

Course Title	Ethical Theory		Instructor(s)	Thomas J. Spiegel
			E-mail	tspiegel@miu.ac.jp
Class Style	Lecture		Office Hours	-
Track	Global Liberal Arts		Mode of Instruction	Solo-teaching
Credits	2		Allocated Year	1
Active Learning	Category 1 (3) Category 4 (1,3, 9, 10)		Compulsory or Elective	Elective
Course Overview	<p>Ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the question (formulated in the broadest sense possible) of what humans ought to do with their lives. Concretely, this touches upon questions regarding morality, the good life, the right shape of communal life, religion, and existence. This course is designed to teach students the most important and fundamental concepts in ethics and meta-ethics. Accordingly, the course will deal with questions such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the nature of the good? 2. What is a good life? 3. What do we owe each other? 4. What is justice? 5. Is morality subjective or objective? <p>The course will feature readings of classical thinkers who aimed to answer some of these questions. The course requires close readings and discussion of the text, students are expected to participate interactively by contributing to the debates.</p> <p>The course features elements that aim to activate students to ensure deeper understanding of the issues at hand. Among those elements are different kinds of group tasks that require students to explain and debate the topics we read and discuss in smaller settings.</p> <p>I will pose a question at the end of each class relating to the content of that session. Students are required to ponder this question and submit a brief answer of about 50 to 150 words online.</p>			
Course Objectives	<p>The objective of this course is for students to attain an understanding of some of the most important issues and concepts in ethics. Simultaneously, this course will introduce the students to some of the most important thinkers in ethics. By continuously taking reasoned stances on these issues both in writing and in debates, students will further improve and hone their ability for critical thought as a skill that is deployable in numerous other subjects. In particular, successfully partaking in this course will enable students to more critically and competently reflect on the shape of a just society, on the nature of morality, and on their own personal ordinary conduct.</p>			
Prerequisite	No prerequisites			
Course Schedule	No	Contents		Homework
	1	Introduction and Virtue Ethics Virtue ethics, due to Aristotle, is a branch of moral philosophy that emphasizes character and the cultivation of virtues rather than merely evaluating actions based on rules		Question posed at the end of class
	2	Virtue Ethics This class continues the session on virtue ethics		Question posed at the end of class
	3	Deontology Deontology, most notably associated with Immanuel Kant, is a moral theory that evaluates actions based on adherence to		Question posed at the end of class

		rules, duties, or principles,	
	4	Deontology This class continues the session on deontology.	Question posed at the end of class
	5	Hedonism Hedonism is the idea, first formulated in antiquity, that pleasure is the highest good and ultimate aim of life.	
	6	Consequentialism Consequentialism, associated with British philosophers Bentham and Mill, is a moral theory that evaluates the rightness or wrongness of actions based on their outcomes or consequences	Question posed at the end of class
	7	Consequentialism This class continues the session on consequentialism.	Question posed at the end of class
	8	Divine Command Theory Divine command theory is the idea that what is right or wrong depends on the will and command of an all-powerful God. <hr/> Mid-term class evaluation	Question posed at the end of class
	9	Midterm test	
	10	Existentialism Existentialism is thought to be a philosophical movement of the 19 th and 20 th century dealing with individual existence, radical freedom, and choice. It is associated with thinkers like Kierkegaard and Sartre.	Question posed at the end of class
	11	Meta-Ethics Meta-ethics is the theory about the nature of ethics itself. Here we will deal with moral realism, the idea that morality exists in the world independent from us.	Question posed at the end of class
	12	Meta-Ethics This session focuses on moral anti-realism, the idea that morality is not a real part of the world.	Question posed at the end of class
	13	Justice This first session introduces ancient theories on justice from Plato and Aristotle.	Question posed at the end of class
	14	Justice This session deals with more modern theories of justice, such as the capabilities approach and the idea of justice-as-fairness.	Question posed at the end of class
	15	Feminist Ethics This session deals with central topics in feminist ethics, such as gender, violence, power, or care.	Question posed at the end of class
Grading	<p>Final Test: 30%</p> <p>Midterm test: 30%</p> <p>Weekly Homework: 20%</p> <p>Active Participation: 20%</p>		
Textbooks	N/A		
References			
NOTES	<p>- Homework will be assigned at the end of class.</p> <p>- Homework needs to be turned in 24 hours before the next class.</p>		

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Depending on the way the term develops, this syllabus may be amended.- Late submissions will generally not be accepted, unless there is a good reason.- Students are expected to be punctual and attend all lessons. Students who are late for class or leave early may be marked as absent. If you have a good reason to leave early or come late (e.g., an accident on the way to class), communicate with me. If you cannot participate in class, for example because you are ill, please submit an official document (e.g., a doctor's note) within 7 days; otherwise you will be marked as absent.- If you miss three or more classes unexcused, you may be asked to withdraw from the class or be failed the class. |
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