

PHILOSOPHY 431 ETHICAL THEORY

Instructor: Donald Hubin
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337N University Hall
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M 2:30 – 3:30, W 9:00 – 10:00
and by appointment

Course Objectives: This course is intended to be a rigorous introduction to ethics; it is designed to acquaint students who have a serious interest in philosophy with the major issues in ethical theory and the various approaches to these issues. We will examine the nature and basis moral value and obligation. Our discussion of issues in normative ethics will follow the presentation of Shelly Kagan in our primary text. However, the text will be augmented by additional readings assigned throughout the quarter and by lecture.

Texts: *Normative Ethics*, Shelly Kagan
Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, Immanuel Kant
Utilitarianism, John Stuart Mill
On Liberty, John Stuart Mill
(*Other readings as assigned in class or available on reserve*)

Proposed Topic Outline and Readings:

- I. Introduction
Readings: Kagan, pp. 1-24
- II. The Good
Readings: Kagan, pp. 25-69
- III. Doing Harm
Readings: Kagan, pp. 70-105
- IV. Other Constraints
Readings: Kagan, pp. 106-152
- V. Further Factors
Readings: Kagan, pp. 153-188
- VI. Teleological Foundations
Readings: Kagan, pp. 189-239
- VII. Deontological Foundations
Readings: Kagan, pp. 240-304

NOTE: Selections from the works by Kant and Mill will be interspersed with the readings in Kagan's book (as will some other assigned reading). By the end of the quarter, we will have read both of these books in their entirety. I recommend that you read them through completely as soon as possible and then work through the selections as they are assigned in class. Prior to the final exam, it would be good to read them straight through again.

Course Requirements:

There will be both a midterm examination and a final examination—each constituting 30% of your grade. The date of the midterm will be announced in class repeatedly at least one week before the midterm. The final exam, which (though comprehensive) will focus primarily on the material since the midterm, will be in the regular classroom on the date and time scheduled by the University: Monday, March 14, 11:30 am–1:18 pm. An additional 30% of your grade will be determined by a term paper (to be approximately 10-12 pages long). A rough draft of the paper is due Wednesday, February 23. This draft will be returned with comments, criticisms and suggestions for revision. Though this draft will not be graded, a penalty of one full

grade point will be assessed on the final draft if no rough draft was submitted. The final draft of your paper is due on the last day of classes for Winter Quarter, Friday, March 11. The balance (10%) of your grade will be determined by class participation and by your successful completion of reading summaries for the materials we read in class

Assignment	Date	Weight
Midterm	To Be Announced	30%
Term Paper (Rough Draft)	Wednesday, February 23, in class	(See above)
Term Paper (Final Draft)	Friday, March 11	30%
Final Exam	Monday, March 14, 11:30 am–1:18 pm	30%
Class Participation and Reading Summaries	As Assigned (most class meetings)	10%

Academic Misconduct:

The University understands academic misconduct to include “any activity which tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution, subvert the educational process” (“Committee on Academic Misconduct Procedures and Rules”, 7/15/2004 < <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/procedures.pdf>>). With respect to this course, examples include, but are not limited to, such actions as cheating on exams and submitting a term paper written by another. No one should be unclear about whether *these* are wrong, but students are sometimes not clear about what constitutes plagiarism. ‘Plagiarism’ is defined by the University to be “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrase of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas”. There should be no misunderstanding about word for word transcriptions or simple paraphrases—these *must* be acknowledged through proper citations. It is sometimes not clear, though, when simply using the ideas of another requires citation. This is especially true in the context of a course, in which one is, presumably acquiring fundamental ideas of a subject matter from the text or the instructor. Certain ideas are “in the public domain”, so to speak; they are ideas used by everyone working in the field, and do not require citation. Other ideas are such that their origin needs to be acknowledged. It is sometimes difficult for students to distinguish these. It is helpful to remember that what is at issue is whether the failure to acknowledge a source would tend to misrepresent the idea as your own. The failure to acknowledge your source for a distinction between duty and supererogation, for example, would not tend to misrepresent the distinction as your own since it is a distinction that anyone working in the field will draw in some way or other. To offer a *specific* account of this distinction that is offered by another without citing the source could easily tend to misrepresent the account as your own. It is clearly better to err on the side of over-acknowledgment in cases in which one is in doubt.

I view academic misconduct of any sort as a *very* serious violation of University requirements. University rules provide for extremely serious sanctions for academic misconduct, and I will, as I am required to do, forward any cases of suspected misconduct to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Disability Services:

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated. They should inform me as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>