

PHI 192: INTRODUCTION TO MORAL THEORY

Fall 2016

Time and Location: M/W/F 11:40am—12:35pm, Crouse Hinds 17

Instructor: **Paul Prescott PhD**

Office Hours: by appointment

Email: papresco@syr.edu

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 2014). ISBN-10: 0199997233 [henceforth, 'FE'].
- Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 2014). ISBN-10: 0199997276 [henceforth, 'EL'].

The required texts are available for purchase at the University Bookstore in the Schine Student Center. Additional readings will be made available for download on Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Moral Theory is an introduction to some of the central problems of moral philosophy. Topics include (1) the major Western moral theories, including Utilitarian, Kantian, Aristotelian, and Social Contract theories; (2) the relationship between morality and religion, self-interest, and a scientific worldview; and (3) a range of disputed moral issues, including our duties to non-human animals, the obligations of the affluent towards the poor, and the ethics of radical human enhancement. Readings will be from both historical and contemporary sources.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be three exams, and no papers. *Regular reading, preparation, and participation are expected.*

Exams [first, second, and final]: The exams will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions. The content covered by the final exam will be cumulative.

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to do the assigned reading prior to class, and to participate in discussion throughout the semester. Each student may miss two class sessions over the course of the semester. Additional absences will be counted. A **significant** portion of your grade will be based on regular attendance, reading, and participation.

Grading Information: Students will be graded on the basis of (1) performance on the three exams, (2) regular attendance and the quality of participation in classroom discussions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy will be enforced. The Syracuse policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. The policy governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete University policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

Special Accommodations: If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located at 804 University Avenue, room 309, or call 315-443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue “Accommodation Authorization Letters” to students with documented disabilities as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: *Course Introduction*

Reading: FE: Introduction

Week 2: *Morality and Religion*

Reading: FE 5: Morality and Religion
 FE 6: Natural Law

Week 3: *Ethics and Egoism*

Reading: FE 7: Psychological Egoism
 FE 8: Ethical Egoism
 Mackie, *The Law of the Jungle* (online)

Week 4: *Consequentialism*

Reading: FE 9: Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions
 FE 10: Consequentialism: Its Difficulties
 Le Guin, *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* (online)

Week 5: *Kantian Ethics*

Reading: FE 11: The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice
 FE 12: The Kantian Perspective: Autonomy and Respect
 EL 9: Kant, *The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative*

Week 6: FIRST EXAM (Weds, 10/5)

Week 7: *Social Contract Theory*

Reading: FE 13: The Social Contract Tradition: The Theory and Its Attractions
FE 14: The Social Contract Tradition: Problems and Prospects
EL 10: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (excerpt)

Week 8: *Ethical Pluralism*

Reading: FE 15: Ethical Pluralism and Absolute Moral Rules
FE 16: Ethical Pluralism: Prima Facie Duties and Ethical Particularism
EL 11: Ross, *What Makes Right Acts Right?*

Week 9: *Virtue Ethics*

Reading: FE 17: Virtue Ethics
EL 12: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (excerpt)
TBA

Week 10: *Feminist Ethics*

Reading: FE 18: Feminist Ethics
EL 13: Lindemann, *What is Feminist Ethics?*
TBA

Week 11: SECOND EXAM (Weds, 11/9)

Week 12: *Contemporary Moral Problems*

Reading: EL: TBA

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 13: *Contemporary Moral Problems*

Reading: EL: TBA

Week 14: *Contemporary Moral Problems*

Reading: EL: TBA

Week 15: FINAL EXAM (Thurs, 12/15 @ 12:45)