

## **(HONORS) INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS**

### Text

J. Arthur and S. Scalet (eds.), *Morality and Moral Controversies*, Eighth Edition (Prentice-Hall, pb).

The course handouts and other postings will be on Blackboard.

### Office hours and contact information

W 2:00 - 4:00, or by appointment; Caldwell 215B. E-mail:  
[ujanel@isis.unc.edu](mailto:ujanel@isis.unc.edu). Web site: [www.unc.edu/~ujanel](http://www.unc.edu/~ujanel).

### Course objectives

This course is an introduction to the elements of moral reasoning and deliberation. What sorts of factors should I consider in making a moral decision?

We will examine some of the classic theories of moral right and wrong, such as Bentham and Mill's Utilitarianism and Kant's Categorical Imperative. Then we shall investigate a number of controversial moral issues, applying the classic theories and also seeing what they overlook. The special topics will be chosen by you the students collectively, but may well include abortion, capital punishment, or gender equality.

### Written work

One very short exercise (roughly 5% of your overall grade); two short papers (1000-1250 words each), with a rewrite opportunity on the first (40% and 45%). There will be some choice of topic.

By law, there will be a final examination; its weight is negotiable, though I have left a default of 10%.

## Syllabus

August 19, 21: Introductory matters. A sample moral issue: euthanasia. *Reading:* For Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup>, Dyck, “An Alternative to the Ethic of Euthanasia” (pp. 252-56); Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (pp. 256-60).

August 26, 28: Continuing discussion of euthanasia as a case study. *Reading:* Court opinion in *JFK Memorial Hospital v. Heston* (pp. 248-50); Godwin, “Comparing Human Lives: The Archbishop and the Chambermaid” (pp. 251-52); Brandt, “Defective Newborns and the Morality of Termination” (pp. 265-71); Callahan, “Aging and the Ends of Medicine” (pp. 272-78); Harris, “The Survival Lottery” (pp. 278-83).

September 2, 4: The Utilitarian theory of ethics. *Reading:* Mill, “Utilitarianism” (pp. 65-72). **Exercise due, Tuesday the 2<sup>nd</sup>, in class.**

September 9, 11: Utilitarianism, continued. *Reading:* Brandt, “The Real and Alleged Problems of Utilitarianism” (pp. 83-89).

September 16, 18: Kant’s moral theory. *Reading:* Kant, “The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals” (pp. 56-65).

September 23, 25: Kant, continued; respect for persons. *Reading:* O’Neill, “Kant and Utilitarianism Contrasted” (pp. 78-83). **Paper #1 due, Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup>, in class.**

September 30, October 2: Vs. rules. *Reading:* Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics” (pp. 51-56); Held, “Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory” (pp. 89-94).

October 7, 9: War. *Reading:* Wasserstrom, “On the Morality of War” (pp. 115-23); Ryan, “The Morality of Pacifism” (pp. 124-26); Supreme Court opinion in *Korematsu v. United States* (pp. 126-31).

October 14: Terrorism and torture. *Reading:* Scheffler, “Is Terrorism Morally Distinctive?” (pp. 95-99); Steinhoff, “Torture: The Case for Dirty Harry” (pp. 100-07); Wolfendale, “Training Torturers: A Critique of the ‘Ticking Bomb’ Argument” (pp. 107-15). **Rewrite of Paper #1 due.** No class Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup>; **Fall Break.**

October 21, 23: Moral conceptions of sex.. *Reading:* Kant, “Duties toward the Body in Respect to Sexual Impulse” (pp. 285-89); Goldman, “Plain Sex” (pp. 291-99).

October 28, 30: Sex, continued: Homosexuality; date rape. *Reading:* Finnis, “What’s Wrong with Homosexuality?” (pp. 289-91); Mohr, “Gay Basics: Some Questions, Facts, and Values” (pp. 299-308); Pineau, “Date Rape: A Feminist Analysis” (pp. 309-16); Paglia, “An Interview About Date Rape” (pp. 316-19).

November 4, 6: Abortion. *Reading:* Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion” (pp. 211-18); Warren, “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion” (pp. 218-25); English, “Abortion and the Concept of a Person” (pp. 225-231); Marquis, “An Argument that Abortion is Wrong” (pp. 231-39); Harris, “Fathers and Fetuses” (pp. 240-47).

November 11, 13: Genetic engineering. *Reading:* President’s Council on Bioethics, “The Ethics of Cloning-to-Produce-Children” (pp. 192-206).  
**Paper #2 due, Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup>, in class.**

November 18, 20: Capital punishment. *Reading:* Court opinion in *Gregg vs. Georgia* (pp. 132-38); Perlmutter, “Desert and Capital Punishment” (pp. 139-46); van den Haag, “The Ultimate Punishment” (pp. 146-51).

November 25: Capital punishment, continued. *Reading:* Reiman, “Justice, Civilization, and the Death Penalty” (pp. 151-41). No class Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup>; **Thanksgiving Vacation.**

December 2: Review or otherwise general session.

**Final exam, Friday, December 12, 8:00 a.m.**

### Honor code

Chancellor Thorp has asked faculty to include the following statement in all course syllabi.

Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable, because any breach in academic integrity, however small, strikes destructively at the University’s life and work.

The Honor Code and the Campus Code, embodying the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship, have for over 100 years governed the performance of all academic work and student conduct at the University. Acceptance by a student of enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in these codes and a respect for this most significant University tradition.

Your participation in this course comes with my expectation that your work will be completed in full observance of the Honor Code.

If you have any questions about your responsibility or my responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code and as the instructor in this course, please bring them to me, or consult with someone in either the office of the Student Attorney General or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Thank you.