Syllabus for Philosophy 2314 – Ethics

Date and Time: TTH 5:30–6:45pm, January 13–April 30  
Classroom: Doherty Library 029
Instructor: Stephen Sparks  
Office Hours: Mon. 1–3 in Sullivan Hall 105
E-mail: reformativ_clay@yahoo.com

Required texts:
- Peter Kreeft, *A Summa of the Summa: The Essential Philosophical Passages of St. Thomas Aquinas*’
  Summa Theologica Edited and Explained for Beginners
- *The Essential Kierkegaard*, eds. Hong and Hong

Optional reading:
- Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*

Other recommended texts for additional reading:
- Louis Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*
- Stephen J. Pope, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*
- Ralph McInerny, *Ethica Thomistica: The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*
- Steven J. Jensen, *Living the Good Life: A Beginner’s Thomistic Ethics*
- Yves Simon, *Freedom of Choice and The Tradition of Natural Law*
- John F. X. Knasas, *Thomism and Tolerance*
- R. Hittinger, *The First Grace: Rediscovering the Natural Law in a Post-Christian World*
- John Deely, “Evolution and Ethics” and “Evolution, Semiosis, and Ethics,” readings 2 and 3 in *Realism for the 21st Century: A John Deely Reader*
- Davenport and Rudd, eds., *Kierkegaard After MacIntyre: Essays on Freedom, Narrative, and Virtue*
- C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard’s Ethic of Love*
- Edward F. Mooney, ed., *Ethics, Love, and Faith in Kierkegaard: Philosophical Engagements*
- William K. Frankena, *Ethics*, 2nd edition, also available online:  

Online articles and resources:
- JSTOR, online archive of academic journals, [http://www.jstor.org/](http://www.jstor.org/)
  available online at [http://www.philosophy.uow.edu/ml/edrid/cm/1nmp.html](http://www.philosophy.uow.edu/ml/edrid/cm/1nmp.html)

Course description: A study of the components of moral decision and moral life: freedom, obligation, conscience, objective goods and values. Application of moral principles to particular circumstances.
The course will be broken down thus:

**General Topics:**
1. Moral Relativism vs. Moral Objectivism
2. Ethics and Egoism: Morals and Motives
3. Axiology (Value Theory): What is the Good?

**Major and Minor Traditions in Ethics:**
4. Utilitarian Ethics: Maximizing Happiness
5. Deontological (Duty-Based) Ethics
6. Virtue Ethics
7. Thomistic Ethics: The Ethics of Thomas Aquinas
8. Kierkegaard’s Christian Existentialist Ethics

**Ethics in Relation to Theism:**
9. Morality and Religion: God’s relation to Ethics

**Application:**
10. Applied Ethics

**Classroom expectations:**
Class participation is vital to understanding the material, and outlining key arguments is highly recommended. There may be an occasional pop quiz, and you are required to prepare three well thought out questions or observations on the readings (I will collect these sporadically for credit). Be prepared to be asked for details concerning the readings and your own reasoned opinion on them, as participation is 10% of your grade. Laptops, cell phones, and other forms of disruptive digital multimedia are not permitted.

**Attendance policy:**
Class attendance is mandatory. You may miss one class period without penalty. Any further absences not cleared with a doctor’s note will result in loss of points. *More than four unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.* You are responsible for knowledge of the lecture content and awareness of other matters I may announce in class; if you are absent, be sure to apprise yourself of what you missed. Tardiness, depending on frequency and extent, may also be marked as an absence.

**Exams:**
All exams will include multiple choice, short answer, an essay question, and “identify the author” extra credit. The final is comprehensive.

