

Syllabus

Professor

Chris Heathwood
heathwood@colorado.edu

Office: Hellems 192
Hours: M 3-5, W 12-1, and by appt.

Course Description

We make moral judgments – e.g., “You shouldn’t litter,” “It’s unfair that some children have no health care,” “Friendship helps make life worth living,” “Abortion is wrong,” “Martin Luther King was a great man” – all the time. But what are we doing when we do this? Are we describing an objective moral reality, or ultimately just expressing our feelings? Are such statements ever true? Can we ever know one to be true? If there are moral facts, are they just a subclass of the natural facts about the world? Assuming that we do have moral obligations, why should we care about them? These are some questions in *metaethics*, to which the first part of this course will provide an introduction.

Then we will turn to *normative ethics*, where we attempt to figure out which moral claims – and, in particular, which fundamental moral principles – are actually true. Our main questions will be, What makes an act right or wrong?, and, What makes a state of affairs good or bad? *Consequentialists* believe that an act’s rightness or wrongness is to be explained solely in terms of how good or bad its outcome would be. We will explore this theory in detail, as well as theories about what makes an outcome good or bad. *Deontologists* reject the view that consequences are all that matter. They typically believe that we have *special obligations* (e.g., to our children, to people with whom we have made agreements) that are not explained by the value of outcomes. Deontologists also often believe in *constraints* against certain kinds of behavior (e.g., lying, harming the innocent) even when doing so would lead to the best outcome. We will explore deontology as well.

This is a difficult class, especially for those not majoring in philosophy (but even for many of those who are, as well). Every semester, some people fail it. You must have taken at least two courses in philosophy at the university level to be eligible to take this course. But more experience than that is recommended. Talk to me about it if you are unsure.

Course Website

The course website, which you should check regularly, can be found here:

<http://spot.colorado.edu/~heathwoo/phil3100/>

Here you will find:

- a copy of this syllabus
- many of the readings for the course
- accounts of what we did in class each day (check this first if you miss a class)
- study guides for exams
- guidance on papers
- other important course information.

Readings

One book is required:

- Michael Huemer, *Ethical Intuitionism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). ISBN: 0230573746.

It is available at the CU Bookstore. There will be many additional required readings, which will be available as pdf files on the course website.

Requirements

1. Technology. You must have an email account and regular access to the internet, and you must check your colorado.edu email address and the course website frequently. You also must have regular access to a printer in order to print out readings from the website.

Text messaging during class is strictly prohibited. First-time offenders will be asked to leave their phones on my desk for the remainder of class; repeat offenders will be excused from class. When you get to class, *turn your cell phone OFF.*

If you use a laptop in class, *you may use it only for taking notes.* No web-surfing, emailing, IM-ing, facebooking, etc. If you use a laptop, *disable the wifi.*

2. Many Pop Quizzes (10%). To do well in this class, you must attend class regularly, arrive on time, complete each reading assignment on time, take notes on readings and in class, ask questions when you have them, and contribute to class discussions. There will be pop quizzes designed to test whether you have done the assigned reading and have been coming to class (and are coming to class *on time* – pop quizzes occur at the start of class). *They are open-note*, but not open-book. If you keep up with the readings, come to class, and take notes on both, the quizzes should be easy. If you don't do these things, they will be very difficult. You can drop your lowest quiz score.

3. Two Papers (30%). You are required to write two 4-6 page (1,200-1,800 word) papers (see below for due dates). The purpose of each paper is to defend, by means of rational argument, a clearly-stated philosophical thesis, relating to a topic from the course, that you think is true. Papers above 2,000 words will not be accepted. Late papers will be penalized unless you have a legitimate, documented excuse.

4. Three Exams (60%). There will be three exams during the semester, one for each unit of the course (see below for dates). These will be in-class, short-answer, bluebook exams. To help you prepare, and to give you an idea about the sorts of questions you can expect, a study guide will be made available before each exam. Furthermore, the class meeting before the exam will be devoted to reviewing the study guide. But you must come prepared for this review session by having written out answers to questions on the study guide. To encourage you to come prepared, I will employ the "Socratic method" of calling on students randomly, and asking them questions.

