

Alasdair Macintyre's Short History of Ethics.
 Russ Shafer-Landau's 'The Fundamentals of Ethics'. V
 Mark Timmons (2013) 'Moral Theory: An Introduction' (Rowman & Littlefield)
 Shelly Kagan's Normative Ethics,
 Julia Driver, Ethics: The Fundamentals.

PL1021 ETHICAL INQUIRY: PROBLEMS AND PARADIGMS

The American University of Paris

Assistant Professor Julian Culp

Fall 2018



Le Penseur (Musée Rodin, 75007 Paris)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How should I live? How can I determine whether an action is right or just? These are perennial questions that philosophers have long considered and attempted to answer. The course explores the ethical writings of several philosophers, including Plato, Kant, and Mill, in order to help us clarify and articulate our own values as well as discover the nature of philosophy.

Emphasis will be placed on attentive reading and discussion of seminal texts, as well as on developing and exercising a discussion culture in the classroom. The course will include lectures and seminar discussions concerning key figures and texts, as well as major philosophical conceptions, arguments, and theories regarding politics.

BASIC INFORMATION

<i>Time:</i>	Tuesdays and Fridays, 12h10–13h30	<i>Level:</i>	Undergraduate
<i>Room:</i>	A-1	<i>Co- and pre-requisites:</i>	None
<i>Credits:</i>	4	<i>Course can bet taken twice for credit?</i>	No
<i>Type:</i>	GE100	<i>Final Exam:</i>	December 18, 2018, 12h00

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To grasp and communicate central ethical problems and paradigms
- To understand and reconstruct philosophical texts
- To analyze and evaluate ethical arguments
- To develop, and convincingly argue for, one's own ethical positions

CONTACT INFORMATION

For consultation and meetings, please contact me after class or by e-mail, or come to my office hours.

Email: jculp@aup.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays and Fridays 16h00-17h00, and by appointment
Office number: G-L19 (Grenelle building, 147 rue de Grenelle)

BLACKBOARD

Course-related material, such as readings (except for the required textbooks), lecture slides, assignment tasks, etc., will be made available on the BLACKBOARD portal. Make sure that you have joined the course and that you adjust your settings to receive notifications and messages. Important up-dates will be posted on the course page and emailed via the BLACKBOARD messaging system.

READINGS

The *required textbooks* are listed below and can be purchased at the AUP Bookstore (10 bis rue Amélie):

- Arrington, Robert. 1998. *Western Ethics. An Historical Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell). ISBN: 9780631194163. [**ARRINGTON, WE**]
- Blackburn, Simon. 2001. *Being Good: Short Introduction to Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2nd edn. ISBN: 9780192853776. [**BLACKBURN, BG**]
- Shafer-Landau, Ross. 2014. *The Ethical Life – Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems*, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press). ISBN: 9780190631314. [**SHAFER-LANDAU, EL**]

Additional readings will be available on BLACKBOARD or will be distributed in class. For the *mandatory readings* assigned to each session, please consult the *schedule* below.

In case you are interested in studying a topic in further depth, feel free to contact the professor for further information, or contact the AUP Library (9, rue de Monttessuy): <http://library.aup.edu/index.html> – email: library@aup.edu.

A great online resource for philosophy is *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu>.

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION IN CLASS

Students are expected to come to every class meeting on time and be prepared to participate actively. The *student's preparation* includes in particular careful reading of the assigned texts in advance of the planned session. When reading you should take notes and excerpt the core ideas of the texts – that is, you should engage in active reading. *Active participation* encompasses the active engagement in the discussions during the lectures and in the work group activities. In discussions, all participants are expected to show respect and courtesy.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Attendance is required and will be taken at the beginning of every class. You may miss up to three sessions without excuse – though you are kindly asked to inform the instructor in advance if you plan to be absent. It is the student’s responsibility to make up work for the missed class and to communicate with the professor for that purpose.

More than three unexcused absences will be reported to the *Student Development Team* and result in a failing participation grade. In such a case you might also be asked to withdraw from the course. Absences may only be considered excused if they are officially excused, e.g. because of (medically documented) student illness, participation in course-related study trips, family emergency or an appointment with the immigration office. Attendance at all exams is mandatory. Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods*.

Punctuality is essential for uninterrupted and efficient coursework. It is also a sign of respect not only for the instructor, but also for your fellow students. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked absent.

