PHIL 2314: Ethics (3 cr.)
Section A, Spring 2015

Classroom, Meeting Days and Times: Strake Hall 204, MWF, 9:10-10:00 a.m.

Instructor:
(Matthew) Alexander Schimpf, Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy
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Phone: 713-525-3598
E-mail: schimpm@stthom.edu
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 p.m. (and by appointment)
Course website: https://blackboard.stthom.edu

Course Description:
We will reflect on the goals and components of the moral life, addressing topics such as happiness, virtues, character, duty, conscience, and the natural law. The works of Aristotle and St. Thomas will be the most important resources for our thought about these topics. However, we will also consider some rival theories of ethics such as moral relativism, consequentialism, and deontology. We will also test these theories by applying them to specific ethical problems.

Prerequisites:
PHIL 1311 Philosophy of the Human Person, or three courses in the historical sequence.

Class Format:
Most classes will begin either with a brief debate about some worthwhile philosophical quotation. We will then move into a discussion of the assigned readings in the hope of identifying and clarifying their key ideas. Because our class will focus heavily on close reading of the text and class discussion, the use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, and other electronic devices will be prohibited, except in special cases.

Required Texts:
In an attempt to keep costs down, most of the texts we will use will be available online or at our class website on Blackboard. However, you should purchase the texts listed below. Total costs for new books should be around $30, but lots of used copies should also be available. If you plan to buy them from the university bookstore, purchase them all now (the bookstore will send back the “extras” after awhile). While any edition is acceptable, the page numbers of the assigned homework will refer to the exact editions listed below:

Web Resources:
Some articles and excerpts will be made available on our course website (https://blackboard.stthom.edu). For everything else, we will make use of the free online editions listed below.
http://www.colorado.edu/philosophy/heathwood/pdf/benedict_relativism.pdf

Course Requirements and Policies:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Total points: 100</th>
<th>Due date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texts</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
<td>February 16</td>
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<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
<td>April 13</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
<td>February 27</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25 pts.</td>
<td>May 13</td>
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Grading Scale:

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<th>Grading</th>
<th>Points Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>95-100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>90-94 points</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>87-89 points</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>83-86 points</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>Lowest Pass</td>
<td>70-72 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>77-79 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>73-76 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Lowest Pass</td>
<td>72 points</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Below 60 points</td>
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1. Attendance: Strive to attend all classes and to arrive at class on time. Absences and habitual tardiness will tend to lower your course grade. Furthermore, if you are absent or tardy, I will not fill you in on what you missed; it will be up to you to get the notes from your classmates (should they even be inclined to give them to you).

Should I need to cancel a class, I will do so by emailing you at your university email address. Make sure your address is functional and get in the habit of checking it every day.

2. Participation. Class participation will be worth 5 total points (5% of your final grade). You can participate by posing questions, answering questions, volunteering to read, offering constructive comments, expressing complete confusion, and so on. The bottom line: make your presence felt. Make a contribution in some way.

3. Texts. You are not going to be able to participate well in this course without having the assigned texts with you in class—to that end, you will be graded on it: 5 pts (5% of your course grade) will come from bringing the correct text with you to class on the day we are discussing it. I will check this at the beginning of each class when I take attendance. Should you not be there when I check texts, it is your responsibility to see me after class and let me know that you had the relevant text with you.

4. Exams. There will be two exams in the course: a midterm exam and a final exam. The midterm exam will be worth 15 pts. (15% of your total course grade), while the final exam will be worth 25 pts. (25% of your course grade). Because my exams will be concerned with the focal points in the text that we have discussed in class, regular class attendance will be the best preparation possible for them. To further assist your preparation, the class prior to each exam will be a review session.

The midterm exam will take place during our regular class period. The final exam will take place in our regular classroom on Wednesday, May 13, 8:30 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Since the day and time of the final exam are scheduled by the University Registrar, I cannot change them. Adjust your travel plans accordingly. In general, missed exams can only be made up in the case of documented emergencies.

5. Assigned Readings and Quizzes. Most of the work for this class will come from your engagement with the assigned readings. On the schedule below, the reading listed for the day is the reading you should have completed prior to the class. For example, for class on Wednesday, January 14th, you should have completed your reading of Plato’s Crito.

To help you stay motivated to do the readings and to reward your efforts, there will be 11 or so brief pop quizzes on the readings throughout the course of the semester. You will usually have one quiz each week. Each quiz will be worth 2 pts., adding up to a total of 20 pts. (i.e. 20% of your course grade). I plan to drop your lowest quiz grade. All of these quizzes will be administered through Blackboard (under “Course Documents”) and must be completed by 9 a.m. on the day our class meets.

6. Papers. You will have two papers this semester, each worth 15 pts. (15% of your total course grade). All papers are to be single-sided, double-spaced, written in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, and follow the Chicago style for any citations.
Late papers may **not** be submitted via email. Rather, should you be unable to complete the paper on its assigned due date, you have only one more chance: you may turn in your late paper—again, in hard copy—at the next class meeting that you attend. Any paper later than that will not be accepted. I will penalize late papers by a full letter grade: i.e., a B paper will be lowered to a C, an A- to a B-, and so on.

**7. Extra Credit.** Extra credit may be earned by writing philosophical reflection papers of 1-2 pages in length on official UST events (i.e., not your roommate’s 21st birthday party). Such papers should include a detailed description of the event, as well as an explanation of a way in which the event is relevant to the philosophical topics covered in our class. Each paper is worth up to 1 pt. of extra credit, and you may earn up to 5 total points of extra credit (a possible 5% boost to your overall grade).

