

# Ethics (ETHC)

## JHU-CTY Course Syllabus

### Required Items:

- *Ethical Theory: An Anthology* 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Russ Shafer-Landau. Wiley-Blackwell. 2013
- *The Fundamentals of Ethics* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Russ Shafer-Landau. Oxford University Press. 2011.
- A notebook for completing writing assignments

### Course Description:

Ethics is the study of how we ought to live. Since the ancient Greeks, philosophers have held ethics as one of the most important fields in philosophy because of its intimate ties with everyday life. During the first part of this course we will consider and critique different principles and theories which purport to explain what makes an action right or wrong, and what sort of character traits we ought to develop. In the second part of the course we will investigate the status of ethical theories and claims. We will attempt to discover whether there are objective truths about how we ought to live, or if ethics is ultimately a matter of subjective opinions and desires. In the final part of the course we will consider some practical ethical issues such as global poverty and animal welfare.

### Course Objectives:

- This course will serve as an introduction to philosophy in general and to philosophical ethics in particular.
- You will learn to recognize arguments and to assess them critically.
- You will gain practice in employing the philosophical tools of critical analysis in your own thinking and writing.
- You will learn to conduct research in philosophy and to organize the findings of your research into written form.
- You will consider the positions of historical thinkers such as Plato, Mill, and Kant, as well as those of contemporary philosophers such as Derek Parfit and Peter Singer.
- You will gain understanding of specific topics in ethical theory such as consequentialism, deontology, and ethical non-naturalism

### Expectations:

You will be expected to read and analyze material from the course texts and handouts. You will also be expected to attend and participate in class. The instructors will attempt to provide interesting and informative material for you to read, give helpful lectures, provide assignments and activities that challenge and stimulate interest, be available to answer any questions you may have, and provide fair and timely evaluations of your achievement.

### Assignments:

There will be occasional quizzes throughout the session. There will be a term paper assignment which will require you to construct an argument for or against a particular ethical view covered during the session. You will give formal presentations of your paper followed by a question and answer session with the audience (classmates, instructors, and other CTY staff members). In addition to these individual assignments there will also be many group assignments including formal debates, skits, presentations, and art projects.

## Academic Integrity:

We encourage you to discuss the material from this course with others. You must write the term paper on your own. Additionally, we expect students to be polite to each other and to the instructors. A polite person might say, “I respect you and your intellect such that if I disagree with you, I will attempt to show you that my beliefs are right until you are convinced, or I am convinced that I am wrong.” The subject matter of this course is often controversial, and involves beliefs forged by emotional experiences and family background. We will never make fun, ridicule or berate people in this class for holding a particular belief, but we may question a position in order to better understand and, perhaps, come to appreciate it. Also, please refrain from disrupting class (Turn cell phones, watch alarms etc. OFF; do not chat with classmates).

## Course Schedule:

Day/Topic	Session	Subject	Activities
Day 1 (Monday) – Introduction: Religion and Ethics	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Pre-Assessment</li> <li>• Objectives and Expectations</li> <li>• What is Ethics?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ice-Breaker – “Link”</li> <li>• Pre-Assessment</li> <li>• Name Placards</li> <li>• Review Syllabus</li> <li>• Class Discussion: goals and rules</li> <li>• Writing Exercise: Why study ethics?</li> <li>• Lecture/Discussion: What is ethics?</li> <li>• Reading: <i>FOE</i> Introduction</li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religion and Ethics</li> <li>• Euthyphro Dilemma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: Euthyphro Preview (intro ethics &amp; Religion)</li> <li>• Reading: ETA p. 218-219</li> <li>• Small group discussion</li> <li>• Reading: <i>FOE</i> ch. 5</li> <li>• Assignment: ch. 5 discussion questions</li> </ul>
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religion and Ethics</li> <li>• Consequentialism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: Review Religion and Ethics/ Introduction to Moral Theories.</li> <li>• Reading: <i>FOE</i> ch. 9</li> </ul>
Day 2 (Tuesday) – Consequentialism	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequentialism</li> <li>• Classic Utilitarianism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz on Logic and DCT</li> <li>• Reading: <i>FOE</i> ch. 9</li> <li>• Lecture: Intro to consequentialism and utilitarianism</li> <li>• Class Discussion: How plausible is utilitarianism?</li> <li>• Video: “Justice” Episode 1</li> </ul>

