

**Ethics**  
**50:730:226**

Semester  
Location: TBD  
Days/Times

Professor: Melissa Yates

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Office Hours: W 10:00a.m.-12:00p.m., or by appointment

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## I. Rationale:

This course is designed to introduce students to ethical issues and problems. Over the course of the semester we will study a wide range of topics, including egoism, moral obligations, respect for persons, and theories of human and animal rights. We will also study psychological and cognitive theories of moral development, and philosophical responses to the ethics of assistance.

## II. Course Aims and Objectives:

### *General Education Aims*

In general, the course aims to teach students how to analyze and evaluate ethical arguments, to promote the development of thoughtful class discussions about the reading materials and topics, and to encourage critical reflection on our beliefs and values. This course contributes to the General Education category “Ethics and Values” in the following ways:

- *Goal 1: Interpret, explain, and compare significant systems and theories of human ethics and/or values.* Students are exposed to five significant systems of ethics through primary source readings and are taught how to interpret and explain the details of those systems, both one their own and comparatively. The major systems of ethics that the course addresses are: virtue ethics, utilitarianism, Kantianism/deontology, egoism/relativism, and care ethics.
- *Goal 3: Analyze ethical debates in terms of their underlying assumptions and implications.* Each section of the course employs examples of ethical debates, some very abstract and others more concrete. For instance, in the first section the differences between egoism, utilitarianism, Kantianism, and care ethics are exposed through a question regarding competing obligations to obey law and to help save a family member’s life. While that example is fairly abstract, it provides students an opportunity to better understand the assumptions and implications of the theories.
- *Goal 4: Recognize the ethical values at stake in practical, concrete, and/or everyday situations.* While this is something we work with in the context of class discussions throughout the semester, the final section of the class focuses on one specific everyday situation – that concerning our relationship to people in need. The local, national, and international dimensions of this real life circumstance are explored in the context of the various ethical systems developed in earlier parts of the class.
- *Goal 5: Apply ethical reasoning toward solving practical problems.* While the class does not have the ambition of solving the problems of global hunger, it does aim to provide students with ways to approach their own part in those questions, and exposes students to a range of real campaigns that have developed out of the application of ethical theories.
- *Goal 6: Formulate, communicate, and evaluate effective ethical arguments.* Students practice developing their own objections and evaluations of ethical theories through in class discussions, the in class tests, and the final paper.

### Course-Specific Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Be able to *define* key terms deployed by authors assigned in the course.
  - Key terms include principles and concepts developed by a unique author (e.g. the “greatest happiness principle” is a key term unique to J.S. Mill, and also general terms defined in a special way by different authors (e.g. “good” or “right” will be a key term that changes under different authors).
  - Students will be expected to recall the definitions of key terms during class, and to explain key terms on take home writing assignments.
- Be able to *summarize* the main thesis of each essay assigned in the course.
  - The main thesis of an essay is the general or overarching conclusion advanced by an author. In order to summarize the thesis, students will need to be able to discriminate between different arguments advanced within an essay and evaluate which is the most general.
  - Students will be expected to propose essay thesis statements in class discussion and during in-class tests and take home assignments.
- Be able to *reconstruct* the key arguments and reasons used by the authors in support of their thesis.
  - A reconstruction of an essay is similar to an outline of an essay. In a reconstruction, students take the content of an essay and organize it in terms of a thesis statement and a series of claims or reasons offered by the author in support of the thesis.
  - To reconstruct an argument, students will need to identify and discriminate among a series of different reasons offered by an author to determine which ones would be most helpful in supporting an argument.
  - Students will be expected to participate orally in class collective reconstructions initially, but then will be expected to be able to reconstruct an essay in writing.
- Be able to *apply* previously learned philosophical terms and principles to concrete examples.
  - The application of philosophical concepts to real world examples is an important way to test the plausibility of an author’s argument. Students will practice creating counter-examples during class discussions, and will creatively apply an author’s arguments to those counter-examples. Students will also be able to apply principles from one author to examples developed by another author.
  - Students will be expected to apply key principles, terms, and concepts to examples during in class tests and on take home assignments.
- Be able to *evaluate* the appropriateness and plausibility of the conclusions reached in the assigned materials, and *compare* two competing arguments about a topic, giving reasons for their positive evaluation of one over the other.
  - The evaluation of philosophical arguments involves an appreciation for a charitably interpreted version of the argument, and the development of a critical dialogue between the proponent of the view and plausible objectors. Sometimes this requires the application of objections from the perspective of other assigned authors, but other times this requires the creative development of objections from one’s own perspective.
  - Students will be expected to weigh reasons for and against arguments on essay assignments.

