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**Bentley University: Philosophy Department**

***PH 102-07 Honors/***

***Practical Ethics***

***Fall Semester 2024***

***M/W 5:00-6:20pm***

*Course Image: Stock illustration of two hands holding the earth by illustrator* [*Meriel Waissman.*](https://www.merielwaissman.com/)

**Instructor:** Dr. Kelly Cunningham

**Office Location:** Jennison 221

**e-Mail:** [kcunningham@bentley.edu](mailto:kcunningham@bentley.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 2:00-3:15 (in person) and Thursday 11:00am-12:30pm (Zoom, link on Brightspace) and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In our everyday lives we are confronted with choices about what to do, how to act, and how we should live. We also encounter societal problems like hunger, climate change, racism, sexism, and poverty. In this course we will discuss these matters and develop an understanding of ethical theories that can provide us with guidance for thinking through moral choices and addressing real-world problems.

Throughout this course, students will learn the basic tenets of ethical theories (including deontology, utilitarianism, virtue ethics, and care ethics) and how to apply them to specific case studies that highlight personal and professional ethical dilemmas.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

In this course, you are expected to complete the readings and to be prepared to discuss them during class. Our class will be a mix of lectures, group discussion, and small group/ partner activities. Some of the topics we discuss in this course are controversial. Spirited debate is encouraged, but disrespectful behavior (toward me or your classmates) will not be tolerated**. Participation is required for this course, and it is not possible to participate unless you attend our sessions in-person.** This is an intro-level course, which means students are *not* expected to have prior philosophical knowledge. As an intro-level course, students can also expect that some of our class time will be devoted to developing basic writing, analyzing, and studying skills.

You can expect me to answer emails within 48 hours during the week (M-F). I try to stay off my email after 8pm, so anything received after that time will be responded to the following morning, I encourage you to come to my scheduled office hours or set-up an appointment if you have questions about the course material—it can be difficult to do philosophy over email! You can also expect me to look over drafts or outlines for your final assignments before office hours or a meeting, provided a reasonable time frame (I usually require at least 48 hours to read and comment on a draft before a meeting).

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Below you will find the objectives of this course:

* To develop a basic understanding of several prominent ethical theories
* To apply key concepts and principles from those theories to ethical problems in personal and professional life
* To construct and evaluate arguments in both written and verbal forms
* To engage meaningfully with a diverse array of perspectives
* To deconstruct and think critically about challenging texts and ethical dilemmas

**TEXTS & OTHER COURSE MATERIALS**

Please bring a writing utensil, something to take notes on, and the assigned text to class every day. Readings will be available on Brightspace. No textbooks are required for this course.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE BREAKDOWN**

**Participation (10%)**

The participation category of your grade will be calculated based on your efforts on exit slips and in-class activities. To complete them, you must be present on that day of class. Exit slips merely require completion and in-class activities and handouts will be graded on a ✓-, ✓, ✓+ scale. A ✓ or higher average will earn you full points for this category.

I understand that conflicts may arise, so I allow **three “no-questions-asked” absences** over the course of the semester. You can use these absences for any reason (job interview, mental health day, routine appointment, attending a wedding, etc.). Excused absences will also not count against you. Excused absences include illness, travel for unplanned family emergencies, and co-curricular activities. Notice from relevant parties is expected for excused absences. **Excessive absences will be reported through the proper channels.** It is acceptable to leave early or arrive late on occasion, I just ask that you do so quietly and in a way that respects our learning environment**. Patterns of lateness or early departure from class will adversely affect your final participation grade**. In compliance with federal guidelines [and Bentley University Academic policy](https://catalog.bentley.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/?_ga=2.267311691.459464984.1721947924-731384486.1706020812), students who do not attend or engage academically in any courses during the first week of class will be designated as a “no show” and will be dropped from all courses.

**Reading Notes+ Reading Summary Worksheets (15%)**

Along with this syllabus, you have been provided with a reading notes summary worksheet. The first side of this worksheet must be filled out in full **by Thursday 10/24 at noon** and the second side must be filled out in full **by the start of class Tuesday 12/2**. It is easiest to fill these out as you go!

There are 16 opportunities to complete reading notes noted on the syllabus. Reading notes are due by noon on the day the reading will be discussed in class. To earn full points in this category of your grade**, you must complete at least 4 reading notes** over the course of the semester. **At least one of them must be submitted before the first essay deadline.**

**Late reading summary or reading note worksheets will not be graded.** Both Reading Summary and Reading Note Worksheets will be graded on a ✓-, ✓, ✓+ scale. To earn full points in this category of your grade**, you must complete both worksheets and four reading notes** averaging a ✓ or higher.

