

# INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

PHILOSOPHY 1100, TERM B

## SECTION 201

M-F, 12:45-2:20, Ketchum 1B44

### PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR

Jonathan Spelman  
[jonathan.spelman@colorado.edu](mailto:jonathan.spelman@colorado.edu)

### INSTRUCTOR

Cheryl Abbate  
[cheryl.abbate@colorado.edu](mailto:cheryl.abbate@colorado.edu)

## COURSE HUB

1. Visit <https://aula.education/>
2. Click [Join a class](#) →.
3. Enter the class key [hp8cj6](#).

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In hopes of determining how we should live, we explore a variety of ethical questions and the ways in which philosophers have answered those questions. For example, we will consider theoretical questions like “What makes our lives go well?” and “Are there any general moral principles we ought to follow?” Additionally, we will investigate some more practical questions such as “Do we have a moral obligation to relieve poverty?” and “Is it morally wrong to buy and eat meat?” Along the way, students develop the philosophical skills they need to answer these questions. In particular, students learn to reconstruct and evaluate arguments, devise thought experiments and counterexamples, and develop intellectual courage, empathy, and humility.

## OFFICE HOURS

- Jonathan will hold office hours in Hellems 15 on Mondays (10-11:30) and Fridays (2:30-4).
- Cheryl will hold office hours in Hellems 15 on Wednesdays (11:30-12:30).
- Both of us are also available by appointment. Please email or message (on [Aula](#)) the instructor you would like to talk with to schedule an appointment.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Morrow, David R. *Moral Reasoning*. Oxford University Press, 2017.
  - [ISBN-13: 978-0190235857](#)
- Course Pack
  - I'll post this on [Aula](#).

## TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Studies show that students who write their notes retain more information than those who type their notes (see, for example, [this NPR story](#)). In light of that, I ask that you not use your laptops during class. If you have a compelling reason for using your laptop during class, please let me know. I am willing to make exceptions to this rule in certain cases.

## GRADES

Grades will be assigned in accordance with the university's uniform grading policy. “A” grades are exceptional and are reserved for those students who demonstrate both a comprehensive understanding of the material and competence with the philosophical skills we work on over the course of the semester. “B-/C+” grades are average.

### *ATTENDANCE*

You are expected to attend class regularly. You may miss up to two classes without penalty, but after your second absence, each additional absence will result in a 3% reduction in your final grade. (Note that I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences.)

### *PREPARATION/PARTICIPATION/HOMEWORK*

You are expected to prepare for each class period by reading and flagging the assigned text and reflecting on its content. This will enable you to be an informed, active participant in small group activities and group discussions, which will benefit us all. You are also expected to complete a number of miscellaneous assignments over the course of the semester. For example, you might be required to complete a homework assignment, take a quiz, present material to the class, and/or participate in a debate (in class and/or online). Your preparation/participation/homework grade will account for 20% of your final grade.

#### *HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS*

You will have three homework assignments near the beginning of the semester. If you complete the homework assignments on your own, before class, you will be able to rework them in class with a small groups of your peers. If you do not complete the homework assignments on your own, before class, you will be penalized.

### *READING RESPONSE PAPERS/ONLINE DISCUSSIONS*

Every few days, you'll be expected to either compose a short reading response paper on a prompt or participate in an online discussion of that prompt. If you choose to compose a reading response paper, it should be about 300 words and should be sent to me as a message. In it, you should provide your position on the questions at issue, an argument for your position, an objection to your argument, and a response to that objection. If you choose to participate in an online discussion of the prompt, you are expected to provide original insight that advances the relevant debate. Your post need not be particularly long. In fact, I would prefer multiple short posts to a single, long post. Your reading response papers will account for 20% of your final grade.

### *EXAMS*

You will have three take-home exams over the course of the semester. Each exam will be cumulative, and will test both your understanding of the content and your philosophical abilities. Each exam will account for 10% of your final grade.

### *FINAL PAPER*

For your final, you will write a 3-4 page (900-1200 word) paper. An electronic copy of your final paper will be due at 11:59 pm on Saturday, August 12, and it will account for 20% of your final grade. See the Course Pack for more information.

<u>GRADED ELEMENT</u>	<u>%</u>	
Preparation/Participation/Homework	20	10 assignments x 10 = 100
Reading Response Papers/Online Discussions	30	6 assignments x 25 = 150
Exams	30	3 assignments x 50 = 150
Final Paper	20	1 assignment x 100 = 100
Total	100	