### III. Format and Procedures:

This course will proceed as a combination of lecture and discussion. An outline of each class will be presented at the start of the class, and we will generally follow closely the content of the reading materials assigned. Students will be expected to read all assigned material before class, and to come prepared to ask and answer questions about the terms and arguments developed in the essays. Students are always encouraged to slow down lecture material for the purpose of improving comprehension and clarity.

**IV. Tentative Course Schedule:** *\*\*This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*

Date	Main Topic(s)	Work to do at home Readings – to be completed <u>before</u> class	Evaluation
9/4	<b>PART ONE: Moral Development</b> Introduction: Meet Instructor, and your classmates/ syllabus; Explanation of reading presentations		

9/9	<b>Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development</b> Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>W.C. Crain, <u>Theories of Development</u> Chapter 7: "<a href="#">Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development</a>"(online)</li> </ul>	
9/11	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lawrence Kohlberg, "<a href="#">The Child as Moral Philosopher</a>"(online)</li> </ul>	
9/12	Last day to drop a class without a W grade		
9/13	Last day to add a course		
9/16	Discuss Readings	Lawrence Kohlberg, <u>The Claim to Moral Adequacy of a Highest Stage of Moral Judgment</u> (online)	
9/18	<b>Feminist Critique of Kohlberg's Moral Psychology</b> Discuss Readings; First Exam Study Guide Distributed	Carol Gilligan, <u>In a Different Voice</u> , Introduction, Chs. 1-2 (pp. 1-63)	
9/23	Discuss Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carol Gilligan, <u>In a Different Voice</u>, Chs. 3 and 6 (pp. 64-105; 151-174)</li> </ul>	
9/25	<b>FIRST EXAM</b> <b>This exam will be held in our classroom during our regular class period. It will be closed-book and closed-note. All students are required to take this exam at this time.</b>		
9/30	<b>PART TWO: Amoralism, Subjectivism, and Relativism</b> Discuss Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bernard Williams, <u>The Amoralist, Morality</u>, 3-13</li> <li>Bernard Williams, <u>Subjectivism: First Thoughts, Morality</u>, 14-19</li> </ul>	
10/2	<b>Amoralism and Subjectivism</b> Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bernard Williams, <u>Interlude: Relativism, Morality</u>, 20-25</li> <li>Bernard Williams, <u>Subjectivism: Further Thoughts, Morality</u>, 26-37</li> </ul>	
10/7	<b>Critiques of Morality</b> Discuss Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soren Kierkegaard, <u>The Seducer's Diary</u>, Selections (handout)</li> <li>Friedrich Nietzsche, <a href="#">On the Genealogy of Morals</a>, Essay 1 (pages 6-25)</li> </ul>	
10/9	Discuss readings	Friedrich Nietzsche, <a href="#">On the Genealogy of Morals</a> , Essay 1 (pages 6-25) and Essay 2 (pages 25-50)	
10/14	Class Canceled		
10/16	<b>PART THREE: Goodness and Happiness</b> <b>Virtue Ethics</b> Discuss Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finish Nietzsche</li> <li>Aristotle, <u>Nichomachean Ethics</u>, Book 1</li> </ul>	
10/18	Academic warning grades		
10/21	Discuss readings; Second Exam Study Guide and Take-Home Exam Distributed	Aristotle, <u>Nichomachean Ethics</u> , Book 2	
10/23	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aristotle, <u>Nichomachean Ethics</u>, Book 2</li> </ul>	

