

PHIL 200
Ethics: Great Traditions
University of Montana
Spring 2009

Soazig Le Bihan

Part I

Presentation and Introduction

Chapter 1

Syllabus

1.1 General Information

- Course Information:
 - Course Number: PHIL 200E-03
 - Credits: 3
 - Class meets: MWF 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm, JOUR 304
 - Prerequisites: None

- Instructor Information
 - Office: LA 153
 - Office Hours: Fridays 8:00 - 11:00 am and by appointment
 - Mailbox: LA 101
 - Email: soazig.lebihan@umontana.edu
 - TA: Tom Aldrich: thomas.aldrich@umontana.edu

- Course Websites
 - The most up-to-date course information (including class notes, homework assignments, announcements, any revision of the schedule, exam questions, links etc.) can be found on the course web site: <http://www.soaziglebihan.org/0901-PHIL200.php>
 - You will be able to see your grades on Blackboard: <http://courseware.umt.edu/>

1.2 Course Description

We all have ethical convictions, that is, we all have beliefs about what is right or wrong to do. We also know that ethical issues are not easy to solve. Various people have conflicting convictions, and we sometimes find ourselves facing ethical dilemmas. A course in Ethics should give the means to critically evaluate ethical beliefs, your own and others'. The questions to start with are 1. whether or no our beliefs are consistent with one another, and 2. whether or not we have good reasons to believe what we believe.

To this aim, we will examine the major approaches in ethical theory. We will carefully read the works of great philosophers, including Aristotle, Hobbes, Mill and Kant. We will also look at the works of some important contemporary philosophers in the field. On the basis of these readings, we will be able to construct a tool box for the evaluation of ethical arguments. With this tool box in hand, we will work our way through topics in applied ethics, including abortion, animal rights, euthanasia, death penalty, race/gender issues, and the environment. Note that the focus of the course will be focused on the Western vision of morality.

At the end of the course, you should be able to:

- show critical knowledge of the major approaches in ethics;
- recognize the origin and context of ethical arguments;
- evaluate the validity and soundness of ethical arguments;
- convey your own ethical convictions with clarity and circumspection.

1.3 Course Schedule

Note that the course schedule is subject to change. Consult the course website for the most up to date class information, especially if you miss a class. You are held responsible for staying up to date even if you were absent. No class day is fixed. I may also add some readings along the way.

Required Texts:

- EMP: Rachels and Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 5th Edition, MacGraw-Hill
- RTD: Rachels and Rachels, *The Right Thing to Do*, 4th Edition, MacGraw-Hill
- SLB: Course notes available on the website

Week 1	01/26 01/28 01/30	Presentation of the course What is Morality? EMP 1, RDT 1, SLB 2 Philosophy and Arguments, RDT 2, SLB 3
Week 2	02/02 02/04 02/06	Philosophy and Arguments – EXAM 1 Cultural Relativism EMP 2, SLB 4 Moral Subjectivism EMP 3, RTD 7 (Hume), SLB 5
Week 3	02/09 02/11 02/13	Subjectivism cont'ed RTD 3 (Mackie) EXAM 2 – Movie: The Courage to Care SLB 6 Egoism EMP 5, SLB 7
Week 4	02/16 02/18 02/20	No class: Washington-Lincoln Day Morality and Religion EMP 4, RTD 5 (Aquinas), SLB 8 Morality and Religion, cont'ed
Week 5	02/23 02/25 02/27	EXAM 3 Morality of Abortion RTD 11 (Thomson), RTD 10 (Marquis), SLB9 Abortion, cont'ed
Week 6	03/02 03/04 03/06	Naturalistic fallacy – Homosexuality RTD 13 (Leiser), SLB 10 Environmental Ethics – Readings on Blackboard, SLB 11 Environmental Ethics – EXAM 4
Week 7	03/09 03/11 03/13	Utilitarianism EMP 6-7, RTD 8, 16, SLB 12 – WITHDRAW DAY Utilitarianism, cont'ed Utilitarianism, cont'ed
Week 8	03/16 03/18 03/20	World Hunger RTD 14,15, Hardin, SLB 13 World Hunger, cont'ed – EXAM 5 Animal rights RTD 19 (Singer), 20 (Machan), SLB 14
Week 9	03/23 03/25 03/27	Animal rights, cont'ed Movie: Death of one's own Movie: Death of one's own, cont'ed
Week 10		SPRING BREAK
Week 11	04/06 04/08 04/10	Euthanasia RTD 17 (Rachels), 18 (Doerflinger), SLB 15 Euthanasia, cont'ed EXAM 6
Week 12	04/13 04/15 04/17	Duty Theory EMP 8, RTD 9, SLB 16 Duty Theory EMP 9, SLB 17 Duty Theory, cont'ed
Week 13	04/20 04/15 04/17	Social Contract Theories – EMP 10, RTD 6, SLB 19 Social Contract Theories cont'ed – Rawls TBA EXAM 7
Week 14	04/27 04/29 05/01	Death Penalty RDT 24 (von den Haag), 25 (Bedau), SLB 18 Movie: Dead Man Walking Movie cont'ed
Week 15	05/04 05/06 05/08	Virtue Ethics EMP 13, RDT 4 (Aristotle) Virtue Ethics, cont'ed Feminism and Care EMP 12, Giligan
Week 16	05/13	Final Exam 3:20 - 5:20

