

**PHI 192: Introduction to Moral Theory**  
Fall 2014

Instructor: Byron Simmons  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** We will be primarily concerned with three main questions: What makes a life good for a person? What makes death bad for a person? What makes an action morally right or wrong? We will cover both historical sources (Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Lucretius, Kant, Schopenhauer, Mill) as well as some contemporary authors. You will learn to give a clear statement of a moral theory, to extract a clear statement of an argument from a philosophical text, and to explain and evaluate an argument.

**TEXTS:** All the required readings for this class will be made available electronically. You are expected to print out them out promptly, study them carefully, and mark them up extensively.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** There will be three in-class exams (dates on the schedule below). Your first exam will be worth 15% of your raw final grade, your second exam will be worth 25% and your third exam will be worth 20%.

There will also be nine homework assignments. These will generally be handed out on Friday and will be due at the beginning of class the following Friday. You may attempt all nine, but you must attempt the first two, and then four more after that (for a total of six). **Homework assignments cannot be turned in late.** Provided that you attempt the first two assignments, your six highest homework assignments will be worth 30%.

There will also be a number of very short unannounced quizzes. **Quizzes cannot be made up under any circumstances.** Your five highest quizzes will be worth 10%.

There will be no extra credit assignments. Your raw final grade will breakdown as follows:

1. Exams (60%)
2. Homework assignments (30%)
3. Quizzes (10%)

If you miss more than three non-exam class periods without a documented justification, then you will receive only a fraction of your raw final grade. There are thirty eight such class periods (excluding the first day). For every 10% of these class periods that you miss, you will receive a 2.5% deduction from your raw final grade.

**MISSED EXAMS:** If you know that you are going to miss an exam, you must provide me with a documented justification beforehand. You will then take a makeup. No makeups are permitted without an approved justification.

**CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:** You are expected to come prepared to each class, to be on time, and to stay for the duration of the class period. If you must enter late or leave early, please do so unobtrusively. Please silence your cell phones. **Do not use any electronic devices (such as laptops, ipods, ipads,**

**or cell phones) during class.** If you are caught texting or otherwise playing on your cell phone, you will be given a warning; if you are caught again, you will be marked absent.

**HELP:** Philosophy is really hard, but help is readily available. You might find some of the readings difficult and some of the material confusing. If you find yourself struggling with something you do not understand, please do not hesitate to let me know. I will be more than happy to help you. Don't wait for a bad grade on an exam. If you seek help, you will get it.

**TUTORING:** Syracuse University is committed to your success. To that end, there are several tutoring centers on campus, including the Tutoring & Study Center (TSC), the Writing Center, and the Athletics Academic Services Center. I encourage you to use these services. All schedules and locations are posted on the TSC website: <http://tutoring.syr.edu>.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures on the University's website at <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

The *minimum* penalty for an academic integrity violation in this course is a zero on the exam, assignment, or quiz in question. A report will then be sent to the Academic Integrity Office. If you are not sure whether what you are doing constitutes a violation of academic integrity, please ask me immediately.

**ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS:** Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, (315) 443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review these accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodation as early as possible is necessary. For more information, see the Office of Disability Services, <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>.

**RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:** If you need to miss a class due to a religious observance, you will be entitled to makeup opportunities if (but only if) you provide notice by the end of the second week of classes (September 8<sup>th</sup>). You must do so through MySlice.

**TENATIVE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO REVISION):** Please complete all the readings before the class periods indicated below. They will be made available in the "Readings" section of the Blackboard website: <http://bbgroupa.syr.edu/>.

### **Unit I: Well-Being**

Mon, 8/25      General Introduction

Wed, 8/27      Introduction to Axiology

- Fri, 8/29      Simple Hedonism  
                     John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2, pp. 209-14 and Chapter 4
- Wed, 9/3        Arguments against Simple Hedonism
- Fri, 9/5        Qualified Hedonism/ Arguments against Qualified Hedonism  
                     Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine" from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*
- Mon, 9/8        Arguments against Qualified Hedonism (continued)
- Wed, 9/10      Desire Satisfactionism  
                     Chris Heathwood, "Fairing Well and Getting What You Want"
- Fri, 9/12        Arguments against Desire Satisfactionism
- Mon, 9/ 15      Arguments against Desire Satisfactionism (continued)
- Wed, 9/17      Perfectionism  
                     Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1
- Fri, 9/19        Arguments against Perfectionism
- Mon, 9/22      Review for Exam 1
- Wed, 9/24      Exam 1**

**Unit II: Pessimism, Meaning, Death, and Immortality**

- Fri, 9/26        Pessimism  
                     Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. 2, Chapter 46
- Mon, 9/29      Pessimism (continued)
- Wed, 10/1      Meaning in Life  
                     Susan Wolf, *Meaning in Life and Why it Matters*
- Fri, 10/3        Meaning in Life (continued)
- Mon, 10/6      Death  
                     Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus"  
                     Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, Book 3
- Wed, 10/8      Death (continued)  
                     Thomas Nagel, "Death"
- Fri, 10/10      Death (continued)
- Mon, 10/13     Death (continued)
- Wed, 10/15     Immortality  
                     Bernard Williams, "The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality"

Fri, 10/17 Immortality (continued)

Mon, 10/20 Review for Exam

**Wed, 10/22 Exam 2**

**Unit III: Normative Ethics**

Fri, 10/24 Trolley Cases

Mon, 10/27 Introduction to Normative Ethics

Wed, 10/29 Divine Command Theory  
Plato, *Euthyphro*

Fri, 10/31 Utilitarianism  
John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2

Mon, 11/3 Utilitarianism (continued)

Wed, 11/5 Famine Relief  
Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

Fri, 11/7 Famine Relief (continued)

Mon, 11/10 Animal Welfare  
\* Alastair Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases"

Wed, 11/12 Kantianism: The Formula of Universal Law  
Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Sections 1 and 2

Fri, 11/14 Kantianism: The Formula of Universal Law (continued)

Mon, 11/17 Kantianism: The Formula of Humanity

Wed, 11/19 Abortion  
Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

Fri, 11/21 Abortion (continued)

[Mon, 11/24 & Wed, 11/26 & Fri, 11/28 – THANKSGIVING BREAK – No Class]

Mon, 12/1 The Trolley Problem  
Judith Jarvis Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"

Wed, 12/3 The Trolley Problem (continued)

Fri, 12/5 Catch up and review

**Mon, 12/ 8 Final Exam at 3:00pm**