



Boston University Study Abroad
London

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History of Western Ethical Philosophy
CGS HU 201 (CGS)
Fall 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 to 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 issues.

Assessment

You are required to submit a 2000 word (maximum) paper critically evaluating the ethical thought of one of the thinkers covered in the course up to the deadline. You are required to draw on the thinker's original arguments (found in your class reader), and draw explicitly with precise referencing on evaluations of the thinker found in at least two secondary sources (e.g. Arrington and another book in the bibliography or elsewhere). In addition, where relevant, you are encouraged to demonstrate the relevance of the thinker's ideas to a contemporary ethical issue.

The deadline for the paper is Tuesday October 28th. The paper counts for one third of the grade for the course.

In the **final examination on Tuesday December 3rd (11am to 1pm)** you will be required to answer **two questions** in essay format from a choice of about twelve questions. You are not allowed to answer a question on the thinker chosen for your previous paper; however, you are allowed answer a question on a thinker who you may have offered a presentation in seminars. **The final examination counts two thirds of the grade for the course.**

Attendance

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.

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.*

Course Chronology

(In each seminar two or three students per week will be expected to make a short presentation based on the readings for each class. The whole class, of course is expected to read thoroughly as well and support the presenters). You will be divided into two seminar groups, A & B for the whole semester).

Part A of the Semester:

Lecture: 1.30-3.30pm Mondays, Discussion Groups A& B: 1.30-2.30 or 2.30pm-3.30pm Thursdays

Prior to the first class students are expected to have read:

T. Denise et al	Great Traditions in Ethics (Chapter 1 introduction and Chapter 2 Knowledge and Virtue. Chapter on Plato.
R. L. Arrington	Western Ethics: A Historical Introduction (Chapter 1 Socrates and the Sophists: An Introduction to Ethics. Also chapter on Plato.

Monday September 1st	11.00am-3.00pm. Introduction to the course and brief meetings with groups A & B to allocate presentations. Introduction to philosophy and ethics. <i>Why start with the Greeks?</i> The importance of Socrates and especially Plato
Thursday September 4th	Seminars on Plato
Monday September 8th	Aristotle: Ethics and the Virtuous Character
Thursday September 11th	Seminars on Aristotle
Monday September 15th	The Impact of Christian Theology on Western Ethics: St Augustine's Christianised Platonism
Thursday September 18th	Seminars on Augustine
Monday September 22nd	Christianised Aristotelianism: St Thomas Aquinas.
Thursday September 25th	Seminars on Aquinas
Monday September 29th	The Transition from the Medieval to the Early Modern World. Thomas Hobbes and Egoism.
Thursday October 2nd	Seminars on Hobbes

Mid-Semester Break 6th- 10th October

Part B of the Semester

Lectures and seminars: 9am-1pm Tuesdays

Tuesday October 14th	David Hume's Passionate Ethics and Seminars
Tuesday October 21st	No Class this week
Tuesday October 28th	Kant's deontological Ethics and Seminars (Paper Due)
Tuesday November 4th	Karl Marx on Capitalism and Seminars
Tuesday November 11th	Utilitarianism: Jeremy Bentham and Seminars
Wednesday November 12th	"2071" at the Royal Court Theatre, 7.45pm
Tuesday November 18th	Utilitarianism: John Stuart Mill
Tuesday November 25th	Reflection Time: Bentham versus Kant versus Aristotle and Modern Dilemmas: Film and Discussion. All students together.
Tuesday December 2nd	11.00am Final Examination (two hours)

Course Reading

Required Course Texts:

T. C. Denise, N. P. White & S.P. Peterfreund	<i>Great Traditions in Ethics</i>
R. L. Arrington	<i>Western Ethics: An Historical Introduction</i>

There are enough copies of these texts in the BU library and you will be allowed to borrow them for the whole semester. Make sure that you do not deface these texts and also ensure that you return them at the end of the semester.

You are expected to draw on both of these books for all seminar discussion and for your papers.

Other References on Ethics in the BU London Library

Please note all of the books in this section make references to all or most of the thinkers covered in the course:

G. Graham	<i>Eight Theories of Ethics</i>
M. Baron (et al)	<i>Three Methods of Ethics</i>

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

References on Applied Ethics

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

B. Rollin	<i>The Frankenstein Syndrome</i>
B. Appleyard	<i>Brave New Worlds: Genetics and Human Experience</i>
M. Ridley	<i>Genome: The Autobiography of a Species</i>
A. Cohen & H. Wellman	<i>Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics</i>

References on Philosophy in General

J. Nuttall	<i>An Introduction to Philosophy</i>
J. Cottingham (ed)	<i>Western Philosophy</i>
P. Facione	<i>The Student's Guide to Philosophy</i>
B. Almond	<i>Exploring Philosophy</i>
J. Rosenberg	<i>The Practice of Philosophy: A Handbook for Beginners</i>
K. Appiah	<i>Thinking it Through</i>
N. Bunnin (ed)	<i>The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy</i>
M. Cohen	<i>101 Philosophy Problems</i>
N. Warburton	<i>Thinking from A-Z</i>
A. Morton	<i>Philosophy in Practice</i>
J. Gaader	<i>Sophie's World: an adventure in Philosophy</i>

Additional readings may be posted on Blackboard: <https://lms.bu.edu>

Good Luck, Terry Sullivan September 2014