		(continued)	
10/28	<b>SECOND EXAM</b>		
	Students may choose to either take the in-class exam, or to submit the take-home exam. This in-class exam will be held in our classroom during our regular class period. It will be closed-book and closed-note. The take-home option will be due at 3:00 p.m. on this day.		
10/30	<b>PART FOUR: Justice and Morality</b> <b>Utilitarian Morality</b> Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Stuart Mill, <u>Utilitarianism</u>, Chs. 1-2 (pp. 30-72)</li> </ul>	
11/4	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Stuart Mill, <u>Utilitarianism</u>, Chs. 3-4 (pp. 73-86)</li> </ul>	
11/6	<b>Kantian Morality</b> Discuss readings	Immanuel Kant, <u>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</u> , Section 1	
11/11	Discuss readings	Kant, <u>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</u> , Continued, Section 1	
11/13	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kant, <u>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</u>, Section 2</li> </ul>	
11/15	January 2014 Graduates, Diploma Application closes		
11/18	<b>The Ethics of Assistance</b> Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finish Kant</li> <li>Peter Singer, <u>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</u>, (Online)</li> </ul>	
11/20	Discuss readings	Peter Singer, <u>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</u> , Continued, (Online)	
11/25	Discuss readings Last day to withdraw from a class with a W grade	Peter Singer, <u>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</u> , (Online)	
11/27	Observe Friday Schedule	No class	
12/2	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richard Arneson, <u>Moral limits on the demands of beneficence?</u> <i>The Ethics of Assistance</i>, 33-58</li> </ul>	Final Paper Topics Distributed
12/4	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thomas W. Pogge, "<u>Assisting</u>" the global poor, <i>The Ethics of Assistance</i>, 260-288</li> </ul>	
12/9	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richard W. Miller, <u>Moral Closeness and World Community</u>, <i>The Ethics of Assistance</i>, 101-122</li> </ul>	
12/11	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>David Miller, <u>National Responsibility and International Justice</u>, <i>The Ethics of Assistance</i>, 123-146.</li> </ul>	
12/20			<b><u>Final Paper Due by 11:00pm</u></b>

## V. Course Requirements:

1. Class attendance and participation policy:

- (a) You are expected to attend all classes on time. If you expect to miss any class please use the [University's absence reporting](#) website to indicate the date and reason for your absence, which will automatically generate an email to me.
- (b) You are expected to obtain class notes from fellow students and class handouts from me in the event that you are absent when assignments are distributed.
- (c) You are expected to provide at least fourteen days notice in the event that you must be absent for an event connected with your studies or athletics at Rutgers, or for reasons of observance of a religious holy day.
- (d) You are expected to attend and take the mid-term exam on March 14<sup>th</sup> during our regularly scheduled class. Make-up exams will only be permitted in documentable emergency cases, and must be completed before the corrected tests are handed back on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

**2. Course Readings/Materials:** these texts are optional, as they are also available online.

- (a) **Carol Gilligan**, *In a Different Voice*
- (b) **Bernard Williams**, *Morality*
- (c) **Aristotle**, *Nichomachean Ethics* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Translated by Terence Irwin)
- (d) **John Stuart Mill**, *Utilitarianism* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Edited by George Sher)
- (e) **Immanuel Kant**, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Translated by Mary J. Gregor)
- (f) **Deen K. Chatterjee (Ed.)**, *The Ethics of Assistance*
- (g) Students are also responsible for downloading and printing off articles stored online, and for collecting handouts when listed on the syllabus.

