Miyazaki International College

Course Syllabus

Spring 2021

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| Course Title (Credits) | PHI303: Ethical Theory (3 Credits) |
| **Content Teacher** | |
| Instructor | Nahum Brown, PhD |
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| Office/Ext | 1-405 / 3731 |
| Office hours | TBA |

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| Course Description: |
| In this course, we consider the applications of ethical theories to different areas of social concerns, concentrating on the analysis of case studies and critical discussion of moral principles and ethical codes. In terms of theory, we look at some of the most important ethical ideas in the history of Western philosophy (virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and deontology). The course also focuses on debates about Ethical Egoism and Altruism. |
| **Course Objectives:** |
| Upon completion of this course, students will have a strong understanding of the main themes of Ethics, especially in terms of the main ethical theories.  Students should be familiar with:   Several of the central problems and questions in the history of ethical thought;   How to apply theoretical ethics to contemporary social and political issues in the world today.  **Critical Thinking Objectives**  Upon completion of this course, students will have developed their critical thinking abilities. They will have improved their ability to do the following;   Read texts analytically and understand different lines of argument;   Interpret responses to identified philosophical questions;   Analyze and assess the consistency and plausibility of ideas;   Compare, contrast and evaluate diverse philosophical positions. |

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| Day | Content/Activities | |
| 1 | Teachers’ Introduction, Discussion of Syllabus, Explanation of Goals and Purpose of the Class, Students’ Introduction; Plato, “The Story of Gyges’ Ring” | |
| 2 | **Unit 1: Ethical Egoism and Altruism,** Plato, “The Story of Gyges’ Ring” | |
| 3 | Plato, “The Story of Gyges’ Ring” | |
| 4 | Plato, “The Story of Gyges’ Ring” | |
| 5 | Plato, “The Story of Gyges’ Ring” | |
| 6 | Hobbes, *Leviathan* | |
| 7 | Hobbes, *Leviathan* | |
| 8 | Socrates’ Response to the Gyges Story; Mencius, “The Child Falling into the Well” | |
| 9 | Socrates’ Response to the Gyges Story; Mencius, “The Child Falling into the Well” | |
| 10 | Rachels, “A Critique of Ethical Egoism” | |
| 11 | Rachels, “A Critique of Ethical Egoism” | |
| 12 | Rachels, “A Critique of Ethical Egoism” | |
| 13 | Rachels, “A Critique of Ethical Egoism” | |
| 14 | Rachels, “A Critique of Ethical Egoism” | |
| 15 | Rachels, “A Critique of Ethical Egoism” | |
| 16 | Unit 1 Review | |
| 17 | Midterm Exam | |
| 18 | **Unit 2: Consequentialism, Deontology, and Virtue Ethics**, The Trolley Problem | |
| 19 | The Trolley Problem | |
| 20 | Van Norden, “Three Normative Theories” | |
| 21 | Van Norden, “Three Normative Theories” | |
| 22 | Van Norden, “Three Normative Theories” | |
| 23 | Van Norden, “Three Normative Theories” | |
| 24 | Van Norden, “Three Normative Theories” | |
| 25 | Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” | |
| 26 | Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” | |
| 27 | Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” | |
| 28 | Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” | |
| 29 | Unit 2 Review | |
| 30 | Final Exam | |
| Required Materials: | |
| Bring a highlighter, a red pen, a pencil, an eraser, an English-English dictionary, and an A-4 binder to every class. Instead of using a standard textbook, handouts will be given in class. There are no textbooks necessary. | |
| Course Policies (Attendance, etc.): | |
| You are expected to be punctual and to attend all lessons. A delay or early departure will be counted as a half (0.5) day absence. However, any absence, delay, or early departure can be excused if an official document (e.g., doctor’s notes) is submitted to us within 7 days of such an occurrence. When you miss a lesson, it is your responsibility to see your teachers afterwards (and perhaps other students who attended the lesson), to find out how to catch up with the work you missed. If you expect to be absent from a forthcoming lesson, you should email both of your teachers to explain your absence at least one day in advance.    **A maximum of four and a half (4.5) absences is allowed. The fifth absence will automatically result in a withdrawal from the course.**  **\* For the online version of this course, “absence” means absence from zoom sessions or failure to complete weekly activity submissions.** | |
| Class Preparation and Review: | |
| Students are expected to spend at least one hour reviewing and doing homework and one hour preparing for every hour of lesson time. | |
| Grades and Grading Standards: | |
|  Participation: 15%   Midterm 42%   Final Exam: 43%  **Participation**  The participation grade includes but is not limited to: contributing to class activities and overall attentiveness in class.  **Unit Tests**  A test will be held at the end of Units 1 and 2. Absence from a test will result in a mark of ‘0’ unless documentation acceptable to Academic Affairs is provided. Make-up tests will only be provided if extenuating documentation is provided. If a Make-up is provided, it will be at least as hard as the original test.  **Final Exam**  The final exam will be held during the exam period and may cover all material studied in the course. Details of the format of the final exam will be provided in class.  The final grade will be determined as below.  A: 90-100 points  B: 80-89 points  C: 70-79 points  D: 60-69 points  F: Less than 60 points  Plagiarism  Plagiarism is not acceptable at MIC. Students must submit their own work and not copy from other sources, unless they credit their sources with appropriate referencing. Students caught copying information from other sources and pretending that it is their own work will automatically result in a grade of ‘F’ or withdrawal from the course. | |
| Methods of Feedback: | |
| In principle, graded work will be returned within one week of submission with appropriate feedback, i.e., grade, comments, etc. | |
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| Notes: | |
| The schedule, policies, and procedures in this course are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. | |