During our assigned final exam slot (see below for date and time), instead of having a final exam, you will have the opportunity to take one of the earlier exams over again. The take-over exam won't necessarily have the same questions as the original exam, but it will cover the same material (and the same study guide will apply). If you don't improve your score on the take-over exam, this won't hurt you – I will keep your original score. Doing a take-over exam is optional.

If you miss an exam during the semester, you will be permitted to take a make-up exam only if you have a legitimate, documented excuse (e.g., non-trivial illness, death in the family, religious

obligation). Otherwise, you must use the take-over day to make-up your exam. If you must miss an exam, you need to let me know *in advance*.

*** Notice that there is an exam the Friday before Spring Break. Leaving early for a Spring Break trip is not a legitimate excuse. If you choose to do this, you will have to take a zero on Exam #2, and then take it "over" during finals week. ***

Grading

Your final grade for the course will be calculated as according to following table.

Quizzes	10%	20 points
Exam 1	20%	40 points
Paper 1	15%	30 points
Exam 2	20%	40 points
Exam 3	20%	40 points
Paper 2	15%	30 points

TOTAL:	100%	200 points

Remember that you can take over one of the three exams (during finals week) to improve your score on it.

We will use a standard "non-curved" grading scale, as follows:

185-200	A	175-179	B+	155-159	C+	135-139	D+	0-119	F
180-184	A-	165-174	B	145-154	C	120-134	D		
		160-164	B-	140-144	C-				

Here are spaces for you to record the actual scores that your receive on quizzes, exams, and papers, as you get them. Each quiz is worth two points. There will probably be ten, but could be more.

<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q5</u>	<u>Q6</u>	<u>Q7</u>	<u>Q8</u>	<u>Q9</u>	<u>Q10</u>	<u>(Q11)</u>	<u>(Q12)</u>	<u>(Q13)</u>
<u>Exam 1 (40)</u>			<u>Exam 2 (40)</u>			<u>Exam 3 (40)</u>			<u>Paper 1 (30)</u>		<u>Paper 2 (30)</u>	

A Possible Course Schedule (subject to change)

'Huemer' refers to our book, Huemer's *Ethical Intuitionism*. All other readings are on course website.

[wk]	Date	Topic	Readings (due on date listed)
[1]	M 1/10	First Day Stuff	
	W 1/12	Philosophy, Ethics, Metaethics	<i>EI</i> , Introduction
	F 1/14	Propositions, Necessity, Analyticity, <i>A priori</i>	Van Cleve, "Necessity, Analyticity, and the <i>A Priori</i> ," 15-27 (rest optional)

