

## **(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 25, 27: Introductory matters. A sample moral issue: euthanasia. *Reading:* For Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup>, Dyck, “An Alternative to the Ethic of Euthanasia” (pp. 252-56); Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (pp. 256-60).

September 1, 3: 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 8, 10: The Utilitarian theory of ethics. *Reading:* Mill, “Utilitarianism” (pp. 65-72). **Exercise due, Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup>, in class.**

September 15, 17: Utilitarianism, continued. *Reading:* Brandt, “The Real and Alleged Problems of Utilitarianism” (pp. 83-89).

September 22, 24: Kant’s moral theory. *Reading:* Kant, “The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals” (pp. 56-65).

September 29, October 1: Kant, continued; respect for persons. *Reading:* O’Neill, “Kant and Utilitarianism Contrasted” (pp. 78-83). **Paper #1 due, Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup>, in class.**

October 6, 8: Vs. rules. *Reading:* Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics” (pp. 51-56); Held, “Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory” (pp. 89-94).

The remaining topics will be determined collectively by the students.

October 20: **Rewrite of Paper #1 due.** No class Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, **Fall Break.**

November 17: **Paper #2 due, Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup>, in class.**

**Final exam, Thursday, December 17, 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.