



Boston University Study Abroad London

Boston University Study Abroad London History of Western Ethical Philosophy CGS HU 201 (CGS Humanities) Summer 2014

Instructor Information

A. Name Terry Sullivan

Course Objectives

We are discussing nothing trivial but how a man should live (Plato)

Ethics is a branch of philosophy which in itself is an exercise in being self-aware; it is a radical and critical questioning of assumptions upon which beliefs are based. It requires us to be clear and careful in assessing our views and those of others. Ethics invites us to criticise radically assumptions about good and bad, right and wrong and how they may be applied both to the private lives of individuals and to the wider realms of organised social and political life.

Aims and Learning Outcomes

The course aims to introduce you the nature of philosophy and the philosophical contributions to ethics by examining the ideas of certain major thinkers and schools of ethical and political thought from the times of the ancient Greeks to modern times. It will also invite you to consider the possible relevance of classical ethicists to contemporary ethical controversies.

On successful completion of the course you should:

- Have become aware of the purpose and reach of philosophy
- Have become aware of the of the main arguments of the major ethicists in Western thought
- Be able to apply some of the criteria of classical ethicists to on-going moral and political issues.

Assessment

You are required to submit a 1500-2000 word paper, drawing on the primary source extracts in Denise *et al* as well as at least two secondary sources (all correctly referenced) by the time of the final exam or earlier if you choose. Please address the following question:

Choose the readings of one ethical thinker from the course and analyse them, using direct brief quotations from the original and explicit judgements made of them in secondary sources such as Denise's commentary prior to the readings, Arrington's views and one other source. Strategic illustration, where relevant, from contemporary ethical issues is welcome. **The paper counts 30% of the grade for the course.**

In the **final examination** you are required to answer two questions in essay form from a choice of several questions on each individual thinker covered in the course. **The final examination counts 60% of the grade for the course. You must not answer a question on the same thinker chosen for the paper.**

Presentations

Each student is required to offer a brief presentation in seminars following lectures on each chosen thinker. Volunteers will be called for at the first meeting.

Grading

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism: <http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester>

** Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

Attendance Policy

Classes

All Boston University Study Abroad London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, tutorial, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

Authorised Absence:

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorized Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness, for which students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as possible). **Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence**

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- Illness, supported by a local London doctor's note (submitted with Authorised Absence Approval Form).
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence:

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Lateness

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

Course Chronology

Thursday July 3rd	The Nature of Philosophy and Ethics. Why Start with the Greeks? (Call for presentation volunteers).
Monday July 7th	11 am: Plato: The Theory of Forms, the Allegories and the Good. 2pm: Aristotle: Virtue Ethics and the Good Citizen.
Tuesday July 8th	11 am: Presentations on Plato. 12 Noon: Presentations on Aristotle. 2pm The impact of Christianity on Western Ethical Philosophy
Monday July 14th	11-am The Transition from the Medieval to the Modern World 12 pm Thomas Hobbes: Egoism and Absolutism. 1.30 pm: The World of the Hellenic Greeks. Visit to the British Museum with Professor Helen Evenden. Meet <u>promptly</u> in the Lobby at 43 HG.
Tuesday July 15th	11am-David Hume: Ethics and Feelings 2 pm Presentations on Hobbes 3 pm Presentations on Hume
Monday July 21st	11am: Immanuel Kant's Deontological Ethics 2-4pm Presentations on Kant
Tuesday July 22nd	11am: Karl Marx on Capitalism and the Future 2pm: Presentations on Marx
Monday July 28th	11am-1pm: Utilitarian Ethics: Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. 2-4pm Presentations on Bentham and Mill.
Tuesday July 29th	11am Who was Right: Aristotle, Kant or Bentham? Using Ethical Philosophy to Analyse Contemporary Issues. 2pm: Friedrich Nietzsche. Does he have a Place in Ethics?

Monday August 4th

11am Presentations on Nietzsche

**12 Noon: Principles Underpinning Ethical Controversies:
Abortion, Euthanasia, Punishment etc.**

2 pm: Revision

Tuesday August 5th

11.30am-1.30 pm Final Exam (Two Hours).

