

**Florida International University**  
**Department of Philosophy**

**PHI 2600 (7) Introduction to Ethics (CP 117)**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-4:00

**Course Description**

Philosophically speaking, ethics is the *rational* consideration of right and wrong in social life. In this course we will consider the “meta” ethical problem of understanding moral language and discourse: is morality mere opinion, or, is it factually based? If the latter, what, if anything, do moral facts depend on (e.g. God? Cultural norms? Something else?). We will also examine various theories of “normative” ethics (such as “deontology” and “utilitarianism”) and consider what each says about what moral goodness is. We will also discuss how these theories attempt to resolve some difficult and pressing ethical problems, including such questions as: Under what conditions is it permissible to take a human life (e.g. are euthanasia and abortion justifiable)? What obligations, if any, do we have towards non-human animals and the environment? Are affirmative action policies a fair method of securing equality on the basis of ethnicity and gender? Should we advocate egalitarian distributive principles, or, leave the market to decide who ends up better off and worse off? What sorts of laws and punishments should there be? Is the death penalty morally justifiable?

**Required Texts**

Rachels, James. (2012a). *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (7<sup>th</sup> edition). McGraw-Hill

Rachels, James. (2012b). *The Right Thing To Do: Readings in moral philosophy* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). McGraw-Hill.

**Grading and Requirements**

Logic Quiz: 10% (Jan. 12)

First Test: 20% (Feb. 23)

First paper: 20% (Mar. 20, due in class)

Second Quiz: 10% (Apr. 10)

Second paper: 20% (Apr. 12, due in class)

Second Test: 20% (April 26, 9:45 a.m. The examination room is TBA)

**Nota Bene:**

1. Readings not in the assigned texts will be posted on Moodle.
2. Lateness Penalty: An assignment received later than the due date will be penalized. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., will only be entertained if supporting documentation is provided (e.g. a doctor’s note).

3. Attendance: I periodically take attendance at the beginning or end of class. For every class missed (or in which you fail to sign in because you arrived too late, or left early), I will deduct 2% from your final grade.
4. Extra credit: there are no opportunities for extra credit, so take the assigned work very seriously.
5. Email: use ONLY the email address on this syllabus for your electronic correspondence with me (hermanso@fiu.edu).
6. Keep your returned assignments: It is your responsibility to hold onto them until the course has ended.
7. Test dates: I will not allow alternate dates for tests, for any reason, save for a life-emergency supported by appropriate documentation (e.g. planning a vacation during the semester is ill-advised). A missed test that was not the result of a verified life-emergency will receive no grade and there will be no make-up.
8. You must submit a HARD COPY of your essays (no cover page, no fancy binding, stapled, numbered, double-spaced, and with a bibliography). Emailed submissions are not allowed.
9. Blue books: you need 2 blue books for your tests.
10. Texts: You must obtain both copies of the required texts *within the first week* of classes. I may ask you to bring your books to class or suffer a grade penalty.
11. The use of computers & mobile phones during class is not permitted.
12. Students taking this class are assumed to have read and understood their obligations.

### **Topic Schedule**

**E = *The Elements of Moral Philosophy***

**R = *The Right Thing to Do***

**January 10:** Properties of arguments (writing diagnostic & logic homework assigned for R2, pp.19-21, 26-27) – *answers to be posted on Moodle on January 11*

**January 12: FIRST QUIZ &** What is morality? (E1, skim R1)

**January 17:** Relativism (E2, R2) – *add/drop deadline*

**January 19:** Finish relativism

**January 24, 26:** Subjectivism (E3, R6, R26)

**January 31:** Religion and ethics (E4 & Aquinas)

**February 2:** Finish religion and ethics (E4.1-3, Aquinas on Moodle)

**February 7, 9:** The debate about abortion (E4.4. pp.58-63, R11, R12)

**February 14, 16:** Egoism (E5, R17)

**February 21:** Animal rights (R14, R15, R16)

**February 23: FIRST TEST**

**February 28, March 1:** Utilitarianism (E7, R3)

**March 6, 8:** The debate about Utilitarianism (E8, R4, R5)

**March 20, 22:** Deontology (E9, R7) – **FIRST PAPER DUE MARCH 20**

**March 27, 29:** Kant, Utility & Capital Punishment (E10, R18, R19)

**April 3, 5:** Social contract theory (E6, R31, R32, R33)

**April 10: SECOND QUIZ &** Feminism and the ethic of care (E11, R10)

**April 12, 16:** Virtue ethics (E12, R8) – **SECOND PAPER DUE APRIL 12**

**April 19:** The environment (Singer, Hill & Husak on Moodle),

**April 26: SECOND TEST**

### **Grading Scheme**

A	90 – 100
A-	80 - 89
B+	77 - 79
B	73 - 76
B-	70 - 72
C+	67 - 69
C	63 - 66
C-	60 - 62
D+	57 - 59
D	53 - 56
D-	50 - 52
F	< 50

### **FIU's policy on plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is an academic misconduct and defined as *the deliberate use and appropriation of another's works without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own. Any student who fails to give credit for the ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is guilty of plagiarism.*

Examples include: Term papers acquired online or from other sources; Copying of original material without attribution; Use of other students' work; Copying and pasting, verbatim, information from Internet sources, without quotation marks and correct citations.

N.b. "Recycling" work submitted for other courses is prohibited.