**Two Short Essays (20%x2= 40%)**

You will write two short essays (~1500 words) during the semester based on prompts that will be provided at least two weeks before the short paper deadlines. Prompts will ask you to explain key concepts and primary texts as well as construct an original argument. Papers more than 500 words over or under 1500 will receive a half-letter penalty (i.e. if your “A” paper is greater than 2000 or less than 1000 words, it will become an A-). **You are required to bring a draft of your first short paper to class during workshop week (October 7th-11th), so please plan accordingly.**

**Final Assignment (35% total: 10% for presentation, 5% for draft & peer feedback , 20% for final essay)**

Your final assignment will consist of three components: an in-class presentation, a draft, and the final essay. Your presentation and final essay will require you to apply a theory/ concepts we cover in class to a case study of your choosing. A rubric and full description of the requirements for the presentation and the final essay component are available on Brightspace. Early in the semester, we will determine presentation days for each student. Your presentation should be between 7-12 minutes long (including ~3 minutes for discussion). A draft of your final paper is due on the same day as your presentation. Peer feedback will occur during class time on days that you are not presenting. Your final essay will be based on your presentation/draft and should incorporate the feedback that you receive from me and your classmates. Your final paper should be ~2000 words, the same penalty for being over/ under the word count applied (see short essay description above)

**GRADING SCALE**

Your final grade will be calculated based on the points you earn for each of the assignments in this course. I use Bentley’s standard grading scale for assigning letter grades at the end of the semester. Extra credit opportunities require additional time and since not all students have equal access to leisure time, extra credit tends to disadvantage student-parents, students who provide care for other family members, and students who work. For this reason, **I do not offer extra credit.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade Point** | **Letter Equivalent** | **Numerical Equivalent** |
| 4.0 | A | 95-100 |
| 3.7 | A- | 90-94 |
| 3.3 | B+ | 87-89 |
| 3.0 | B | 83-86 |
| 2.7 | B- | 80-82 |
| 2.3 | C+ | 77-79 |
| 2.0 | C | 73-76 |
| 1.7 | C- | 70-72 |
| 1.3 | D+ | 67-69 |
| 1.0 | D | 63-66 |
| .7 | D- | 60-62 |
| 0.0 | F | Below 60 |
| P | C- or better | 70 or better |

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## All courses offered at Bentley University reflect our institution’s commitment to a set of core values and practices.  The links below will take you to full explanations of our policies and procedures related to accommodations and equitable learning environments.  As a student, you are expected to review and be familiar with each of these policies:

## [Bentley’s honor code and academic integrity system](https://catalog.bentley.edu/graduate/academic-policies-procedures/academic-integrity/)

## [Equity and bias reporting forms and procedures](https://www.bentley.edu/equity-reporting)

## [Student Disability Accommodations](https://www.bentley.edu/offices/disability-services)

## [Religious observances](https://catalog.bentley.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/#Religious_Observances_Policy)

## [Bentley’s core values](https://www.bentley.edu/about/mission-and-values)

## The links above spell out these policies in more detail, but I have copied several policies below for your reference.

## FERPA COMPLIANCE REMINDER

To protect student privacy, FERPA guidelines state that professors are not to discuss grades via email. If you would like to discuss your grades, please come to office hours, email me to make an appointment.

## TECHNOLOGY AND AI USE POLICY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

During our first week we created and voted on the following AI use policy for our course.

**PH102H AI Use Policy Fall 2024**

**Permitted uses of AI for this class include:**

* Checking for grammar/spelling errors.
* Translating your own thoughts written in another language to English.
* Generating counter-arguments to your thesis/ response to prompts is allowed, but you must cite the AI tool you used in a footnote if you do so.
* Outlining, brainstorming, and idea generating are allowed, but you must cite AI and/or include the outline it generates for you when you submit your paper. You should indicate ideas generated by AI in a footnote.
* You may also use AI to clarify your understanding of texts/concepts, but keep in mind that AI tools tend to over-simplify and may give you incorrect information.

**AI uses NOT permitted for this class include:**

* Writing full sentences/ paragraphs/ sections of essay assignments.
* Generating replies to counter-arguments (generated by AI or you).
* Completing the reading notes or reading notes summary worksheet.

