

Coastal Carolina University
College of Humanities and Fine Arts
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

Fall 2014
Syllabus & Tentative Schedule

Course: Introduction to Ethics, PHIL 102, Sections 06 & 07

Credit hours: 3

Time and Location, Section 06: MW 4:00–5:15 p.m., Kearns Hall, Room 201

Time and Location, Section 07: MWF 3:00–3:50 p.m., Kearns Hall, Room 108

Instructor: Patrick Beach, Ph.D. (please call me “Dr. Beach” or “Professor Beach”)

Email: pbeach@coastal.edu

Office: 124 Sands Hall

Telephone 843-349-4049

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30–11:00, and by appointment

Course Website: moodle.coastal.edu

Communication Policy: I will respond to emails within 24 hours (but usually sooner).

Required Texts

- Barbara MacKinnon, *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues, Concise Edition, 2nd Edition*

ISBN-10: 1-133-04974-5

ISBN-13: 978-1-133-04974-6

This link will allow you to buy the book for \$82.50 or rent it for the semester for \$20.49.

<http://www.cengagebrain.com/micro/1-1WRGQDX>

Amazon, Barnes & Nobel, Chegg, etc., may have new or used or rental copies at different price points.

Do *not* get the eBook, please, and please get the correct edition.

- Supplemental materials will be posted on Moodle.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the three main areas of philosophical ethics, metaethics, normative ethics and applied ethics. Students will explore metaethical issues such as ethical subjectivism and objectivism, moral skepticism, free will and responsibility; major normative theories such as consequentialism and deontologism; and applied ethical issues such as animal rights, war, and cloning. The overarching goal will be for students to develop the skills necessary for thinking, writing, and speaking about ethical theories and problems while acquiring a basic understanding of these theories and problems.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the philosophical, religious, literary, ethical, cultural and other humanistic concepts through which educated people interpret and judge themselves and their world.
2. Demonstrate the ability to recognize varieties of humanistic thought and expression.
3. Demonstrate the ability to interpret varieties of humanistic thought and expression.
4. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate varieties of humanistic thought and expression.

Course Objectives

Students who are successful in the course will be able to . . .

1. Understand and charitably interpret philosophical texts.
2. Express ideas clearly and precisely in well-organized prose.
3. Identify, reconstruct, and evaluate arguments. Particular attention ought to be paid to their internal structure (premises vs. the conclusions they aim to support).
4. Demonstrate familiarity and accumen with central philosophical concerns in metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics.

Course Requirements

Work Load Estimates: In a typical week, you should expect to devote about 6–10 hours to the reading and writing for this course. This is time beyond class attendance. Sometimes the readings are long and sometimes they are quite difficult. You will need to invest time in preparing for class.

Means of Assessment: Two exams, one 4–5 page paper, and quite a number of low-stakes assignments (reading quizzes, in-class writings, etc.). The exams are in-class (closed

book and closed notes).

We will spend about half an hour per week in class working on what makes for good philosophical writing, how to give good peer feedback, etc.

Attendance Policy: Students are obligated to attend class regularly. Absences, excused or not, do not absolve students from the responsibility of completing all assigned work promptly. Students who miss assignments, announced quizzes, or other course work obligations due to excused absences will be allowed to make up the work if possible (in-class work is often not possible to make up).

Absences will be excused for documented cases of:

1. incapacitating illness,
2. official representation of the University (excuses for official representation of the University should be obtained from the official supervising the activity),
3. death of a close relative, and
4. religious holidays.

Students who miss more than 25% of the regularly scheduled class meetings with unexcused absences will fail the course.

See <http://www.coastal.edu/policies/pdf/acad-125classattendance.pdf> for Coastal's official attendance policy.