REQUIREMENTS

- Participation
- 4 critical replies of 500 words each
- 1 mid-term paper of. 2,000 words
- 1 mid-term exam
- 1 final exam

It is the students’ responsibility to meet the administrative and academic requirements of this course. Make sure that you familiarize yourself with these requirements and that you plan your time and your work reasonably. But also remember that the readings and assignments are meant as springboards for your own independent and hopefully rewarding exploration of the topic.

GRADING

The grades for the requirements and for the entire course are based on the 4.00 system stated below. The relative weights of the assessments of the requirements of this course are these:

Requirement	Relative weight
Participation	10%
4 critical replies	25%
1 mid-term paper	25%
1 mid-term exam	20%
1 final exam	20%

The grading follows this 4.00 system:

Letter Grade	4.0 Scale	Meaning
A	4.0	Excellent
A-	3.7	Excellent
B+	3.3	Good
B	3.0	Good
B-	2.7	Good
C+	2.3	Satisfactory
C	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	1.7	Satisfactory
D+	1.3	Unsatisfactory
D	1.0	Unsatisfactory
D-	0.7	Unsatisfactory

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1: Critical Replies (6.25% each – 25% in total)

You will be expected to write 4 short critical replies to set questions that concern the readings. These *critical replies* will guide your reading, foster your understanding and assessment of the texts, and prepare you for classroom discussions.

The critical replies should be about *500 words*. They should be submitted via BLACKBOARD as *Word* document (.doc or .docx; Times New Roman, 12 pt., spacing 1.5) by 12h10 (before class) on the day on which day are due.

Due dates:

1st critical reply: Sept. 21 (Week 2), by 12h10 (before class)

2nd critical reply: Oct. 5 (Week 4), by 12h10 (before class)

3rd critical reply: Nov. 13 (Week 10), by 12h10 (before class)

4th critical reply: Dec. 7 (Week 13), by 12h10 (before class)

Assignment 2: Mid-Term Paper (25%)

You will be expected to write a short mid-term paper of about 2000 words in which you respond to a set question. The paper should be submitted as *Word* document (.doc or .docx; Times New Roman, 12 pt., spacing 1.5) via BLACKBOARD by *Saturday, Oct. 20, 23h59*.

The aim of the mid-term paper is to provide an answer to the set question regarding one of the courses topics (1) by *analysing* key conceptions and arguments regarding content and structure, and (2) by *critically assessing* the adequacy, effectiveness, and applicability of the arguments and the intellectual position under consideration.

Due date: Oct. 20 (Week 6), by 23h59.

Grading Criteria for the Critical Replies and the Mid-term Paper (Assignments 1 and 2):

Your critical replies and mid-term papers will be graded according to the following **five criteria**: coherence of the thesis, strength of the argument, adequate use of relevant primary texts (and secondary literature), clarity of structure, and correctness of form. For each of these criteria you will be graded according to your performance. The grade that you will receive will be calculated on the basis of this scheme:

Grading Criteria	Relative Weight
Coherence of the thesis	20%
Strength of the argument	20%
Adequate use of relevant primary texts (and secondary literature)	20%
Clarity of structure	20%
Correctness of form	20%

Late critical replies and mid-term papers will be marked down one grading unit per day (24 hours) of lateness. For example, if you submit an A/4.0 critical reply or mid-term paper 10 hours late,

you will receive an A-/3.7. Extensions of the deadline are only possible for serious reasons. In general, an extension can only be granted if you apply for it *before* the deadline expires.

Assignment 3: Written Exams (20% each – 40% in total)

After each of the two halves of the course you will be expected to review the material and attend a written exam. The mid-term and final exams will consist of a set of questions on the respective halves of the course. These questions will contain knowledge questions regarding key terms and intellectual positions, as well as short essay questions that ask you to *reconstruct* and *discuss* philosophical texts and ethical arguments that this course addresses. More information will be provided along the semester.