**Penalties for violating our class's AI policy are as follows:**

* If you forget to cite AI when necessary or to include the outline it generates, you will receive 1 warning and be asked to resubmit the assignment with citations and/or outline. After your warning, your grade will be deducted a partial letter grade for each violation (e.g. and "A" paper becomes an "A-")
* If you use AI to write all or part of your essays, your grade will be capped at 85% for the first violation and will receive a 0% for any subsequent violations. Please note that 85% is the *cap* and not the automatic grade you will earn.
* If you use AI to complete your reading notes or reading summary worksheet the same penalty as above applies.

You may use laptops/ tablets to reference readings or take notes during class. However, your cell phone, earbuds, or headphones should not be used during class. I will call you out if you are caught using them and if the behavior persists you will not receive participation credit for that day. If you are anticipating a time-sensitive phone call during class time, please inform me and plan to take your call outside the classroom.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

## All students are expected to adhere to Bentley’s Academic Integrity policy and Honor Code, which can be found on Brightspace and in the Undergraduate Student Handbook/Graduate Catalog. The policy essentially states that a student should not represent someone else’s work as his or her own. Plagiarism, cheating on exams or quizzes; or other instances of academic dishonesty will result in an “F” (0) on the assignment, and possibly for the course. Serious and/or repeated violations of our AI policy will also be reported. In short, do not cheat. If you are struggling to complete assignments or understand course material, come to office hours, or arrange a time to talk with me.

## ACCOMODATIONS

## If you are comfortable disclosing, please notify me privately if you have accessibility needs that will interfere with the completion of work for this course or that requires other forms of accommodation.