Day/Topic	Session	Subject	Activities
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subjective and objective consequentialism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture: subjective vs. objective</li> <li>Consequentialism Skits</li> </ul>
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mill</li> <li>Objections to consequentialism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading: <i>FOE</i> ch. 10</li> <li>Reading: <i>ETA</i> p. 417-421</li> </ul>
Day 3 (Wednesday) – Consequentialism	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The demandingness objection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture: Review utilitarianism</li> <li>Writing Exercise: Hedonism &amp; “Experience Machine”</li> <li>Class discussion</li> <li>Lecture: The demandingness objection</li> <li>Small Group Discussion: How much can morality demand of us?</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Injustice and Rule Consequentialism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act Utilitarianism Case Studies</li> <li>Rule Consequentialism Game</li> </ul>
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kant &amp; Deontology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture: Rule Consequentialism</li> <li>Reading: <i>FOE</i>: ch. 11</li> <li>Assignment: ch. 11 discussion questions</li> </ul>
Day 4 (Thursday) – Kant and Deontology	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing Kant</li> <li>The Good Will</li> <li>Autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment: Consequentialism Quiz</li> <li>Lecture: Introducing Kant &amp; Deontology</li> <li>Video: “Justice” Episode 6 Part 1</li> <li>Class Discussion</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Categorical Imperative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture: Kantian Moral Worth</li> <li>Kant Art Projects</li> </ul>
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kant continued</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading: <i>FOE</i> ch. 12</li> <li>Assignment: ch. 12 discussion questions</li> <li>(Extra Reading: <i>ETA</i>: 490-497)</li> </ul>

Day/Topic	Session	Subject	Activities
Day 5 (Friday) – Kant and Deontology	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formula of Humanity</li> <li>• Alienation objection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Exercise: Cultivating Talents</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Lecture: Review Good Will and Autonomy: Introduce Formula of Humanity</li> <li>• Video: “Justice” episode 6 Part 2</li> <li>• Reading: “The Duty of Humanity”</li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral Luck</li> <li>• Moral Rationalism</li> <li>• Moral Saints</li> <li>• Divine Hiddenness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class Discussion: Alienation Objection</li> <li>• Reading for Presentations</li> </ul>
Day 6 (Sunday) – Presentations	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral Luck</li> <li>• Moral Rationalism</li> <li>• Moral Saints</li> <li>• Divine Hiddenness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare Presentations</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Study for Quiz</li> </ul>
Day 7 (Monday) – Debate and Virtue Ethics	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing Virtue Ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: Perfect and Imperfect Duties</li> <li>• Case Studies</li> <li>• Prepare for Quiz</li> <li>• Kant Quiz</li> <li>• Reading <i>FOE</i>: 252-261</li> <li>• Lecture: Introducing Virtue Ethics</li> <li>• Reading <i>ETA</i> 617- 622</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aristotle</li> <li>• Golden Mean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading: <i>ETA</i> 622-627</li> <li>• Lecture: Aristotle</li> <li>• Activity: Golden Mean Skits</li> </ul>

