

PHIL 2200: Introduction to Ethics

Dr Piers Stephens

Course Description: In this course, we shall begin by looking at some of the history and key thinkers in the Western tradition of ethics, in the process examining the most important theoretical frameworks by which moral problems have been conceived. Our initial focus will be on the challenge posed by moral scepticism – the question of *why* we should be good – and after using this as a guiding question, we shall turn to examining practical contemporary moral issues through the lenses of the ethical traditions already discussed. Students will be encouraged to explore and systematically develop their own views and arguments in relation to the theories and issues involved, especially by engaging critically with the classic perspectives, and should thus develop a deeper philosophical understanding both of the field of ethics itself and some particular contemporary moral concerns by the conclusion of the course.

Required Reading

Duncan Richter, *Why Be Good? A Historical Introduction to Ethics* (abbreviated as WBG).

Hugh LaFollette (Ed), *Ethics in Practice* (3rd edition), (abbreviated as EIP).

Students may also find helpful tips about creative thinking and approaches to problem solving in ethics from Anthony Weston's *A Practical Companion to Ethics* (3rd edition). Students who are inexperienced in essay writing and/or philosophical argument may also find another book helpful, namely *A Rulebook for Arguments*, also by Anthony Weston.

Course Requirements:

Two short essays (5-7 pages each) - 25% each

Two quizzes – 5% each

Breakout session attendance – 5%

Research essay (9 – 11 pages) – 35%

Contact Details, Reading Requirements, etc

My office hours, in Peabody Hall room 121, are from 2.30-4.30pm on Mondays, or by appointment. I can also be contacted at other times if urgent, so please do feel free to contact me with any questions or worries. The reading allocated below on a session by session basis is required and will be central to the business of each session. My email address is piers@uga.edu

Attendance & Essay Submission Policy

Essays should be submitted to Ben McCraw via email on his address of mccrawbw@uga.edu by midnight on the deadline date given below, with a hard copy to follow at your earliest opportunity. Unexcused lateness in emailed essay submissions will be dealt with via a docking system, in which 5% is removed from the essay grade for each day late; however, extensions may be negotiated if absolutely necessary so long as prior notice is given, ideally at least 24 hours *before* the essay deadline in question. Attendance is mandatory at breakout sessions, and a register will be taken at these smaller gatherings, with 5% of final grade dependent on good attendance. Attendance is not technically mandatory at lectures; however, please note that *relevant extra material not present in the set reading will be presented and explained in the lectures. This material will be strongly represented in the quizzes, and so students who skip lectures do so at their own risk in terms of impact on their grades.*

Assignments, Integrity and Academic Honesty Issues

Intellectual integrity is the foundation of the academic community, and thus of the value of your work and grades. Violations of academic honesty and integrity therefore strike at the heart of the UGA learning community and constitute a serious offence against your fellow students and instructors. Such violations include cheating, plagiarism, fabrication and misrepresentation of work (e.g. by distorting sources or claiming sole authorship of a collective work), submitting the same paper or extremely similar papers for two different courses without the consent of both instructors, the obstruction or sabotaging of others' work, or assisting others in engaging in any of these breaches of academic honesty. You should inform yourself of the UGA Honor Code and Honesty Policy to this end. Full details of the UGA Academic Honesty Policy, "A Culture of Honesty" are given at http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm and you are encouraged to view it. *All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.* If students are in any doubt as to the validity of their likely actions in constructing a piece of work, they should please see me for advice first. You will find below the detailed syllabus in terms of scheduling and reading obligations. *The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

Detailed Schedule of Reading and Assignments

1/12 Syllabus outline and thematic introduction.

1/14 Reading: WBG 1-28

1/19 Martin Luther King Day -Holiday

1/21 WBG 29-46

1/26 EIP 45-55

1/28 WBG 47-66

2/2 WBG 67-85 **Short Essay 1 Assigned**

2/4 WBG 86-104

2/9 WBG 105-122

2/11 WBG 123-141

2/16 EIP 31-44

2/18 WBG 142-159

2/23 EIP 22-30 **Essay 1 Deadline; Essay 2 Assigned**

2/25 WBG 160-178

2/27-8 **Quiz 1 (in breakout sessions)**

3/2 WBG 179-208

3/4 EIP 117-125

3/9-3/13 Spring Break

3/16 EIP 137-147

3/18 EIP 171-180

3/23 EIP 181-191

3/25 EIP 233-241

3/30 EIP 242-253 **Essay 2 Deadline; Essay 3 Options Assigned**

4/1 EIP 254-274

4/6 EIP 373-376, 411-420

4/8 EIP 470-491

4/13 EIP 562-577

4/15 EIP 578-90

4/20 EIP 611-632

4/22 EIP 633-656

4/23-4 **Quiz 2 (in breakout sessions)**

4/27 EIP 657-679

4/29 EIP 680-700 **Essay 3 Deadline**