

# INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

## Course Syllabus

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**I. Term: Summer 2018, Tu, W, Th, F – 10:30-12:00, July 09-Aug 03.**

### **II. Course description including objectives**

This is a general course in philosophy, accessible to all students; the aim of the course is to teach students to think seriously and responsibly about moral matters, about all matters relevant and important in life: how to become a good and responsible person, how to avoid wrong acting and what does it mean to have a life deserving to be respected and satisfied with –not as a recipe in instrumental sense but in the sense in which it is the result of attaining the capability for self-evaluation and self-respect, as well as the capacity to responsibly evaluate and respect others. It is the course dealing with the task how to incorporate morality into the, individual and social, life.

### **III. Course structure:**

1. Ethics and morality: morality as a part of social reality, ethics as the (philosophical) theory of morality.
2. The nature and definition of morality: Morality as a specific evaluational criterion and a social fact: basic distinctions between acts and events, reasons and causes, values and facts.
3. Ethical theories: reciprocal illumination as a test of the feasibility of five ethical theories (direct intuition and “golden rule”, virtue ethics, theory of double effect, utilitarianism (consequentialism), deontology).
4. Meta-ethics, theory of the meaning of moral terms and sentences
5. Meta-ethics, theory of justification within moral discourse, “is/ought” gap, Institutional facts, constitutive rules, social ontology).
6. Cultural and ethical relativism.
7. Religion and morality (Divine Command Theory).
8. Justice and Social Contract Theory
9. Psychological and Ethical Egoism
10. Utilitarianism in more details: instrumental rationality, the structure and scope of consequentialism
11. Kantian ethics in more details: Categorical Imperative
12. Kantian ethics, Universalization, Classification of duties
13. Freedom and Determinism: Compatibilism
14. Applied Ethics, General Features (Three Normative Principles)
15. Illustrations of Applied Ethics (bioethics, environmental ethics, computer ethics).

**IV. Teaching methods:** Lectures, combined with in-class discussions.

**The language** of the course is English.

**V. Texts:** J. & S. Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, an additional packet of texts prepared for the course.

**VI. Requirements:**

**One in-class written exam**, at the beginning of the third week (30% of grade)

**One final paper:** (3-4 double-space pages long, worth 35% of the grade, due on the Monday last week, or at the last class. The paper should be written in the form of critical analysis, must be well reasoned, and argumentative. Be consistent and careful in your expression; length is not a guarantee of quality. See Writing standards.

**Test Exam** (last class), worth 35% of the grade.

**VII. Writing Standards:**

Papers should be written in an organized and coherent form addressing the following questions:

1. What is the issue under consideration?
2. What is your thesis?
3. What is the argument for that thesis?
4. Looking at the paper critically, but with your aims in mind, what should you have done differently? What would have made the paper more effective (plausible, persuasive)? What other questions should be asked about this particular paper?
5. What can we learn from this paper? What should we know or think about after reading it that we might have not known or thought about before? What do you get, or think to get, from writing and completing the paper? What message are you sending to someone who might read it without having to grade it? Are you satisfied with the paper? (That is most important.)