[2]	M 1/17	NO CLASS - MLK DAY	
	W 1/19	Non-Cognitivism	Ayer, "Critique of Ethics and Theology," pp. 102-113 (rest optional); Huemer, §2.1
	F 1/21	Non-Cognitivism	Huemer, §§2.2, 2.3, 2.8 (rest optional)
[3]	M 1/24	Non-Cognitivism	
	W 1/26	Subjectivism	Hume, excerpts on subjectivism Huemer, §§3.1-3.3
	F 1/28	Subjectivism	Moore, "The Nature of Moral Philosophy," 329-334.
[4]	M 1/31	Divine Command Theory	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> (excerpt) Huemer, §§3.4-3.6
	W 2/2	Divine Command Theory, Analytic Reductionism	Huemer, §4.1
	F 2/4	The Open Question Argument	Moore, <i>Principia Ethica</i> (excerpt) Huemer, §4.2
[5]	M 2/7	Intuitionism	Ross, excerpt from <i>The Right and the Good</i> Huemer, §§5.1-5.4
	W 2/9	Intuitionism	
	F 2/11	Nihilism	Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values" <i>EI</i> , §5.5
[6]	M 2/14	Moral Disagreement	<i>EI</i> , ch. 6
	W 2/16	REVIEW FOR EXAM #1	
	F 2/18	Exam #1 - Metaethics	
[7]	M 2/21	Return Exam #1, Paper Workshop	Martinich, <i>Philosophical Writing</i> (excerpt)
	W 2/23	Normative Ethics of Behavior, Utilitarianism	Mill, excerpts from <i>Utilitarianism</i> Feldman, "What is Act Utilitarianism?"
	F 2/25	Objections to Utilitarianism	Feldman, "Act Utilitarianism: Arguments Pro and Con," pp. 36-41 (rest optional) Feldman, "Problems for Act Utilitarianism," 52-60
[8]	M 2/28	First Paper Due Indirect Utilitarianism	Sinnott-Armstrong, "Consequentialism," §5 (rest optional). (maybe)
	W 3/2	Axiology, Hedonism	Heathwood, "Welfare"
	F 3/4	Arg. from Psych. Hedonism	Bentham, excerpt from <i>IPML</i>
[9]	M 3/7	The Experience Machine	Nozick, "The Experience Machine"
	W 3/9	Preferentism	Parfit, "What Makes Someone's Life Go Best?"
	F 3/11	Objective List Theory	Ross, "What Things Are Good?"
[10]	M 3/14	conclude Axiology, catch up	
	W 3/16	REVIEW FOR EXAM #2	
	F 3/18	Exam #2 - Utilitarianism, Axiology	
S P R I N G B R E A K			

[11]	M 3/28	Return Exam #2 Kant's Categorical Imperative	Kant, excerpts from <i>Groundwork</i> Feldman, "Kant I," up to p. 106.
	W 3/30	Kant's Categorical Imperative	Feldman, "Kant I," the rest.
	F 4/1	Kant's Categorical Imperative	
[12]	M 4/4	Deontology, Constraints, Special Obligations, Options	McNaughton and Rawling, "Deontology," (§§4, 5.2 optional)
	W 4/6	Rossian Pluralism	Ross, excerpts from <i>The Right and the Good</i>
	F 4/8	More Deontology	Sidgwick, excerpts from <i>The Methods of Ethics</i> Hooker, "Ross-Style Pluralism Versus Rule-Consequentialism" (maybe)
[13]	M 4/11	The Doctrine of Double Effect	Foot, "Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect"
	W 4/13	The Doctrine of Double Effect	
	F 4/15	Killing vs. Letting Die	Thomson, "Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem"
[14]	M 4/18	Killing vs. Letting Die	
	W 4/20	Experimental Philosophy	Greene, "The Secret Joke of Kant's Soul" (excerpts)
	F 4/22	NO CLASS	
[15]	M 4/25	REVIEW FOR EXAM #3	
	W 4/27	Exam #3 - Deontology	
	F 4/29	Second Paper Due, FCQ's, return Exam #3	
[Finals]	W 5/4	OPTIONAL TAKE-OVER EXAM, 7:30 p.m.	

Class Mates

So that you will have someone from whom to get the notes (and any other pertinent info) should you miss class, introduce yourself to three classmates and write their information here:

Name:

Email:

Phone:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Issues, Complaints, etc.

If something is bothering you about the course, the readings, your classmates, the classroom environment, me, or anything related to our course, please do not hesitate to discuss the problem with me. If you don't feel like I am dealing with it to your satisfaction, please bring your problem to the attention of our department chair, Graeme Forbes (graeme.forbes@colorado.edu), and/or our director of undergraduate studies.

Academic Integrity

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at colorado.edu/academics/honorcode.

Anyone caught violating the academic integrity policy (in any way) will automatically receive an F for this course and be subject to further sanctions from the Honor Code office.

Disability Services

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. Please let me know well in advance about any such conflicts, so we can resolve them. Your class participation grade will not be negatively affected due to such conflicts. For more information about the university's policies on these matters, see colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information about the university's policies on these matters, see colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at www.colorado.edu/odh.