Day/Topic	Session	Subject	Activities
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objections to Virtue Ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading: <i>FOE</i>: 261-270</li> <li>• Assignment: Discussion Questions 4 and 5</li> <li>• Reading: <i>ETA</i> pp. 645-652</li> <li>• Assignment: 1 paragraph summary of central line of argument—raise one objection</li> </ul>
Day 8 (Tuesday) – Virtue Ethics & Contractarianism	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objections to Virtue Ethics</li> <li>• Hursthouse</li> <li>• Annas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture/Discussion: Objections to VE and Hursthouse</li> <li>• Popcorn Reading: <i>ETA</i> 676-680</li> <li>• Silent Reading: <i>ETA</i> 680-684</li> <li>• Lecture: How to write a philosophy paper</li> <li>• Discussion paper pre-writing</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Virtue Ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Essay: Discussion paper on Annas or Hursthouse</li> </ul>
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aristotle on the Good Life</li> <li>• Introduce Contractarianism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture on</li> <li>• Review Virtue Ethics</li> <li>• Study for Quiz</li> <li>• Reading: <i>FOE</i> ch. 13</li> </ul>
Day 9 (Wednesday) – Contractarianism	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hobbes</li> <li>• Rawls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study for Quiz</li> <li>• Assessment: Virtue Ethics Quiz</li> <li>• Lecture: Hobbes and the social contract</li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• Veil of Ignorance activity</li> <li>• Popcorn Reading: 581-584</li> <li>• Silent Reading: 585-591</li> <li>• Video: “Justice” Episode 7 part 2</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rawls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: Rawls</li> <li>• Class discussion</li> <li>• Video: “Justice” Episode 8 part 1</li> <li>• Reading: Nozick</li> </ul>

Day/Topic	Session	Subject	Activities
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rawls vs. Nozick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for Rawls vs Nozick Debate</li> </ul>
Day 10 (Thursday) – Ethical Relativism	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for Debate</li> <li>Debate</li> <li>Writing Exercise: Debate Reflections</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Relativism</li> <li>Ethical Subjectivism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing Exercise: Is Ethics Relative?</li> <li>Pair/Share--Discussion</li> <li>Popcorn Reading: <i>FOE</i> ch.19</li> <li>Discussion</li> <li>Lecture: Introducing Metaethics</li> </ul>
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moral Nihilism Part 1 – Error Theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading: <i>ETA</i>: 22-30</li> <li>Assignment: 1 page summary</li> </ul>
Day 11 (Friday) – Moral Nihilism and Realism	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Error Theory</li> <li>Nihilism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture/Discussion: Relativism and Subjectivism</li> <li>Popcorn Reading: <i>FOE</i> p.306-312</li> <li>Lecture: Mackie &amp; Joyce</li> <li>Popcorn Reading: <i>FOE</i> p. 312-317</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nihilism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations: 10 Arguments against moral realism</li> </ul>
Day 12 (Sunday) – Realism	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal and External Reasons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture: Introduce Parfit</li> <li>Reading: Parfit on normativity and reasons</li> </ul>
Day 13 (Monday) – Realism & Term Papers	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-natural realism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture: Metaphysical objections to realism</li> <li>Reading: Parfit on ontology and normativity</li> <li>Metaethics Art Projects</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Term Paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study for quiz</li> <li>Assessment: Metaethics Quiz</li> <li>Lecture: How to write a philosophy paper</li> <li>Term Paper Pre-Writing</li> </ul>

Day/Topic	Session	Subject	Activities
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term Paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term Paper Pre-writing</li> </ul>
Day 14 (Tuesday) – Term Papers	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term Paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer Lab</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term Paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer Lab</li> </ul>
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper Presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper Presentations</li> </ul>
Day 15 (Wednesday) – Animals	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal Welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Exercise: Do animals have rights?</li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• Reading: <i>ETA</i> 355-356; 359-371</li> <li>• Lecture: Animal Welfare</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal Welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for Debate</li> </ul>
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal Welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debate</li> </ul>
Day 16 (Thursday) – Global Poverty	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading: Singer Solution to World Poverty</li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• Reading: Pogge</li> </ul>
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Poverty</li> <li>• Health Impact Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture/Discussion: Pogge</li> </ul>
	Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review</li> <li>• Post Assessment</li> </ul>
Day 17 (Friday) – Conclusions	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclusions</li> <li>• What Matters Most</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading: Parfit p. 607-620;</li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> </ul>