**Academic Honesty:**
Every offense against academic honesty seriously undermines the teaching-learning process for which the University exists. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

a. Cheating on an examination or test; for example, by copying from another’s paper or using unauthorized materials before or during the test (i.e. using your cell phone).

b. Plagiarism, which represents as one’s own the work of another, whether published or not, without acknowledging the precise source (i.e. you copy information from a website, without indicating this fact with a footnote).

c. Knowing participation in the academic dishonesty of another student, even though one’s own work is not directly affected (i.e. “Here, copy my paper; we have different teachers, so nobody will know.”)

d. Any conduct which reasonable persons in similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest in an academic setting (i.e. “If #1 is true, then sneeze. If #1 is false, then cough. Rub your eyes when moving to the next question.”).

**Penalty:** The penalty for an incident of academic dishonesty is, at the discretion of the faculty member, either a mark of zero for the work in question or the grade of “F” for the course.

***CLASS SCHEDULE:*** subject to change should circumstances require it (and they usually do)

***Introduction***

   Syllabus [Blackboard](#)
   Plato, *Crito* [Blackboard](#)

Wednesday, January 14: Why Ethics? (pt. II)
   Plato, *Crito* [Blackboard](#)

***The Challenge of Moral Relativism***

Friday, January 16: Moral Relativism
   Ruth Benedict, “A Defense of Ethical Relativism” [online](#)
   B.W. Van Norden, “What is Relativism?” [online](#)

Monday, January 19: No class (MLK Jr. Day)

Wednesday, January 21: Against Moral Relativism
   Mary Midgley, “Trying Out One’s New Sword” [online](#)
   Robert Spaemann, “Moral Philosophy: Are Good and Evil Relative?” [Blackboard](#)
***Aristotle’s Ethics of Virtue***

Friday, January 23: States of Character
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VII, chs. 1-10

Monday, January 26: Virtue, in general
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. II, all chapters

Wednesday, January 28: Particular Virtues--Courage
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. III, chs. 6-10

Friday, January 30: Particular Virtues--Magnanimity
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. IV, ch. 3

Monday, February 2: Particular Virtues--Justice

Wednesday, February 4: Intellectual Virtues
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VI, chs. 1-8

Friday, February 6: Friendship
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VIII-IX, all chapters

Monday, February 9: Friendship
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VIII-IX, all chapters

Wednesday, February 11: Pleasure
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VII, chs. 11-14; Bk. X, chs. 1-5

Friday, February 13: Happiness
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. X, chs. 6-9, Bk. I, ch. 10

***Interlude: The Challenge of Christianity***

Monday, February 16: Happiness—A Different Answer?
Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Bk. II, prose 8; Bk. III, prose 9,10 *(Blackboard)*
PAPER #1 DUE

***Kant’s Deontological Ethics***

Wednesday, February 18: A New Kind of Ethics
Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface

Friday, February 20: The Goal of Reason, Variations of Duty
Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 7-13

Monday, February 23: Happiness, Three Propositions of Morality
Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 13-17

Wednesday, February 25: In-class Review Session
Midterm Exam Topic Sheet *(Blackboard)*

Friday, February 27: IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

Monday, March 2: Duty and Experience, Another Argument for a Metaphysics of Morals
Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 17-23
Wednesday, March 4: Imperatives
   Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 23-29

Friday, March 6: Categorical Imperative (pt. I), Some Case Studies
   Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 29-32

Monday, March 9: No class (Spring Break)

Wednesday, March 11: No class (Spring Break)

Friday, March 13: No class (Spring Break)

Monday, March 16: The Problem of Evil, Categorical Imperative (pt. II)
   Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 32-40

*** J.S. Mill's Utilitarian Ethics***

Wednesday, March 18: General Remarks

Friday, March 20: What Utilitarianism Is
   J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. II, pp. 6-26

Monday, March 23: Of the Ultimate Sanction of the Principle of Utility
   J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. III, pp. 27-34

Wednesday, March 25: Of What Sort of Proof the Principle of Utility is Susceptible
   J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. IV, pp. 35-41

Friday, March 27: On the Connection between Justice and Utility

***The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas***

Monday, March 30: Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas
   “Finding and Understanding Articles from the *Summa*” (Blackboard)
   “Key Terms and Distinctions in St. Thomas’s Works” (Blackboard)

Wednesday, April 1: What Happiness Is Not
   St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 2, all articles (online)

Friday, April 3: No class (Easter Break)

Monday, April 6: What Happiness Is (Part I)
   St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 3, a. 8; q. 4, aa. 1-4 (online)

Wednesday, April 8: What Happiness Is (Part II)
   St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 4, a. 5-8 (online)

Friday, April 10: Attaining Happiness
   St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 5, all articles (online)

Monday, April 13: Good and Evil Deeds
   St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 18, a.1-4, 9, 10 (online)
   PAPER #2 DUE
Wednesday, April 15: Moral Reasoning
   St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae I, q. 79, aa. 12-13; Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 19, aa. 5-6 (online)
   Robert Spaemann, “The individual: should we always follow our conscience?” (Blackboard)

Friday, April 17: The Natural Law (part I)
   St. Augustine, excerpt on Two Laws, from On Free Choice of the Will (Blackboard)
   St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 94 (online)

Monday, April 20: The Natural Law (part II)
   St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 94 (online)
   Robert Spaemann, “Why There is No Law without Natural Law” (Blackboard)

Wednesday, April 22: Natural Virtue, Theological Virtue, and Grace
   St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae, I-II, qq. 55, 62, 109 (online)

Friday, April 24: Applied Ethics

Monday, April 27: Applied Ethics

Wednesday, April 29: Conclusion
   G. K. Chesterton, “The Ethics of Elfland” (online)

Friday, May 1: In-class review session
   Final exam topic sheet (Blackboard)

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 13, 8:30-11:00 a.m.