

Ethics

Full Course Document

Overview

Course:	PHI 107LEC GRA: Ethics
Semester:	Spring 2025
Units:	3.00
Instruction:	OR (Online: Recorded not real time)
Course Website:	https://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~degray/E25S/
Instructor:	Professor David Emmanuel Gray (he/his)
Contact:	Park Hall 118, degray@buffalo.edu, Zoom Meeting ID: 716 645 3983 & Passcode: 14260
Student Meeting Hours:	Tuesday, Thursday: 12:00PM–2:00PM (and also by appointment)

Course Description

Ethics is the branch of philosophy examining the nature of morality, good and evil, and right and wrong action. At bottom, ethics addresses the most practical question: “What ought I do?” As such, this is not some hypothetical concern, but something with which we all continually wrestle, as we go about our day-to-day lives. This suggests that ethics is an inherent and inescapable part of human existence.

In this course, we will look at several influential attempts to answer that practical question of ethics. Throughout, we will discover how these divergent, and often conflicting, approaches frame present-day discourse surrounding a variety of issues—such as ghosting, religion, drone attacks, gaslighting, implicit bias, gender quotas for university admissions and job hiring, world poverty, eating factory-farmed meat, human rights, alcohol and sexual consent, course grades, and ethical leadership.

As you will soon see, the most important issues in ethics rarely have obvious right and wrong answers. Nor is there a simple “ethics checklist” to consult when you are confronted with a hard choice or difficult moral dilemma. There are instead many different reasonable approaches, and those approaches may often conflict with one another.

Therefore, it is ultimately up to you, *and you alone*, to reflect on and reach your own conclusions on these matters. This means that **I am not here to tell you what is right and what is wrong**. After all, who am I to tell you what it is you should value for your life?

As a result, my primary goal is to cultivate your cognitive and affective capacities for practical deliberation on your own, and with others, about moral issues. This will equip you to better understand these issues for yourself and, in turn, meaningfully engage with others. After all, only the hermit lives in isolation. For the rest of us, **we must be prepared to secure the legitimate cooperation of those with whom we may disagree**.

This is a basic principle of ethics, and I will do my best to immerse you in the deliberative process it entails. I cannot think of a better way to assist you in becoming a future leader in your communities and chosen fields of study.

Learning Outcomes

This course introduces you to the philosophical study of ethics and some of its practical applications. In addition, you will learn (I hope!) more about yourself and your place in the world.

To help guide us, this course has five learning outcomes. By this May, you will be able to...

1. Identify and employ common terminology for philosophical approaches to ethics,
2. Explain and summarize arguments within philosophical texts,
3. Apply important ethical concepts and theories to various hypothetical and real-world situations,
4. Assess competing claims concerning the demands that morality places on your actions and decisions, and
5. Reflect on your own assumptions and form more considered judgments on moral issues.

I have designed all course activities with these outcomes in mind.

Learning Resources

There are no textbooks to buy for this course. The course website will have all the readings along with some reading questions for you to consult. I expect you to read that material according to the class schedule.

The course website and UB Learns will also have assignments and other materials, along with any updates to our schedule.

Course Structure

This is a **fully online** course. It does not meet regularly on Zoom. Instead, your learning will be conducted asynchronously on this website and UB Learns. Even so, I have structured this course so that you have opportunities to learn in a community with your peers.

One thing to note is that **this is not a self-paced course**. Each week you will complete two assigned modules and discuss the material with your classmates on Perusall. Every few weeks there will be a unit exam to check on your progress.

All that said, **don't panic!** This may seem like a lot of work, but throughout the course you will earn philosopher's stones that can be used to turn in work late, redo exam questions, and make up for missed work. In addition, the grading scheme is extremely flexible in how you earn points towards your final grade.

Throughout this course, I want you to not only learn from me but also from your interactions with your classmates. Indeed, like any activity, you get better at reasoning about ethics the more you actually do it with others. As a result, the quality of the course depends critically on your individual attention and participation. The purpose of us studying together as a class is to learn and engage with each other.

To encourage you in all this, I will do my best to make your time devoted to this course worthwhile and well spent. I will also take special care to create an environment where you feel comfortable asking questions and expressing your own views with me and your classmates.

However, a few words of warning about this format:

- Philosophy is a full-contact sport, but conducted as cooperative processes. You and your classmates must wrestle together with difficult moral issues, while not attacking each other. **Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.**
- To get the most out of this class, **please do not confuse this cooperative style of learning with mere conversation or informal, organized chatting.**

Announcements & Other Communication

I will email important information to you throughout the semester, so routinely check your UB email for updates. Otherwise, I will gladly answer your questions, discuss your work, or respond to your concerns. Please feel free to send me an email, see me on Zoom, or drop by my office (Park Hall 118).