## Bentley University abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which stipulate that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education solely by reason of a disability. If you have a hidden or visible disability that may require classroom accommodations, please call the Office of Accessibility Services within the first 4 weeks of the semester to schedule an appointment. The Office of Accessibility Services is located in the Office of Student Success (JEN 336, 781.891.2004). The Office of Accessibility Services is responsible for managing accommodations and services for all students with disabilities and/or accessibility needs.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings** | **Assignments Due** |
| 9/2-9/6 | **Welcome Week:** | N/A | N/A |
| Week 1 | M: No class, Labor Day |  |  |
|  | W: Syllabus Scavenger Hunt |  |  |
| 9/9- 9/13 | **Welcome Week (cont.)** |  |  |
| Week 2 | M: Philosophy, Ethics, Practical Ethics | “Concrete Flowers” by Kristie Dotson | Option #1 for Reading Notes |
|  | W: Case Study Breakdown & Basics of Evaluating Arguments |  |  |
| 9/16-9/20 | **Virtue Ethics** |  |  |
| Week 3 | M: What is Virtue Ethics? | *On Virtue Ethics* by Rosalind Hursthouse, “Introduction” pages 1-16 | Option #2 for Reading Notes |
|  | W: Aristotelian Virtue Ethics | *Nicomachean Ethics,* Book I, chapters i-v, vii-x, xiii, and Book II, chapters i-vi, viii-ix by Aristotle | Option #3 for Reading Notes |
| 9/23-9/27 | **Virtue Ethics (continued)** |  |  |
| Week 4 | M: Aristotelian Virtue Ethics | *Nicomachean Ethics,* Book III chapters i-vii by Aristotle | Option #4 for Reading Notes |
|  | W: Aristotelian Virtue Ethics + Case Study | Nicomachean Ethics Book X chapters i-iv, vi-vii, ix | Option #5 for Reading Notes  **Short Paper #1 Prompts Available** |
| 9/30-10/4 | **Confucian Ethics** |  |  |
| Week 5 | M: Confucian Ethics | *The Analects of Confucius,* Books I-III | Option #6 for Reading Notes |
|  | W: Confucian Ethics + Case Study | *The Analects of Confucius* Books VII and XX | Option #7 for Reading Notes |
| 10/7-10/11 | **Writing Workshop Week** |  |  |
| Week 6 | M: Writing Introductions, Using Evidence |  | Bring Short Paper #1 Draft to Class |
|  | W: Organization, Writing Conclusions |  | Bring Short Paper #1 Draft to Class |
| 10/14-10/18 | **Mid-Semester Check in** |  |  |
| Week 7 | M: No class—Fall Break |  |  |
|  | W: Mid-course Evaluations, Case Study Practice, + Final Assignment Planning |  | Turn Final Assignment Planning Worksheet in by Friday 10/18; Short Paper #1 Due (turn in on Brightspace) |
| 10/21-10/25 | **Utilitarianism** |  |  |
| Week 8 | M: Utilitarianism & Its Objections | Chapter I: “General Remarks” + first 2 paragraphs of Chapter II: “What Utilitarianism Is” *Utilitarianism* by John Stuart Mill | Option #8 for Reading Notes |
|  | W: Utilitarianism & Justice | **(Optional)** Chapter V: On the Connection Between Justice and Utility |  |
| 10/28-11/1 | **Wrap Up Mill & Start Kantian Deontology** |  |  |
| Week 9 | M: Wrap-up Mill on Justice, Start Kant |  |  |
|  | W: The Good Will + Universal Law Formation of the Categorical Imperative | **First Section 4:393- 4:398** (stop at paragraph that ends with “for self-interested purpose”) and **Second Section 4:412 -4:417:** start at paragraph that begins with “However, in order to progress…” and end at paragraph concluding with  “This imperative may be called that of morality”  *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* by Immanuel Kant | Option #9 for Reading Notes |
| 11/4-11/8 | **Wrap up Kant & Begin Ethics at the turn of the Century** |  |  |
| Week 10 |  | **(Optional)** **Second Section : 4:420-4:425** (start at paragraph that start with “When I think of a *hypothetical* imperative…, end at “are immaterial and wrenched from us” **and Second Section: 4:428-4:435**(start at “Now I say…end at “..of no equivalent, has a dignity”) *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* by Immanuel Kant | Option #10 for Reading Notes |
|  | W: W.E.B DuBois on Double Consciousness | *The souls of Black folk*, “Of Our  Spiritual Strivings” pages 7-15 | Option #11 for Reading Notes  **Prompts for Short Paper #2 Available** |
| 11/11-11/15 | **Feminist Ethics & Care Ethics** |  |  |
| Week 11 | M: Jane Addams on women’s suffrage | “If Men Were Seeking the Franchise” by Jane Addams | Option #12 for Reading Notes |
|  | W: Care Ethics in Practice | Selections from: *The Ethics of Care* by Virginia Held: Chapter 1: Introduction, “Features of the Ethics of Care”, “Care and Justice” and Chapter 2: “Some distinctions” and “Caring Relations” | Option #13 for Reading Notes |
| 11/18-11/22 | **Final Project Presentations** |  |  |
| Week 12 | M: Presentations #1-6 |  |  |
|  | W: Presentations #7-12 |  |  |
| 11/25-11/29 | **Ethics of Punishment** |  |  |
| Week 13 | M: Law, Prison, and Punishment + Presentations #13-15 | *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Chapter 1 by Angela Davis | Option #14 for Reading Notes  **Short paper #2 due by 5pm 11/25** |
|  | W: Thanksgiving Break, No Class |  |  |
| 12/2-12/6 | **Ethics and Medical Practice** |  |  |
| Week 14 | M: Organ Donation + Presentations #16-18 | “Rescuing Lives Can’t We Count?” by Paul T. Menzel | Option #15 for Reading Notes |
|  | W: Euthanasia + Case Study | “Active and Passive Euthanasia” by James Rachels | Option #16 for Reading Notes |
| 12/9-12/13 | **Ethics and our Environment** |  |  |
| Week 15 | M: Justice & Climate Change + Case Study: Montana Ruling | Watch *How to Blowup a Pipeline\** | Edit Final Paper Draft |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | **Finals Week** |  |  |
|  | Attend your final block to ask questions and edit your final paper.  Final Exam Block: Thursday 12/12 from 3-5pm |  | **Final Paper Due by Midnight on Scheduled Final Exam Day (turn in via Brightspace)** |

## \* I plan to host a viewing party on campus for this film on Friday 12/6, though finalized details are TBA. The film is available on Hulu if you choose to watch it on your own time\*

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**Writing Center**

The Writing Center offers one-on-one tutoring for writing and presentations, for students of all years and skill levels. Located on the lower level of the Bentley library (room 023), the Writing Center provides a welcoming and supportive environment in which students can work on writing or presentations from any class or discipline. Students are encouraged to visit at all stages of the process; they can bring a draft, an outline, or just some initial thoughts and questions. Staffed by highly skilled student tutors, the Writing Center is open six days a week, with conferences available online or in-person. Students are encouraged to make appointments in advance. Appointments can be made at https://bentley.mywconline.net. Hours and additional information are available on the Writing Center SharePoint site.

**ESOL Center The English for Speakers of Other Languages Center**

The ESOL Center, located in the lower level of the library, Room 026) offers writing and English language support to students who are English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Its faculty tutors specialize in working with multilingual writers and can provide feedback and strategies on writing for all your course and career-related writing. Day and evening appointments can be scheduled through https://bentleyesol.mywconline.net or by dropping by the ESOL Center to see if a faculty tutor is available.