Grading Proportions

Paper: 25%
Midterm exam: 25%
Low-stakes assignments: 25%
Final exam: 25%

Grading Scale

90–100% = A
86–89% = B+
80–85% = B
76–79% = C+
70–75% = C
66–69% = D+
60–65% = D
0–59% = F

Advice

- Read the material carefully and take reading notes as you go along. Mark up the text in meaningful ways as you read. While I sometimes will give some guidance on the material before you read it, some of it will still be difficult. Be prepared to read and re-read the material. Philosophy *cannot* be skimmed.
- Take good lecture notes and rewrite them as soon as you can after class. This will aid you greatly in understanding the material.
- Organize study/discussion groups. One of the best ways to understand philosophy is to talk about it.
- Look up terms you don't understand.
- Write summaries of the readings, and write up what you think are the muddiest points in your understanding of the material.
- Get help with any writing problems that you know you have. I can help you and the writing center can help you. I expect college-level reading and writing skills.
- Come to office hours and we can talk about the material. I am the most informed person you can talk to about this class. Or set up discussion groups and invite me to participate. Warning: my time becomes very tight before exams.
- Philosophy is a *content-laden* discipline. We will pay attention to a lot of fine-grained details. So while looking at the big picture helps, much of what we will attend to (and you will be responsible for) is at the micro level. The devil is in the details.
- Students may vary in their abilities to read and write at the college level. You can expect to acquire these abilities only if you honor all course policies, attend classes regularly, complete all assigned work in good faith and on time, and meet all other course expectations of you as a student.

Policies

- Students who cheat or plagiarize will fail the course. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for details. <http://www.coastal.edu/conduct/documents/codeofconduct.pdf>
- Students are expected to follow Coastal Carolina University's community standards: "Coastal Carolina University is an academic community that expects the highest standards of honesty, integrity and personal responsibility. Members of this community are accountable for their actions and are committed to creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust."
- Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Accessibility and Disability Services office.

- Respectful, professional, and civil conduct is the expected norm for the class.
- The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, or to ensure better student learning.
- This class is technology free. That is, use of cell phones, tablets, and laptops is forbidden (except for those whose documented disability requires an electronic accommodation). Print the papers we will be discussing and bring them to class (well read and marked up). Take copious lecture notes with pen or pencil and paper. As a courtesy, if you would like to record classes, please inform me.

Tentative Schedule

Last Updated: July 17, 2016
(Subject to Revision)

Note: Readings are in MacKinnon, *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues, Concise Edition, 2nd Edition* or are posted as PDFs on Moodle unless otherwise noted. Assignments are posted on Moodle. In-class assignments are not.

Week / Week of	Topics, Readings, & Tests	Assigned Work
1	Metaethics	
Aug. 18	Beach, "Logic and Truth"	Assignment 1
	Benedict, "A Defense of Ethical Relativism"	
	Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"	Assignment 2
2	Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism"	
Aug. 25	Rachels, "Egoism and Moral Skepticism"	Assignment 3
		Assignment 4
3	In-class logic review	
Sept. 1	Beach, "Enthymemes and Rendering Arguments"	
	Emotivism	
4	MacKinnon, Chapter 4, "Utilitarianism"	
Sept. 8		
5	MacKinnon, Chapter 5, "Kant's Moral Theory"	
Sept. 15		
6	MacKinnon, Chapter 8, "Virtue Ethics"	
Sept. 22		
7	Mid-term Exam	
Sept. 29	MacKinnon, Chapter 10, "Euthanasia"	
8	MacKinnon, Chapter 11, "Abortion"	
Oct. 6		
continued on next page		

Week / Week of	Topics, Readings, & Tests	Assigned Work
9	Abortion discussion continued	
Oct. 13	Paper assigned	
10	MacKinnon, Chapter 12, "Sexual Morality"	
Oct. 20		
11	Sexual morality continued	
Oct. 27	Paper due	Paper due
12	MacKinnon, Chapter 14, "Economic Justice"	
Nov. 3		
13	MacKinnon, Chapter 15, "Legal Punishment"	
Nov. 10		
14	MacKinnon, Chapter 17, "Animal Rights"	
Nov. 17		
15	Animal rights continued	
Dec. 1		
Finals		
Dec. 5	Section 07, 4–6 p.m.	
Dec. 10	Section 06, 4–6 p.m.	