PHIL 2314: Ethics (3 cr.)
Section B, Fall 2015

Classroom, meeting days and times: Strake 107, MWF, 10:10–11:00 a.m.

Instructor:
Dr. (Matthew) Alexander Schimpf, Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30-2:30 p.m., and by appointment on other days
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. As time permits, we will conclude the course by applying some of the moral principles we have identified to specific ethical problems such as genetic manipulation, sex & marriage, abortion, euthanasia, etc.

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

Class Format:
Many classes will begin with a brief debate about the truth or falsity of a philosophical quotation. We will then work through the assigned readings as a class in order to clarify and correct our philosophical understanding. Because the class revolves around active discussion, the use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, and any other electronic device with a screen is prohibited during class (except when academic accommodations apply).

Required Texts:
In an attempt to keep costs down, many of the texts we will use will be available at our class website on Blackboard. However, you should purchase the texts listed below in hard copy. Total costs for new books should be somewhere around $25, but lots of used copies in good condition should also be available. While any edition is acceptable, the page numbers of the assigned homework will refer to the exact editions listed below:

Course Requirements and Policies:

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<th>Components</th>
<th>Total points: 100</th>
<th>Due date:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Texts</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
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<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
<td>September 25</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
<td>October 2</td>
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<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
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1. Attendance: Strive to attend all classes and to arrive at class on time. Missing classes lowers your class participation grade (if you are not there, you are not a participant). If you arrive late to class, it will be your responsibility to see me after class to request that I mark you as present in my gradebook: as far as I am concerned, you are absent if you are absent when I take roll. Finally, 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.

2. Participation. Class participation will be worth 5 total points (5% of your course grade). One can participate by posing questions, offering answers to questions, offering constructive comments, volunteering to read, expressing complete confusion, and so on. The bottom line: make your presence felt. Contribute to the intellectual mission of our class.

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 texts (in hard copy) with you to class on the day we are discussing them. 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 appropriate text.

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. The final exam will be worth 20 pts. Taken together, exams comprise 35% of your course grade. Because the 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. However, we will also have a review session during the class session before each exam.

The midterm exam will take place during our regular class period, probably on Friday, October 2. The final exam will take place in our normal classroom: date and time TBA. Note well: The final exam is scheduled by the Registrar. This means that I have no control over it, and I am not allowed to reschedule the exam at will. Once the date for the final exam is set, make your travel plans accordingly.

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, August 26th, you should have already read the selections from Plato and prepared answers to the guide questions posted on Blackboard.

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. The first paper will be worth 15 pts. and the second will be worth 20 pts. (together, 35% of your course grade). The papers must be single-sided, double-spaced, written in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, and follow the Chicago style for any citations. The papers will be due in class, in hard copy, on Friday, September 25th and Friday, November 20th. Topics will be distributed by the instructor.

Late papers may not be submitted via email. Rather, should you be unable to complete the paper on its assigned due date, you may turn in your late paper—again, in hard copy—at the next class meeting that you attend. 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 University of St. Thomas events like lectures, sporting events, etc. (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 grade). Papers may be turned in at any point during the semester, but no papers will be accepted after our last “regular” class meeting on Monday, December 7th.

**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; or, your friend adds material to your paper while “proofreading” it on your computer).

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. Tap my foot when moving to the next question.”).

**Penalty:** The penalty for an incident of academic dishonesty may be, 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. Per UST policy, two documented cases of academic dishonesty result in expulsion from the University.