Readings

Required Reading: There should be enough copies of the following two texts for you to borrow in the library. Please collect a copy of each prior to the first class. They are the main sources for all presentations. *Please look after them and do not write in them.*

T. C. Denise, N. P. White & S.P. Peterfreund (editors) Great Traditions in Ethics

R. L. Arrington Western Ethics: An Historical Introduction

Additional reading may be found on Blackboard: <https://lms.bu.edu>

Other References on Ethics in the BU London Library

G. Graham	<u>Eight Theories of Ethics</u>
M. Baron (et al)	<u>Three Methods of Ethics</u>
M. L. Morgan	<u>Classics of Moral and Political Theory</u>
J. E. Gracia (ed)	<u>Classics of Western Philosophy</u>
D. Collinson (ed)	<u>Fifty Major Philosophers</u>
N. White	<u>A Brief History of Happiness</u>
M. Timmons	<u>Conduct and Character: Readings in Moral Theory</u> (Very good detailed extracts plus commentary on the great thinkers)
H. Lafollette (ed)	<u>Ethics in Practice</u> (3 rd edition, section 1)
G. Larmore	<u>The Morals of Modernity</u>
R. Norman	<u>The Moral Philosophers</u>
S. Darwell	<u>Virtue Ethics</u>
D. Wiggins	<u>Ethics: Twelve Lectures on the History of Morality</u>
A. Quinton	<u>Utilitarian Ethics</u>
R. Kraut (ed)	<u>Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics</u>
G. Santas (ed)	<u>Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic</u>
T. Hill (ed)	<u>Blackwell Guide to Kant's Ethics</u>
S. Traiger (ed)	<u>Blackwell Guide to Hume's Treatise</u>
H. West (ed)	<u>Blackwell Guide to Mill's Utilitarianism</u>

References on Applied Ethics

J. Nuttall	<u>Moral Questions</u>
D. Robinson	<u>Ethics for Beginners.</u>
J. Driver	<u>Ethics: The Fundamentals</u>
J. Thiroux	<u>Ethics: Theory and Practice</u>
R. Trigg	<u>Morality Matters.</u>

D. Raphael	<u>Moral Philosophy.</u>
P. Singer (ed)	<u>A Companion to Ethics</u> (Excellent section on religion and ethics)
P. Singer	<u>Practical Ethics</u>
P.Singer	<u>Applied Ethics</u>
P. Singer	<u>Unsanctifying Human Life</u>
J. P. Sterba	<u>Ethics: The Big Questions</u>
J. P. Sterba	<u>Morality in Practice</u>
M. Warnock	<u>An Intelligent Person's Guide to Ethics</u>
E. Bond	<u>Ethics and Human Well-Being</u>
J. L. Mackie	<u>Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong</u>
R. Billington	<u>Living Philosophy: An Invitation to Moral Thought</u>
J. Glover	<u>Causing Death and Saving Lives</u>
J. Glover	<u>What Sort of People Should there Be?</u>
A. Cohen and C. Wellman (eds)	<u>Applied Ethics</u>
B. Almond	<u>Introducing Applied Ethics</u>
J. Evans	<u>Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Problems</u>
B. Williams	<u>Morality</u>
D. Koehn	<u>Rethinking Feminist Ethics</u>
M. Cohen	<u>101 Ethical Dilemmas</u>
A. MacIntyre	<u>A Short History of Ethics</u> (Difficult read but makes good critical points)
H. LaFollete (ed)	<u>Ethics in Practice</u> (Excellent discussions of modern moral problems, section 2 onwards)
H. LaFollette	<u>The Practice of Ethics.</u>
C. Clement	<u>Care, Autonomy and Justice</u>
A. Nuttall	<u>Moral Questions</u>
J. Teichman	<u>Social Ethics</u>
A. Nuttall	<u>Moral Questions</u>

References on Philosophy in General

J. Nuttall	<u>An Introduction to Philosophy</u>
J. Cottingham (ed)	<u>Western Philosophy</u>
P. Facione	<u>The Student's Guide to Philosophy</u>
B. Almond	<u>Exploring Philosophy</u>
J. Rosenberg	<u>The Practice of Philosophy</u>
K. Appiah	<u>Thinking it Through</u>
N. Bunnin (ed)	<u>The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy</u>
M. Cohen	<u>Philosophical Problems</u>
N. Warburton	<u>Thinking from A-Z</u>
A. Morton	<u>Philosophy in Practice</u>
J. Gaader	<u>Sophie's World</u>
J. Rea	<u>The Great Philosophers.</u>

Good luck, TJS, July 2014