1.4 Course Requirements

The first requirement for the course is that students carefully read all assignments, and come to class fully prepared. This is simply essential for passing the class.

Attendance and Etiquette Attendance is crucial for your success, especially in a philosophy class. You are expected to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. If you have to leave early, please tell me at the beginning of class and sit close to the exit to minimize the disturbance to the class.

To attend a class does not mean merely sitting in class. You are expected to give your full attention to the class. Cell phones or other modes of communications should be turned off for the duration of class. You will be asked to leave if you are doing anything not relevant for class, e.g. reading the newspaper, sleeping, doing work for other classes, etc.

Exams There will be 8 exams, roughly every week and a half.

The first seven exams are non-cumulative. They will each be worth 10 points each. They cover the material since the last exam, or the beginning of the class for the first exam. They will consist in 3 parts:

1. Part 1 : You will be asked to answer 3 questions that test your command of the course content. Your answer should not be more than 50 words long for each question.
2. Part 2: You will be asked to identify the philosophical point in a passage taken from the readings. Your answer should not be more than 50 words long.
3. Part 3: You will be asked to write a mini-essay (no more than 400 words) on a topic related to the material covered in class

The answers in Part 1 will receive a letter grade. Your answer in Part 2 and 3 will be graded P (passing), U (unsatisfactory), or E (excellent). A P will raise the grade for part 1 by one step (B to B+ for example), a U will lower it by one step, and a E will raise it by two steps (B to A- for example).

The final exam is cumulative. It will consist in 12 questions, 9 out of the preceding exams, three on the material covered since the last exam. It will have the weight of three ordinary exams – 30 points.

Make up exams will be given only in extreme circumstances, family death, severe illness, severe car accident, etc. *Proof of extreme circumstances is required in order to make up an exam.* Oversleeping is not an acceptable excuse, nor busses running late, stuck in detox, etc. Take extra precautions on exam days to avoid these problems. Exams not taken, for any reason, will receive a zero.

You will be able to make up only one exam during the semester. The make up exam will take place on May 7th, room and time TBA.

Academic misconduct You are strictly held to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu/SA>). The exams are closed-note: you may not consult anything but your own mind in order to answer questions on the exam. You may not use cell-phones, or any electronic devices to aid you, nor fellow students, nor fellow students' answers on exams, etc. You will receive no credit for any exam that you cheat on. Your conduct will also be reported to the Dean.

Students with Disabilities If you are a student with a disability and wish to discuss reasonable accommodations for this course, contact me privately to discuss the specific modifications you wish to request. Please be advised I may request that you provide a letter from Disability Services for Students verifying your right to reasonable modifications. If you have not yet contacted Disability Services, located in Lommasson Center 154, please do so in order to verify your disability and to coordinate your reasonable modifications. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at www.umt.edu/dss/.