Dates:

Mid-term exam: Oct. 30 (Week 8), 2018, 12b10

Final exam: Dec. 18 (Week 15), 2018, 12b00

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

As an Anglophone university, AUP is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, the evaluation includes English proficiency. Students can obtain help on specific academic assignments in the university *Writing Lab*. For more information, please visit <https://www.aup.edu/academics/academic-and-career-resources/academic-resource-center/writing-lab> – email: writinglab@aup.edu.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

All work that you submit must be your own. Your sources must be properly cited. Direct quotations from others must be in quotation marks. If you have questions about how to attribute your sources, talk to the professor or to the staff of AUP's *Writing Lab* within the Academic Resource Center: <https://www.aup.edu/academics/academic-and-career-resources/academic-resource-center/writing-lab> – email: writinglab@aup.edu.

Plagiarism is a serious academic misconduct and will be dealt with accordingly. You should familiarize yourself with the university's policy on plagiarism at <http://www.aup.edu/academics/offices-resources/academic-resource-center/writing-lab/plagiarism>. For the sake of fairness and academic integrity, and in order to maintain the reputation of the degree you are earning with us, there will be no tolerance with plagiarism and other such forms of academic misconduct. Any conduct, whether intentional or unintentional, which creates the impression that some of the coursework you submit for grading is your own achievement when it is not will be reported to the *Academic Integrity Office* and may result in an "F" grade for the whole course.

Sometimes students present alien work as their own not because they want to earn an unfair advantage over their peers but rather because they feel unable to cope with the workload for some academic or personal reason. If this is the case, please do not hesitate to contact the professor or AUP's student guidance counselors Pamela Montfort via pmontfort@aup.edu or Yann Louis via ylouis@aup.edu. There is a lot that can be done to help you!

SCHEDULE

NB: This schedule is subject to change over the course of the semester.

INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1

Sept. 11 General Introduction: Ethical Inquiry – Problems and Paradigms

- Matthews, Dylan. 2013. “Join Wall Street. Save the World.” *The Washington Post* (excerpt) [DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS].

Sept. 14 Methodology and Subject Matter

- Kant, Immanuel. 1784. “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” (excerpt) [DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS].
- Blackburn, Simon. 2001. “Introduction.” [BLACKBURN, *BG*, pp. 1-8].

PART I: META-ETHICS

WEEK 2

Sept. 18 Ethics Without God?

- Blackburn, Simon. 2001. “Seven Threats to Ethics – The Death of God.” [BLACKBURN, *BG*, pp. 9-19]. [BLACKBOARD].
- Optional: Plato. *Euthyphro*. [SHAFER-LANDAU, *EL*]

Sept. 21 Moral Skepticism

- Mackie, John. 1977. “The Subjectivity of Values.” [SHAFER-LANDAU, *EL*].

*** 1st CRITICAL REPLY IS DUE. ***

PART II: NORMATIVE ETHICS

A) VIRTUE ETHICS

WEEK 3

Sept. 25 Plato I: Does Might Make Right?

- Plato. *The Republic*. 380BC. Book I, 343a-344c, Book II 358e-360d (*Stephanus* pagination) [BLACKBOARD].
- Optional: Arrington, Robert. “Plato.” [ARRINGTON, *WE*, 34-41].

Sept. 28 Plato II: Happiness Consists of Living Justly

- Plato. *The Republic*. 380BC. Book IV, 433a-435c, 443c-444e (*Stephanus* pagination) [BLACKBOARD].

- Optional: Arrington, Robert. “Plato.” [ARRINGTON, WE, 43-56].

WEEK 4

Oct. 2 Aristotle I: What is the Good Life?

- Aristotle. 350 BC. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Book I, chap. 5-7 [BLACKBOARD].
- Optional: Aristotle. 350 BC. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Book I, chap. 1-4 [BLACKBOARD].

Oct. 5 Aristotle II: How to Live Well?

- Aristotle. 350 BC. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Book II, chap. 1-3 [BLACKBOARD].
- Optional: Aristotle. 350 BC. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Book II, chap. 4-9 [BLACKBOARD].

*** 2nd CRITICAL REPLY IS DUE. ***

WEEK 5

Oct. 9 The Stoics and Cosmopolitan Citizenship

- Nussbaum, Martha. 1997. “Citizens of the World.” *Cultivating Humanity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), pp. 56-63 [BLACKBOARD].

B) UTILITARIAN CONSEQUENTIALIST ETHICS

Oct. 12 John Stuart Mill I

- Mill, John Stuart. 1871. “Utilitarianism.” In Crisp, Roger (ed.), *J.S. Mill – Utilitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 54-64 [BLACKBOARD].
- Optional: Arrington, Robert. “Bentham and Mill.” [ARRINGTON, WE, 334-42].