## ASSIGNED READINGS

### *Week 1 – Introduction to Ethics*

- Tue Sean Blanda, "[The Other Side Is Not Dumb](#)"
- Wed CP: Lewis Vaughn and Louis Pojman, "Excursus: A Little Bit of Logic"  
CP: Evaluating Arguments  
[Wireless Philosophy, What Makes an Argument Valid?](#)  
[Wireless Philosophy, What Makes an Argument Sound?](#)
- Thu **Homework #1**  
CP: Constructing Arguments  
CP: Reconstructing Arguments  
[Wireless Philosophy, What Is an Implicit Premise?](#)  
MR: David Morrow, "Moral Arguments," pp. 14-24
- Fri **Homework #2**  
CP: Thought Experiments  
CP: Counterexamples  
MR: Morrow, "Reasoning with Principles and Counterexamples," pp. 57-66  
MR: James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia," pp. 352-356  
MR: J. Gay-Williams, "[The Wrongfulness of Euthanasia](#)," pp. 357-360

### *Week 2 – Metaethics and Ethical Theory (Consequentialism)*

- Mon **Homework #3**  
CP: Tom Regan, "How Not to Answer Moral Questions"  
MR: David Morrow, "[Skepticism, Subjectivism, and Relativism](#)," pp. 92-104  
MR: David Morrow, "[Religion and Moral Reasoning](#)," pp. 105-113
- Tue **Reading Response: Would I act morally if it weren't prudent?**  
CP: Plato, "The Myth of the Ring of Gyges"  
CP: Louis P. Pojman, "Why Should I Be Moral?"
- Wed MR: David Morrow, "Consequentialism," pp. 114-117  
MR: Jeremy Bentham, "An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation," pp. 171-174  
MR: John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism," pp. 175-183
- Thu **Reading Response: Would I use the experience machine?**  
CP: Russ Shafer-Landau, "Hedonism: Its Powerful Appeal"  
CP: Nozick, "The Experience Machine"
- Fri CP: James Rachels, "The Debate Over Utilitarianism"

### *Week 3 – Ethical Theory (Deontology and Virtue Ethics)*

- Mon **Exam #1**  
MR: David Morrow, "Reasoning with Obligations," pp. 26-34  
MR: David Morrow, "Deontology," pp. 117-122  
MR: Immanuel Kant, "Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals," pp. 164-170
- Tue **Reading Response: Is it wrong to tell a white lie to convince someone to have sex with you?**  
MR: Tom Dougherty, "Sex, Lies, and Consent," pp. 233-251
- Wed CP: Tom Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights"
- Thu MR: David Morrow, "Reasoning with Virtues and Vices," pp. 46-56  
MR: David Morrow, "Virtue Ethics," pp. 122-124  
MR: Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," pp. 184-193
- Fri **Reading Response: Is it wrong to commit virtual murder?**  
CP: Marcus Schulzke, "Defending the Morality of Violent Video Games," pp. 101-106  
CP: Morgan Luck, "The Gamer's Dilemma," pp. 107-112

*Week 4 – Practical Ethics (Famine Relief and Eating Meat)*

Mon **Exam #2**

MR: David Morrow, "Reasoning by Analogy," pp. 67-75

MR: Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," pp. 507-515

Tue **Reading Response: Is it obligatory to donate to famine relief?**

MR: Fiona Woollard, "Saving Strangers: What Does Morality Demand," pp. 515-520

MR: Onora Nell, "Lifeboat Earth," pp. 498-507

Wed MR: Alastair Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People," pp. 486-491

Thu **Reading Response: Is it wrong to buy and eat (factory-farmed) meat?**

CP: Dan Lowe, "Common Arguments for the Moral Acceptability of Eating Meat"



Fri

*Week 5 – Practical Ethics (Climate Change and You Pick)*

Mon **Exam #3**

MR: Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, "It's Not *My* Fault," pp. 521-535

Tue **Reading Response: Is it wrong to joyride?**

MR: John Broome, "Private Morality and Climate Change," pp. 535-546

Wed You Pick

Thu You Pick

Fri Kwame Anthony Appiah, "[What will future generations condemn us for?](#)"

*Final Paper Due Dates*

8/8 **Introduction Approval Due**

8/9 **Complete Draft Due**

8/10 **Peer Feedback Due**

8/12 **Final Draft Due**

## **POLICY STATEMENTS**

### *ACADEMIC HONESTY*

<http://honorcode.colorado.edu>

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 at 303-735-2273 or [honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu) and those students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member involved and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information on the Honor Code can be found at the website above.

### *CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR POLICY*

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior>

[http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code)

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, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, 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. See policies at the websites above.

### *DISABILITY AND MEDICAL CONDITION POLICY*

<http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu/>

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. (For exam accommodations, provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam.) Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu). If you have a temporary medical condition or have other questions, see the website above.

### *DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY*

<http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/>

The University of Colorado Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes by any employee or student or related retaliation against any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of sexual harassment or discrimination or harassment based upon the above-mentioned Protected Classes should contact either the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance at 303-492-2127 or [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu) or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550 or [student.conduct@colorado.edu](mailto:student.conduct@colorado.edu). Information about the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at the website above.

### *RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES POLICY*

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams>

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please let me know prior to the third week of classes if one of your religious obligations prohibits you from either attending class on a particular day or completing a particular assignment. See full details at the website above.