**3. Assignments, Assessment, and Evaluation**

<b>10%</b>	<b>Participation</b>
	<p>The participation grade depends on attendance and contributions to in class discussion. Roughly half of the class will be devoted to discussions of the reading assignments. Students should come to class prepared to raise questions about the material.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Attendance:</b> Students are expected to attend all classes. Students who are absent more than three times over the course of the semester will be penalized one letter grade (for their participation grade) for each absence over three.</li> <li>○ <b>In Class Discussion:</b> Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading, raise and answer questions about passages and arguments, and to be responsive to other students.</li> <li>○ <b>Extra Credit:</b> Students who wish to supplement their in class discussion grade may opt to contribute questions about the readings and their proposed answers to those questions in the online forum, and may choose to attend select Philosophy Society or Department of Philosophy and Religion events throughout the semester (TBA).</li> </ul>
<b>25%</b>	<b>First Exam</b>
	The first in-class exam will be held on September 25 <sup>th</sup> . It will cover the course assignments under the heading "Moral Development."
<b>30%</b>	<b>Second Exam</b>
	For the second exam, students will have a choice between an in-class exam and a take-home exam, on October 28 <sup>th</sup> . It will cover the course assignments under the headings "Amoralism, Subjectivism, and Relativism" and "Goodness and Happiness."
<b>35%</b>	<b>Final Paper</b>
	The third final paper will be due December 20 <sup>th</sup> at 11:00pm, and will concern the last section of the class, "Justice and Morality". Paper topics will be distributed on December 2 <sup>nd</sup> .

- (a) **Late assignment policy:** All deadlines are listed on the course schedule and are firm. For every 24 hours an assignment is late the grade will be subject to dropping one third of a letter grade (from a B+ to a B, for instance). Students should make every effort to alert me in advance if a take-home exam will be late. Assignments will not be accepted more than six days after the deadline.
- (b) **Critical dates for registration changes:** Please check with the [academic calendar](#) to view last day to drop without penalty.
- (c) **Course Grades and Symbols:** Please see the [Rutgers registrar's website](#) for an explanation of the grade codes and their numerical equivalents in terms of GPA.

#### 4. Use of *Sakai* in class

In this class I use *Sakai*—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal> -- to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, and to submit assignments. You can find [support](#) in using Sakai at the Help Desk at 848-445-8721, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or [sakai@rutgers.edu](mailto:sakai@rutgers.edu).

## VI. Tutoring and Resources

### Rutgers Learning Center

Free academic tutoring is available through the Rutgers Learning Center. For more information regarding subjects being tutored and scheduling appointments please see the [RLC website](#).

### Rutgers Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs works to improve the quality of student life on and off campus, and is a very good resource if you are struggling with concerns that are wider than comprehension of the material in this class. This resource can help students find help for issues concerning new, transfer, or international student questions or problems, academic advising, health concerns, and can help you address stress management. For more information regarding their resources see the [Division of Student Affairs website](#), or contact them at (856) 225-2825.

## VII. Academic Integrity

### Rutgers University Student Code of Conduct

Students are required to properly cite all materials, to only submit their own, individually produced work, and to adhere to the requirements of each assignment regarding the use of internet or print resources. Take home assignments must be submitted through the course Sakai site, which will check all assignments against the Turnitin.com database, an electronic plagiarism detection software program. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and strictly enforced, and can be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. Please review the University's [academic honesty policy and disciplinary procedures](#), or speak with me if you have any questions.

## VIII. Other University Notices and Policies

### Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are [available here](#).

### Documented Disability Statement

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) for Students at (848) 445-6800 (voice) or [dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an

official accommodation letter from ODS. Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, handouts are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).

### **Audio-Visual Recording, Transmission, or Distribution**

Students in this class are prohibited from recording and/or transmitting classroom lectures and discussions unless written permission from the class instructor has been obtained and all students in the class as well as guest speakers have been informed that audio/video recording may occur. Recording of lectures or class presentations is solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording. The recording may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments.

Recordings, course materials, and lecture notes may not be exchanged or distributed for commercial purposes, for compensation, or for any other purpose other than study by students enrolled in the class. Public distribution of such materials may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law, or University policy. Violation of this policy may subject a student to disciplinary action under the University's Standards of Conduct.

The policy aims to prohibit or limit recording of classroom lectures or re-distribution of classroom materials in order to:

- respect the integrity and effectiveness of the classroom experience;
- protect students and faculty dignity and privacy;
- respect faculty and University rights in instructional materials; and
- comply with copyright law.