic Conduct Policy (includes disability accommodation)*

*BH Department, Grading Policy*

*Instructor, Late Assignment Policy*

*Instructor, Vericite Policy*

*Instructor, Missed Class Policy*

**READINGS:** All required readings are available free of charge online at the Canvas Page, E-Readings.

**EQUIPMENT:** On exam days, a laptop is mandatory. If you do not own a laptop, borrow one free of charge from the UW Student Technology Fee (STF) Loan Program. Additional information at: <http://www.cte.uw.edu/STFEquipment>

### **DAILY SCHEDULE:**

#### **I. Metaethics**

##### **A. Introduction**

September 26 Introduction

##### **B. Ethical Relativism**

October 1 Benedict, "A Defense of Ethical Relativism"  
Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" (pp. 1-5, Sections 2.1-2.3)  
PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 1 DUE

October 3 No In-Class Meeting  
Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" (pp. 5-12, Sections 2.4-2.7)  
Williams, "Vulgar Relativism"  
Midgley, "Trying Out One's Sword"

October 8 Streaming Media: Countering Myths about FGM/C (14 min)  
WHO, "Female Genital Mutilation: Key Facts"  
*Recommended:* Duivenbode, "Female Genital Cutting and the Cultural Boundaries of Medical Practice"  
GROUP ASSIGNMENT #1: The Practice of FGM/C in the U.S. (in-class)  
PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 2 DUE  
PAPER PROPOSALS DUE (Graduate Students Only)

## **II. Normative Ethics**

### **A. Teleological Theories**

#### **1. Utilitarianism**

- October 10 Bentham, "The Principle of Utility"  
*Recommended:* Streaming Media: "Wireless Philosophy: Consequentialism"
- October 15 Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapters I-IV (pp. 1-61)  
*Recommended:* Darwall, "Utilitarianism"  
PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 3 DUE
- October 17 No In-Class Meeting  
Online Lecture: Critiques of Utilitarianism  
Nielsen, "Against Moral Conservatism"  
Mackie, "The Ethics of Fantasy"  
DRAFT PAPERS DUE (Graduate Students Only)
- October 22 Ross, Prisoners as Living Donors: A Vulnerabilities Analysis  
*Recommended:* Barry, "Cultural Taboos Surrounding Organ Donation"  
ONLINE PEER REVIEW OF PAPERS DUE (Graduate Students Only)  
GROUP ASSIGNMENT #2: The Organ Donor (in-class)  
PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 4 DUE

#### **2. Perfectionism**

- October 24 No In-Class Meeting for Undergraduates  
IN-CLASS PEER REVIEW (Graduate Students Only)  
Online Lecture: Nietzsche's *Übermensch*  
Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 406-408  
Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, pp. 409  
Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*  
Nietzsche, *Homer's Contest*  
Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*
- October 29 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 382-399  
Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, pp. 399-405  
PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 5 DUE
- October 31 Nagel, *Equality and Partiality*, chapters 12-13 (pp. 87-102)  
*Recommended:* Parfit, "Overpopulation and the Quality of Life"  
EXAMINATION 1 REVIEW SHEET AVAILABLE ONLINE
- November 5 Exam 1 Review Session (in-class)  
PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 6 DUE
- November 7 No In-Class Meeting  
ONLINE EXAMINATION 1 AVAILABLE (12:01 AM)  
ONLINE EXAMINATION 1 DUE (11:59 PM)

### **B. Deontological Theories**

#### **1. Kantian Ethics**

- November 12 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface  
O'Kelly, "The Impact of Culture & Religion on Truth Telling at the End of Life"  
GROUP ASSIGNMENT #3: Asian & Muslim Approaches to Truth Telling (in-class)  
PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 7 DUE

- November 14 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ch 1-selection ch 2 (pp. 5-26)  
*Recommended:* Behrens, "A Critique of the Principle of Autonomy Grounded in African Thought"
- November 19 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, selection ch. 2 (pp. 26-40)  
 Feldman, "On Treating People as Ends-In-Themselves"  
 PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 8 DUE
- November 21 Holmes, "Kantianism"  
 Taylor, "Compassion"  
 Held, "Feminist Ethical Theory"  
*Recommended:* Wong, "Ren and Li as Relational Values"
- 2. Ross's Ethics**
- November 26 No In-Class Meeting  
 Online Lecture: Ross's Theory of *Prima Facie* Duties  
 Ross, "What Makes Acts Right?"  
 EXAMINATION 2 REVIEW SHEET AVAILABLE ONLINE  
 PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 9 DUE
- November 28 No In-Class Meeting  
 Thanksgiving (UW Closed)
- December 3 Shue, "Torture"  
 Amnesty International, *No End in Sight: Torture & Forced Confessions in China*  
 GROUP ASSIGNMENT #4: Waterboarding (in-class)  
 PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION 10 DUE  
 EXAM 2 REVIEW SESSION (Online)
- December 5 No In-Class Meeting  
 ONLINE EXAMINATION 2 AVAILABLE (12:01 AM)  
 ONLINE EXAMINATION 2 DUE (11:59 PM)
- December 6 GRADUATE STUDENT PAPERS DUE