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

***Introduction***
   Syllabus
   Plato, *Crito* (Blackboard)

Wednesday, August 26: Why Ethics? (pt. II)
   Plato, *Crito* (Blackboard)

***The Challenge of Moral Relativism***
Friday, August 28: Moral Relativism
   B.W. Van Norden, “What is Relativism?” *(Blackboard)*
   Ruth Benedict, “A Defense of Ethical Relativism” *(Blackboard)*

Monday, August 31: Against Moral Relativism
   Mary Midgley, “Trying Out One’s New Sword” *(Blackboard)*
   Robert Spaemann, “Moral Philosophy: Are Good and Evil Relative?” *(Blackboard)*

***Aristotle’s Ethics of Virtue***
Wednesday, September 2: States of Character
   Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VII, chs. 1-10

Friday, September 4: Virtue, in general
   Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. II, all chapters

Monday, September 7: NO CLASS (Labor Day)
Wednesday, September 9: Particular Virtues--Courage
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. III, chs. 6-10

Friday, September 11: Particular Virtues--Magnanimity
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. IV, ch. 3

Monday, September 14: Particular Virtues--Justice

Wednesday, September 16: Intellectual Virtues
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VI, chs. 1-8

Friday, September 18: Friendship
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VIII-IX, all chapters

Monday, September 21: Friendship
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VIII-IX, all chapters

Wednesday, September 23: Pleasure
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VII, chs. 11-14; Bk. X, chs. 1-5

Friday, September 25: Happiness
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. X, chs. 6-9, Bk. I, ch. 10
PAPER #1 DUE

***The Challenge of Christianity***

Monday, September 28: Happiness—A Different Answer?
Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Bk. II, prose 8; Bk. III, prose 9,10 *(Blackboard)*

***Interlude: Midterm Exam***

Wednesday, September 30: Review Session for Midterm exam

Friday, October 2: IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

***Kant’s Deontological Ethics***

Monday, October 5: A New Kind of Ethics
Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface

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

Friday, October 9: NO CLASS (Prof. Schimpf at ACPA Meeting in Boston)

Monday, October 12: NO CLASS (UST Winter Break)

Wednesday, October 14: Happiness, Three Propositions of Morality
Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 13-17

Friday, October 16: Duty and Experience, Another Argument for a Metaphysics of Morals
Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 17-23

Monday, October 19: Imperatives
Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 23-29
Wednesday, October 21: Categorical Imperative (pt. I), Some Case Studies
  Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 29-32

Friday, October 23: The Problem of Evil, Categorical Imperative (pt. II)
  Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 32-40

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

Monday, October 26: General Remarks

Wednesday, October 28: What Utilitarianism Is
  J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. II, pp. 6-14

Friday, October 30: What Utilitarianism Is

Monday, November 2: Of the Ultimate Sanction of the Principle of Utility
  J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. III, pp. 27-34

Wednesday, November 4: Of What Sort of Proof the Principle of Utility is Susceptible
  J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. IV, pp. 35-41

Friday, November 6: Utilitarian Ethical Analysis

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

Monday, November 9: Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas
  “Finding and Understanding Articles from the *Summa*” (Blackboard)
  “Key Terms and Distinctions in St. Thomas’s Works” (Blackboard)

Wednesday, November 11: What Happiness Is Not
  St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 2, all articles (online)

Friday, November 13: What Happiness Is (Part I)
  St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 3, a. 8; q. 4, aa. 1-4 (online)

Monday, November 16: What Happiness Is (Part II)
  St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 4, a. 5-8 (online)

Wednesday, November 18: Attaining Happiness
  St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 5, all articles (online)

Friday, November 20: Good and Evil Deeds
  St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 18, a.1-4, 9, 10 (online)
  PAPER #2 DUE

Monday, November 23: Moral Reasoning
  St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 79, aa. 12-13; *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 19, aa. 5-6 (online)

Wednesday, November 25: NO CLASS (UST Thanksgiving Break)

Friday, November 27: NO CLASS (UST Thanksgiving Break)

Monday, November 30: 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)
Wednesday, December 2: 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)

Friday, December 4: Natural Virtue, Theological Virtue, and Grace
   St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q.q. 55, 62, 109 (online)

***Final Exam ***
Monday, December 7: In-class review session

FINAL EXAM: TBA