**Grading:**
Final grade consists in number of points out of 100 earned throughout the semester:
- Class participation: 10
- Short paper: 10
- Exam #1: 10
- Exam #2: 10
- Term paper: 30
- Final exam: 30

**Cheating and plagiarism:**
*Zero tolerance.* All forms of cheating and plagiarism, whether deliberate or “negligent,” will result in an F grade for the class (and may also result in submission of a Report of Academic Dishonesty). You are required to do your own work and cite all your sources.
SCHEDULE

Tuesday, January 13
Syllabus; Introduction to Philosophy and Ethics (review pp. ix-xiv in Pojman/Tramel reader)

§1: MORAL RELATIVISM VS. MORAL OBJECTIVISM

Thursday, January 15

Tuesday, January 20
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 53-59: Harman, “A Defense of Ethical Relativism”

§2: ETHICS AND EGOISM: MORALS AND MOTIVES

Thursday, January 22
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 60-68: Intro to Ethics and Egoism; Plato, “Why Should I Be Moral?”

Tuesday, January 27
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 69-78: Hobbes, “Egoism as the Beginning of Morality”

Thursday, January 29
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 86-93: Rachels, “A Critique of Ethical Egoism”

§3: AXIOLOGY (VALUE THEORY): WHAT IS THE GOOD?

Tuesday, February 3

Thursday, February 5
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 120-22: Bentham, “Classical Hedonism”

Tuesday, February 10

Thursday, February 12
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 123-30: Nietzsche, “Beyond Good and Evil”

Tuesday, February 17
EXAM #1 on material from §§1-3
§4: UTILITARIAN ETHICS: MAXIMIZING HAPPINESS

Thursday, February 19
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 156-63: Intro to Utilitarian Ethics; Mill, “Utilitarianism”

Tuesday, February 24

§5: DEONOLOGICAL (DUTY-BASED) ETHICS

Thursday, February 26
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 216-37: Intro to Deontological Ethics; Kant, “The Foundations of Ethics”

Tuesday, March 3
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 238-60: Bergeron and Tramel, “Rightness as Fairness: Kant’s Categorical Imperative”

§6: VIRTUE ETHICS

Thursday, March 5
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 299-311: Intro to Virtue Ethics; Aristotle, “Virtue Ethics”

Tuesday, March 10
SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Thursday, March 12
SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Tuesday, March 17

Thursday, March 19
Reading: Kreeft, pp. 448-78: “Virtues”

Tuesday, March 24
EXAM #2 on material from §§4-6

§7: THOMISTIC ETHICS: THE ETHICS OF THOMAS AQUINAS

Thursday, March 26
Reading: Kreeft, pp. 11-22, 349-99: Introduction; “Happiness”

Tuesday, March 31
Reading: Kreeft, pp. 400-13: “Willing”

Thursday, April 2
EASTER BREAK – NO CLASS
Tuesday, April 7
Reading: Kreeft, pp. 414-32: “Good and Evil”

Thursday, April 9
Reading: Kreeft, pp. 500-532: “Law”

§8: KIERKEGAARD’S EXISTENTIALIST ETHICS

Tuesday, April 14
Reading: Kierkegaard, pp. ix-xii, 37-65: Introduction; Either/Or, Bk. I (the aesthete’s papers)

Thursday, April 16
Reading: Kierkegaard, pp. 13-19, 66-83: From the Papers of One Still Living (on “life-view”); Either/Or, Bk. II (Judge William’s response to the aesthete)

Tuesday, April 21
Reading: Kierkegaard, pp. 93-101: Fear and Trembling (on the “teleological suspension of the ethical”)

Thursday, April 23
Reading: Kierkegaard, pp. 277-94: Works of Love (on a Christian ethics of love that cannot be ‘suspended’)

§9: MORALITY AND RELIGION: GOD’S RELATION TO ETHICS

Tuesday, April 28
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 356-58, 366-76: Intro to Morality and Religion; Rachels, “God and Morality Are Incompatible”

§10: APPLIED ETHICS

Thursday, April 30
Reading: Pojman/Tramel, pp. 395, 412-20: Intro to Applied Ethics; Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 5th, 6–8:30pm