WEEK 6

Oct. 16 John Stuart Mill II

- Mill, John Stuart. 1871. “Utilitarianism.” In Crisp, Roger (ed.), *J.S. Mill – Utilitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 64-72 [BLACKBOARD].
- Optional: Arrington, Robert. “Bentham and Mill.” [ARRINGTON, WE, 334-42].

Oct. 19 The Experience Machine

- Nozick, Robert. “The Experience Machine.” [SHAFER-LANDAU, *THE ETHICAL LIFE*].

Oct. 20 *** MID-TERM PAPER IS DUE.***

WEEK 7

Oct. 23 Feminism

- Taylor Mill, Harriet. 1851. “The Enfranchisement of Women.” In Rossi, Alice (ed.), *Essays on Sex Equality – John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 98-107 [BLACKBOARD].

Oct. 26 Catch-up

- No reading assignment

WEEK 8

Oct. 30 ***MID-TERM EXAM***

Oct. 31–Nov.4 Fall Break

C) KANTIAN DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS

WEEK 9

Nov. 6 Kant I: The Good Will and the Concept of Duty

- Kant, Immanuel. 1785. “Section I: Transition from Common Rational to Philosophic Moral Cognition.” In *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:393-4:401 (*Akademie-Ausgabe* pagination) [BLACKBOARD].
- Optional: Blackburn, Simon. 2001. “The Categorical Imperative.” [BLACKBURN, BG, pp. 116-20].

Nov. 9 Kant II: The Categorical Imperative

- Kant, Immanuel. 1785. “Section II: Transition From Popular Moral Philosophy to Metaphysics of Morals.” In *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:406-415, 420-423, 428-430 (*Akademie-Ausgabe* pagination) [BLACKBOARD].
- Optional: Blackburn, Simon. 2001. “The Categorical Imperative.” [BLACKBURN, BG, pp. 120-5].

WEEK 10

Nov. 13 Neo-Kantian Principles of Social Justice

- Rawls, John. 1999. *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), rev. ed., 3-15, 52-6 (§§1-3, 11) [BLACKBOARD].

*** 3rd CRITICAL REPLY IS DUE. ***

Nov. 16 A Neo-Kantian Critique of Utilitarianism

- Rawls, John. 1999. *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), rev. ed., 19-24, (§5) [BLACKBOARD].

WEEK 11

Nov. 20 Feminism

- Okin, Susan Moller. 1989. “Justice as Fairness: For Whom?” in *Justice, Sex, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books), pp. 89-97 [BLACKBOARD].

PART III: APPLIED (GLOBAL) ETHICS

Nov. 23 A Utilitarian Perspective

- Singer, Peter. 1972. "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." [SHAFFER-LANDAU, *EL*].

WEEK 12

Nov. 27 An Empirical Critique of the Utilitarian Perspective

- Kuper, Andrew. 2005. Global Poverty Relief – More than Charity. In *ibid.* (ed.). *Global Responsibilities* (New York: Routledge), pp. 155-67 [BLACKBOARD].
- Optional: Singer, Peter. 2005. Poverty, Facts, and Political Philosophies – A Debate with Andrew Kuper. In Kuper, Andrew (ed.). *Global Responsibilities* (New York: Routledge), 173-81.

Nov. 29 No Class

WEEK 13

Dec. 4 A Neo-Kantian Perspective

- Pogge, Thomas. 2004. "Assisting' the Global Poor." In Chatterjee, Deen (ed.). *The Ethics of Assistance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 260-72, 278-80. [BLACKBOARD].

Dec. 7 A Neo-Aristotelian Perspective

- Nussbaum, Martha. 1992. "Human Functioning and Social Justice. In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism". *Political Theory* 20, pp. 203-5, 214-25 [BLACKBOARD].

*** 4th CRITICAL REPLY IS DUE. ***

WEEK 14

Dec. 11 A Feminist Perspective

- Jaggar, Alison. 2005. "Saving Anima': Global Justice for Women and Intercultural Dialogue." *Ethics & International Affairs* 19, pp. 55-61, 70-72 [BLACKBOARD].

Dec. 12 (*Make-up session*) Wrap-up

- No reading assignment

WEEK 15:

Dec. 18 ***FINAL EXAM***