

**San José State University
Department of Philosophy
Philosophy 61, Moral Issues
Section 4/Fall 2015**

Instructor: Steve Yahn
Office Location: Faculty Office Building, FO234
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Office Hours: Monday Noon-1; Wednesday Noon-1
Class Days/Time: Monday and Wednesday, 130pm to 2:45pm
Classroom: Dudley Moorhead 149B
GE/SJSU Studies Category: Humanities, Letters (C2)

Course Text:

The Moral Life: An Introductory Reader in Ethics and Literature, fifth edition (2011).
Oxford University Press. Louis P. Pojman.

*Additional readings will be provided by the professor

Course Description:

Moral philosophy covering major ethical theories and moral issues.

The application of the above will be reinforced through a combination of course lectures and discussion, weekly writing assignments, and essays. We will use a combination of works involving literature, philosophy, social science, and Supreme Court opinions.

Student Learning Objectives:

Arts and Letters courses should give students knowledge and understanding of significant works of the human intellect and imagination. Courses should enable students to participate in social and cultural communities associated with artistic and literary endeavors, enriching their personal and professional lives.

SLO 1: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.

SLO 2: Letters courses will enable students to respond to significant works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.

SLO 3: Letters courses will enable students to write clearly and effectively. Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness.

Assignments and Grading Policy:

-(10) Weekly Writing Assignments (approx. 1-2 pages), answering given questions specific to that week's readings, (25%)

-A Midterm Exam (take home), (25%)

-A final exam, (40%)

-Class Discussion Contribution, (10%)

95%+=A	90-94.99%=A-	87-89.99%=B+	84-86.99%=B	80-83.99%=B-;
77-79.99%=C+	74-76.99%=C	70-73.33%=C-	60-69.99%=D	59.99%-below= F

There will be no grading curve applied to this class

Classroom Protocol:

- Please no phones in class: turn off your cell phone; no texting or any other phone related function that may interrupt class
- Please use computers in class for note taking purposes only
- Please refrain from speaking, unless you addressing the professor or participating in a student/group discussion. Class participation is encouraged.
- Please make it to class on time. If late, find a seat quietly. If there is a handout or other important class material I will ensure that you receive this.
- Let us provide a welcoming environment, being respectful of one another, helping each other out where we can. Some of the topics we are dealing with are highly debatable/controversial. Please be respectful when engaging and/or disagreeing with another student's take.

Dropping and Adding:

- Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's catalog policies section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>.
- Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar web page located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/2154/index.html>
- The late drop policy is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>

University Policies:

Academic integrity:

Students are expected to abide by San Jose State University's "Academic Integrity Policy", found at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/integrity.html>. The policy requires students to be honest in all academic course work. All faculty members are required to report any violation of the policy to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. This includes, but is not limited to cheating on exams; plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own); assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/getinvolved/orientation/accomodations/> to establish a record of their disability.

*Please see me if you need special accommodation for exams.

Peer Connections: Additional Assistance/Tutoring:

Students seeking additional assistance for PHIL61 can access San Jose State University's "Peer Connections", which provides academic services, including tutoring, to students. "Peer Connections" can be found in the Student Services Building, Suite 600, or at http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/about_us/about/index.html.

I highly encourage students to visit office hours to discuss the readings, or essay ideas.

Topics/Readings/Assignments/Deadlines (Subject to Change)

Aug 24/M: Syllabus and Course Intro

Aug 26/W: "The Value of Philosophy" Bertrand Russell; Ethics Overview: Subjective-Objective

Aug 31/M: *Lord of the Flies (excerpt)* William Golding; "On the Nature and Purpose of Morality" Louis Pojman

Sept 2/W: *Leviathan (excerpt)* Thomas Hobbes

Sept 4/M: **LABOR DAY- NO CLASS**

Ethical Egoism: *Why Should I Act Morally?*

Sept 9/W: "The Ring of Gyges" from Plato's "The Republic", Books II and IX; "In Defense of Ethical Egoism" Ayn Rand, from *Atlas Shrugged*

Sept 14/M: "Egoism and Altruism: A Critique of Ayn Rand" Louis Pojman; "A Critique of Ethical Egoism" James Rachels

Three Classical Ethical Doctrines- Utilitarianism, Deontology, Virtue Ethics: *What Constitutes a Moral Act/Being Moral?*

Sept 16/W: *Utilitarianism (excerpt)* J.S. Mill

Sept 21/M: "Critique of Utilitarianism" John Rawls; "A Defense of Utilitarianism" Kai Nielsen

Sept 23/W: *The Foundations of the Metaphysic of Morals (excerpt)* Immanuel Kant; "Kant's Theory" William Frankena from *Ethics*

Sept 28/M: *Nichomachean Ethics (excerpt)* Aristotle

Sept 30/W: "Virtue and Moral Life" Bernard Mayo from *Ethics and the Moral Life*; "A Critique of Virtue Based Ethical Systems" William Frankena from *Ethics*

On Good and Evil, The Problem of Evil (Suffering) in the World, and Existential Morality

Oct 5/M: "Why Is There Evil?" Fyodor Dostoevsky from *The Brothers Karamazov*; *The Irenaean Theodicy* John Hick

Oct 7/W: *The Joyful Wisdom, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil, The Genealogy of Morals (excerpts)* Friedrich Nietzsche

Oct 12/M: "Existentialism is a Humanism" Jean Paul Sartre

Oct 14/W: *The Human Search for Meaning* Viktor Frankl from *Man's Search for Meaning*; "Life is Absurd" Albert Camus from *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*

Are Moral Values, Ethical Inquiries: Subjective? Relative? Objective? None of the Above?

Oct 19/M: MIDTERM HANDED OUT (DUE: Oct 26, MONDAY) "The Case for Moral Relativism" Ruth Benedict from "Anthropology and the Abnormal"; "The Subjectivity of Values" J.L. Mackie from *Ethics: Inverting Right and Wrong*

Oct 21/W: "Why Morality is Not Relative" James Rachels from *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*

Oct 26/M: "Nabokov and Orwell on Cruelty" Richard Rorty from *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*;
The Lottery Shirley Jackson

Meta-Ethical Detour

Oct 28/W: "Moral Distinctions Not Derived From Reason" David Hume; "A Critique of Ethics" A.J. Ayer

Feminist Ethics and Ethics of Care

Nov 2/M: "Feminist Ethics" Alison Jagger

Nov 4/W: "The Ethics of Care" Virginia Held; "The Ethics of Caring" Nel Noddings from *Caring*

Laws, Government, and Moral Decision Making

Nov 9/M: "The Apology" and "The Crito" Plato

Nov 11/W: VETERAN'S DAY- NO CLASS

Nov 16/M: *Second Treatise of Government (excerpt)* John Locke; "Letter From the Birmingham City Jail"
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Free Will and Moral Responsibility and Intentions and Consequence

Nov 18/W: "Moral Luck" Thomas Nagel

Nov 23/M: "Freedom and Necessity" A.J. Ayer; "Human Freedom and the Self" Roderick Chisholm

Nov 25/W: "The Doctrine and Doing and Allowing" Warren Quinn

Nov 30/M: "The Doctrine of Double Effect" Warren Quinn; "Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect"
Phillipa Foot

Dec 2/W: Suicide and Physician Assisted Suicide, readings TBA

Dec 7/M: Suicide and Physician Assisted Suicide, readings TBA

Final Exam: Wednesday December 16 (1215-130 pm)