

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

PHIL 105
Fall 2012
116 Roger Adams Laboratory
MW 2:00-2:50

Lecturer: Brian Rabern

Office: Gregory Hall 200A

Office hours: T 10:00-11:00am and by appointment

Email: rabern@illinois.edu

Course website: <https://sites.google.com/site/phil105ethics>

TAs: M. Uhall & I. Harmon

COURSE DESCRIPTION. This course is an introduction to ethics. Questions about how we ought to live and how we ought to treat one another are difficult, important, and unavoidable. Our goal in this course is to think critically about these questions and to explore some of the ways philosophers have approached them. We will investigate the relationship between religion and morality, the relationship between evolution and morality, and the prospects for moral relativism and nihilism. We will, then, consider some historically influential attempts to formulate systematic ethical theories. These are theories that attempt to answer the question “What is good?”. And finally, we will turn to a controversial ethical issue: the moral status of non-human animals. We will consider both the arguments for vegetarianism and the arguments for the permissibility of eating meat—we will assess these arguments in light of the positions and distinctions from the earlier sections of the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS: *Being Good: A short introduction to ethics*, Simon Blackburn [Oxford University Press, 2001]

Supplementary readings: All additional readings will be available online or on e-reserve.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS.¹

¹The detailed schedule is on the course website and is subject to revision. Revisions will be announced on the website. It is each student's responsibility to keep informed about these updates and revisions.

Online participation: You should visit the [course website](#) regularly. This is where I will post course updates, the lecture slides, handouts, and various links to material related to the course. The course schedule is subject to revision. Revisions will be announced in the announcements page on the website.

COURSE GRADE.

- Paper 1: 20%
- Paper 2: 20%
- Paper 3: 20%
- Homeworks: 5% each
- Participation: 10%

Attendance: Students are expected to attend every lecture and discussion section. Participation does constitute part of the course grade, and participation requires attendance. It is unlikely that one will do well in this course without attending lecture regularly. There will be material covered in lecture that you will not find in the readings or class notes.

Cheating: Students are responsible for knowing the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty. See the sections of the university's "Student Code" that define infractions of academic integrity and list the possible, associated penalties:

http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part4_1-401.html