

Date prepared: 5/31/16

University of New Orleans  
Dept. of Philosophy

## PHIL 2201: Ethics (3 credits)

### SECTION 476

#### Contact Information

**Instructor:** Dr. Robert Stufflebeam  
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**Office Hours:** M-T-W-Th, 10:00 – 12:00 (and by appointment)  
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#### Required Text

[1] C. Sommers & F Sommers (2013): *Vice & Virtue in Everyday Life: Introductory Readings in Ethics*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. ISBN 0534605346. [T]

#### Course Description

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** A study of concepts of right and wrong good and evil and their grounds.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** How are we supposed to tell which actions are “right” (moral or permissible) and which actions are “wrong” (immoral or impermissible)? Through the identification, construction, and evaluation of different moral theories, *ethics* is the subfield of philosophy devoted to answering that question. This course is a survey of the major approaches found in ethics, including:

- divine command theory
- utilitarianism
- duty-based ethics (e.g., Kant)
- virtue-based ethics
- ethical relativism
- ethical egoism
- character-based ethics

To explore these approaches, we are not going to limit ourselves to discussions of ethical texts alone, for ethics can be explored through movies too. Hence, we shall watch 3 movies in class. The movie will make the “abstract” concepts raised in the text more “real” or “concrete.” Following the movie we shall critically evaluate what we have read and seen. In the end, the aim of this course is not to determine what ethical theory is “best.” Rather, the aim is survey several major moral theories critically, and for you to learn a fair amount about ethics and doing philosophy while having a bit of fun in the process.

#### Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- recognize philosophical questions and problems
- distinguish the various subfields of philosophy and the sorts of questions dealt with by philosophers in those areas
- read primary and secondary philosophical texts and reconstruct the arguments contained in them sympathetically
- recognize ethical/moral issues
- explain the nature of a moral principle and its role in a moral theory
- explain the difference between moral objectivism and moral nonobjectivism and identify examples of each
- explain the difference between consequentialist and nonconsequentialist theories
- explain divine command theory
- explain utilitarianism
- explain Kant’s deontological theory
- explain the difference between moral relativism and cultural relativism
- explain the difference between moral egoism and psychological egoism



- explain the nature of virtue and character-based theories of morality
- identify the problems associated with each moral theory explored in this course
- formulate objections and express them fairly and sympathetically
- construct your own written arguments with respect to the philosophical issues raised in this course
- respond to criticism fairly and sympathetically

Course Requirements

Grades will be based on a cumulative 100 point scale distributed as follows:

Requirement		Final grade	
<b>Acknowledgement statement</b>	(1%) 1 point	<b>A</b>	100 – 89.5 points
<b>One minute arguments</b>	(24%) 24 points	<b>B</b>	89.4 – 79.5 points
<b>Exam 1</b>	(25%) 25 points	<b>C</b>	79.4 – 69.5 points
<b>Exam 2</b>	(25%) 25 points	<b>D</b>	69.4 – 59.5 points
<b>Exam 3</b>	(25%) 25 points	<b>F</b>	59.4 — 0 points

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT:** Each student must acknowledge knowing that each exam must be submitted by 11:55 p.m. CST on the days identified on the Game Plan. Each student must also acknowledge having read UNO's Academic Dishonesty Policy and pledge to abide by it in this course. Completing the acknowledgment statement on Moodle is worth **1%** of your final grade.

**ONE-MINUTE ARGUMENTS:** Our only means of interacting as a class is through the discussion forums on Moodle. Since interacting with each other and me is important, after almost every lecture there is a discussion question to which you need to post a response. Each student is required to post a response within a few DAYS of when the lecture should be completed. (For each week of the semester, the Game Plan tells you what you need to READ, which lecture to COMPLETE, and to which one minute argument question you need to POST your response.) If you post your response a week after a lecture should have been completed, your response will be late. Consider your responses to be "one-minute arguments." What that means is you will need to make a claim, give some evidence in support of that claim, and it should take me about 1 minute to read it. Hence, you need to write a paragraph as a discussion response, not a single sentence. After posting your discussion response, you may then post a response to someone else's ... continuing the discussion. Your one-minute argument grade will be based on the quality, timeliness, and thoughtfulness of your replies. Overall, they are worth **24%** of your final grade.

**EXAMS:** There will be **3** exams, each covering about 1/3 of the course material. Each exam will be completed online. **You MAY use your text and notes but you may NOT collaborate.** The **Game Plan** tells you when each exam must be completed. **You will have exactly 1 attempt to complete an exam**, so load an exam only if you are prepared to finish it. **Each exam must be completed within 90 minutes.** Regardless of when you begin an exam, **each exam must be submitted by 11:55 p.m. CST on the day of the exam.** Hence, if you load an exam after 10:25 p.m., you will have less than 90 minutes to submit it. After 11:56 p.m., it will impossible to submit your exam for a grade. Each exam will be composed of various short answer (T/F and MC) and short essay questions taken from the study questions for that exam (see Moodle). The exams are worth **75%** of your final grade.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** On each exam there is an extra credit question worth 10% of the exam.

## Course Policies

What follows are my class policies. If for any reason you are unable to abide by these policies, you should withdraw from my course.

- ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Academic honesty is fundamental to the process of learning and to evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, disseminating any part of an exam, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available on Moodle and online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>. Each student is required to pledge that all completed work will be submitting according to the principles of academic integrity as defined in the statement on Academic Dishonesty in the UNO Student Code of Conduct
- CONDUCT:** Feel free to say anything to me or to your peers, but tailor your remarks so as not to be uncivil, abusive, or inappropriate. I will not tolerate ANY abusive behavior in the one minute argument discussions, so do not engage in any personal attacks or name calling. (See my 'warning' below.)
- DISABILITIES:** It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.
- INCOMPLETES:** Incompletes are STRONGLY discouraged. Should you need to take an incomplete, arrangements must be made with me well BEFORE Exam 3.
- LATE WORK:** A one minute argument response will be penalized a letter grade for each week it is late. Hence, if you post a reply to a question 5 weeks late, you the highest you could receive is a 50. Waiting until the end of the semester to post your replies is utterly self-defeating.
- MAKE-UPS:** All exams will be available the first day of class. Each exam will disappear at **11:55 p.m.** the night it must be submitted. Each student must acknowledge understanding when each exam must be completed. Consequently, no make-up exam will be given to any student who did not attempt an exam before it disappears.
- MEDIA:** The game plan tells you what movie to watch for which lecture. Since the lecture will tell you how you are to apply what we are studying while you watch the media, COMPLETE the lecture before watching the media, then POST your reply to the one minute argument question for that lecture. If you have already seen the media, you need to watch it again.
- PARTICIPATION:** Since this is an internet course, your participation will be limited to the one minute arguments. Your responses should be posted each week, NOT weeks later. You need to have read the material and completed the lecture prior to posting your discussion response.

**PROCTORING:** To ensure academic integrity, all students enrolled in distance learning courses at the University of New Orleans may be required to participate in additional student identification procedures. At the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course, these measures may include on-campus proctored examinations, off-site or online proctored examinations, or other reasonable measures to ensure student identity. Authentication measures for this course may include Proctor U and any fees associated are the responsibility of the student. University of New Orleans partners with Proctor U, a live, online proctoring service that allows students to complete exams from any location using a computer, webcam, and reliable internet connection.

**WITHDRAWALS:** You may withdraw from this course for any reason. Withdrawal is strictly up to you and none of my business. Look in the course listings for the last day to withdraw without a penalty — a 'W' appearing on your transcript.

***WARNING!*** *Ethics is part of philosophy. Doing philosophy requires a willingness to think critically. Critical thinking does not consist in merely making claims. Rather, it requires offering reasons/evidence in support of your claims. It also requires your willingness to entertain criticism from others who do not share your assumptions. You will be required to do philosophy in this class. Doing philosophy can be hazardous to your cherished beliefs. Consequently, if you are unwilling to participate, to subject your views to critical analysis, or to explore issues that cannot be resolved empirically, then my course is not for you.*

## PHIL 2201 Game Plan

(Subject to slight revision.)

WEEK	TOPIC	READ (9 <sup>th</sup> ed.)	LECTURE	POST 1 MIN. ARG.
(1) 05/31 – 06/03	<b>A. What is philosophy?</b>		1	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome/Syllabus</li> <li>subfields</li> <li>fundamental questions</li> </ul>		2	2
	<b>B. Good and evil</b>	T: 1-3 (overview) T: 4-14	3	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hallie</li> <li>Edwards</li> <li>Bennett</li> </ul>	T: 340-342 T: 15-25	4	4
(2) 06/06 – 06/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hallie</li> <li>Milgram</li> </ul>	T: 25-33 T: 46-56	5 6	5 6
	<b>C. Divine command theory</b>	T: 190-192 (overview)	7	7
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Judeo-Christian tradition</li> <li>Mortimer</li> <li>Arthur</li> </ul>	T: 192-200 T: 205-208 T: 208-215	8	8
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nietzsche</li> </ul>	T: 68-75	9	9
(3) 06/13 – 06/17	<b>Exam 1 due (by 11:55 p.m. CST on WEDNESDAY, 06/15)</b>			
	<b>D. Utilitarianism</b>	T: 219-224	10	10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mill</li> <li><a href="#">MOVIE: ST Nemesis</a></li> </ul>		11	11
(4) 06/20 – 06/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Williams</li> <li>Le Guin</li> </ul>	T: 224-230 T: 236-241	12	12
	<b>E. Duty-based (deontological) ethics</b>	T: 241-251	13	13
	<b>F. Ethical relativism</b>	T: 76-77 (overview)	14	14
(5) 06/27 – 07/01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluehr-Lobban</li> <li>Pojman</li> </ul>	T: 90-94 T: 111-120	15	15
	<b>G. Ethical egoism</b>	T: 138-139 (overview)	16	16
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">MOVIE: Hollow Man</a></li> <li>Plato</li> </ul>	T: 140-142	17	17
<b>Exam 2 due (by 11:55 p.m. CST on FRIDAY, 07/01)</b>				
(6) 07/07 – 07/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hobbes</li> <li>Hume</li> <li>Rachels</li> </ul>	T: 143-148 T: 148-153 T: 158-168	18 19	18 19
	<b>H. Virtue &amp; Character-based ethics</b>	T: 262-264; 331-333 T: 265-277	20	20
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aristotle</li> <li>Augustine</li> <li>Foot</li> <li>Epictetus</li> </ul>	T: 277-280; 336-340 T: 308-319 T: 280-284	21 22	21 22
(8) 07/18 – 07/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stockdale</li> <li><a href="#">MOVIE: Gladiator</a></li> <li>Wrap up</li> </ul>	T: 284-295	23 24 25	23 24 25
	<b>Exam 3 due (by 11:55 p.m. CST on TUESDAY, 07/26)</b>			
	Tue., 07/26			