Keep in mind that I primarily read university-related email during my regular "business" hours (weekdays from 9:00AM to 5:00PM). Emails received outside of that time may not receive a

response until I am back on campus. That said, I do try to more quickly respond to simple requests or catastrophic concerns!

Schedule

Important!

All due dates and times are Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time. Also, do not forget that **there is an automatic, additional 24-hour grace period** after these due dates and times for finishing the modules and unit exams.

Unit 1: What Is Ethics?

Due January 25 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 0: Course Introduction

- Gray, D. E. (2025, Spring). *PHI 107LEC GRA: Ethics* [Syllabus]. Department of Philosophy, University at Buffalo. <https://www.buffalo.edu/~degray/E25S/E25S-Syllabus.pdf>
- *Optional*: The Good Place. (2016, September 20). *The good place - How your life is scored (episode highlight)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ut0ai4s4mjU>

Module 1: The Domain of Ethics

- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). What is morality? In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 1–13). McGraw-Hill.
- *Optional*: TED-Ed. (2015, December 8). *The ethical dilemma of self-driving cars - Patrick Lin* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixloDYVfKAO>

Due February 1 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 2: Law & Ethics

- Weinstein, B. (2007, October 15). If it's legal, it's ethical... right? *Bloomberg Businessweek*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2007-10-15/if-its-legal-its-ethical-right-businessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice>
- *Optional*: Cannon, C. (1983, September 25). Tylenol's rebound. *The Los Angeles Times* [Part V: Business], 1, 16.

Module 3: Understanding Arguments

- Harrell, M. (2016). What is the argument? *An introduction to philosophical argument and analysis*. MIT Press.

Supplemental Module S1: Ghosting

- Dular, N. (2021). Boy bye: A feminist defense of Ghosting. In B. Fischer (Ed.), *College ethics: A reader on moral issues that affect you* (2nd ed., pp. 67–81). Oxford University Press.
- *Optional*: Earl, D. (2015, March). The four-sentence paper: A template for considering objections and replies. *Teaching Philosophy*, 38(1), 49–76.
- *Optional*: Alison. (2019, July 10). *Horrible 'nice guy' text exchange shows why you should never give out a woman's number without permission*. Ruin My Week. <https://ruinmyweek.com/trending/reddit-nice-guy-bad-friend-texts/>

Due February 3 (Monday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Unit 1 Exam

Posted at 12:00pm (noon) on Monday, September 9.

Unit 2: On What is Morality Grounded?

Due February 8 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 4: Cultural Relativism

- Midgley, M. (2003). Trying out one's new sword. In *Heart and mind: The varieties of moral experience* (revised ed., pp. 80–87). Routledge. (Original work from 1981)
- *Optional*: Benedict, R. (1934). Anthropology and the abnormal. *Journal of General Psychology*, 10(1), 59–82.

Module 5: Ethical Subjectivism

- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2012). Subjectivism in ethics. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (7th ed., pp. 32–48). McGraw-Hill.
- *Optional*: Hume, D. (1978). *A treatise of human nature* (L. A. Shelby-Bigge & P. H. Nidditch, Eds.; 2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. (Original work from 1739–1740)
- *Optional*: Hume, D. (1975). *An enquiry concerning the principles of morals*. In L. A. Shelby-Bigge & P. H. Nidditch (Eds.), *Enquiries concerning human understanding and concerning the principles of morals* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press. (Original work from 1777)

Due February 15 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 6: Divine Command Theory

- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). Does morality depend on religion? In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 50–65). McGraw-Hill.
- *Optional*: Plato. (1989). *Euthyphro*. In R. E. Allen (Trans.), *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Gorgias, Menexenus* (pp. 41–58). Yale University Press. (Original work from ca. 380 B.C.E.)
- *Optional*: Flores, S. O. (2019, May 16). Blog: Classics and pop music: Classical allusions and literary techniques in the music of Jay-Z. *Society for Classical Studies*. <https://classicalstudies.org/scs-blog/samuel-ortencio-flores/blog-classics-and-pop-music-classical-allusions-and-literary>

