

## Syllabus

### Professor

Chris Heathwood

Office: Hellems 192

Office Hours: Wed., 2:45-4:00, and by appt.

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### Course Description

This course is a survey of ethical theory. Our main focus will be on the normative ethics of behavior, where we will study some of the following approaches: relativism, egoism, natural law theory, consequentialism, Kantianism, deontological systems, contractarianism, and virtue ethics. We will also study some theories in axiology, such as hedonism, preferentism, perfectionism, and pluralism. We will finish with metaethics, where we will examine some of the following views: naturalism, non-naturalism, non-cognitivism, subjectivism, and nihilism.

### Books and Readings

One book is required:

- Louis Pojman (ed.), *Ethical Theory: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 4th Edition (Wadsworth, 2001). ISBN: 053457033X. (Note: not the 5<sup>th</sup> edition.)

It is available at the CU Bookstore. If they are out of used copies, you might find a used copy online. A copy is also available on reserve at the library for photocopying.

Parts of the following book will also be used:

- Michael Huemer, *Ethical Intuitionism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). ISBN: 1403989680.

But you don't need to buy the whole book if you don't want to. I will make the relevant chapters available to you in some way or other.

There may be other readings as well. If so, they will also be made available.

If you have very little experience with moral philosophy, the following two introductory textbooks make great resources:

- Fred Feldman, *Introductory Ethics* (Prentice-Hall, 1978). ISBN: 0135017831.
- Mark Timmons, *Moral Theory: An Introduction* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002). ISBN: 084769769X.

I believe the CU Bookstore ordered a few copies of each of these. You might also find them used online.

## Course Requirements

*Class Presentation.* Each student is required to do one class presentation, about 10-20 minutes or so in length (if there is a lot of discussion, your presentation will naturally last longer). For your presentation, pick some *small* topic from one of the week's readings. Then, as we say, "present on it": give the relevant background (if needed), motivate the relevant puzzle or puzzles (if any), present the author's thesis on the topic (if any) or an argument by the author on the topic (if any), raise an objection to something the author says on the topic (if you can). I recommend making a handout for your presentation.

*Short Papers:* You are required to write three short (2-4 page) papers. You will receive a list of narrow topics from which to choose (or you can choose your own topic – but have it approved before proceeding).

*Longer Paper:* A 10-15 page paper is due at the end of the semester, on some topic of your choosing relevant to the course.

## A Possible Course Schedule That Is Certain Not to Be Ours Along with a Possible Set of Readings That Is Certain Not to Be Ours

- Week 1: First Day of Class BS, A Map of Moral Philosophy
- Week 2: Relativism (Herodotus, Benedict, Pojman, Harman)
- Week 3: Egoism (Hobbes, Feinberg, Medlin, Kalin)
- Week 4: Consequentialism I (Mill, Smart, Nielsen, Williams)
- Week 5: Consequentialism II (Hospers, Nozick, Foot, Scheffler, Fumerton and Jeske)
- Week 6: Axiology (Bentham, Mill, Nozick, Parfit, Ross\*, Feldman\*)
- Week 7: Kantianism (Kant, O'Neill, Parfit\*)
- Week 8: Social Contract Theory (Hobbes\*, Murphy\*, Rawls\*, Nozick\*),
- Week 9: Deontology, Rossianism (Foot, Quinn, Ross, Audi)
- Week 10: Virtue Ethics (Aristotle, Mayo, Frankena, Schaller, MacIntyre, Wolf, Pojman)
- SPRING BREAK**
- Week 11: Intro to Metaethics, The Open Question Argument (Spencer\*, Moore, Ayer)
- Week 12: Non-Cognitivism (Huemer, Hare, Gibbard\*)
- Week 13: Subjectivism (Huemer, Lewis\*)
- Week 14: Naturalism/Reductionism (Huemer, Harman, Sturgeon)
- Week 15: Non-Naturalism (Huemer, Shafer-Landau\*)

\*' means this reading is not in either the Pojman or the Huemer.

Short papers will probably be due around weeks 6, 10, and 14, give or take.

The longer paper will probably be due Monday, May 8 (the Monday of "Week 16").