Module 7: Justification in Ethics

- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). Moral reasoning. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 10–12). McGraw-Hill.
- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2012). Are there proofs in ethics. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (7th ed., pp. 41–44). McGraw-Hill.
- *Optional*: Worricker, J. (Host). (2015, September 13). [Justifying a drone attack in Syria] [Radio broadcast transcript]. In *Weekend*. BBC World Service. (D. E. Gray, Transcription)

Supplemental Module S2: God & The Basis of Morality

- English revised version of the King James bible. (2014). *Genesis 22* [The binding of Isaac]. Bible Hub. <https://biblehub.com/erv/genesis/22.htm> (Original work from 1885)
- Kretzmann, N. (1983). Abraham, Isaac, and Euthyphro: God and the basis of morality. In D. V. Stump, J. A. Arieti, L. Gerson, & E. Stump (Eds.), *Hamartia: The concept of error in the western tradition* (pp. 27–50). Edwin Mellon Press.
- *Optional*: English revised version of the King James bible. (2014). *Genesis 18* [Abraham pleads for justice]. Bible Hub. <https://biblehub.com/erv/genesis/18.htm> (Original work from 1885)

Due February 22 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 8: Gaslighting

- Abramson, K. (2014, December). Turning up the lights on gaslighting. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 28(1), 59–82.
- *Optional*: Holway, H. (2020, December 2). *Beyond the final girl: The invisible man and the horror of gaslighting*. Talk Film Society. <https://talkfilmsociety.com/columns/beyond-the-final-girl-the-invisible-man-and-the-horror-of-gaslighting>

Module 9: Prejudice & Quotas

- Rachels, J. (1997). Coping with prejudice. In *Can ethics provide answers? And other essays in moral philosophy* (pp. 199–212). Rowman & Littlefield.

Due February 24 (Monday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Unit 2 Exam

Posted at 12:00pm (noon) on Monday, September 30.

Unit 3: Do the Interests of Others Matter?

Due March 1 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 10: Psychological Egoism

- Rachels, J. (2003). Psychological egoism. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (4th ed., pp. 63–75). McGraw-Hill.
- Optional: Plato. (2004). [The ring of Gyges]. In C. D. Reeve (Trans.), *Republic* (pp. 37–39). Hackett. (Original work from ca. 380 B.C.E.)
- Optional: The Good Place. (2018, December 28). *Mother forkin' morals with Dr. Todd May - Part 3: Psychological egoism - The good place (exclusive)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtplsRk8tzg>

Module 11: Ethical Egoism

- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). Ethical egoism. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 66–83). McGraw-Hill.
- Optional: Rand, A. (1957). *Atlas shrugged*. Random House.

Due March 8 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 12: World Poverty

- Singer, P. (1972, Spring). Famine, affluence, and morality. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1(3), 229–243.
- Optional: Cottom, T. M. (2013, November 1). *Why do poor people 'waste' money on luxury goods?* Talking Points Memo. <https://talkingpointsmemo.com/cafe/why-do-poor-people-waste-money-on-luxury-goods>

Module 13: Morality & Animals

- Singer, P. (2002). *Animal liberation* (2002 ed.). HarperCollins.
- Optional: Wayman, S. (1966, February 4). Concentration Camps for Dogs. *Life*, 60(5), 22–29.

Due March 10 (Monday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Unit 3 Exam

Posted at 12:00pm (noon) on Thursday, October 17.

Unit 4: Utilitarianism & Its Limits

Due March 15 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 14: Classical Utilitarianism

- Bentham, J. (2017). *An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation*. (J. Bennet, Ed. & Trans.). Early Modern Texts. https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/bentham1780_1.pdf (Original work from 1780/1789/1823)
- Optional: The Good Place. (2018, December 21). *Mother forkin' morals with Dr. Todd May - Part 2: Utilitarianism - The good place (exclusive)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuVreCbQOwc>

Module 15: Are Pleasure & Happiness the Greatest Goods?

- Nozick, R. (1974). The experience machine. In *Anarchy, state, and utopia* (pp. 42–45). Blackwell.
- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). Is pleasure all that matters? In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 119–120). McGraw-Hill.

Due March 29 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 16: Deliberative Utilitarianism

- Mill, J. S. (2017). What utilitarianism is. In J. Bennet (Ed. & Trans.), *Utilitarianism*. Early Modern Texts. <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1863.pdf> (Original work from 1861)
- Optional: Gray, D. E. (2020, October 19). *Introduction to ethics - Module 18, video 4 - The pluralist total view* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0M5jiOztfLI>

Module 17: Criticisms of Utilitarianism

- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). The debate over utilitarianism. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 118–132). McGraw-Hill.
- Le Guin, U. K. (1973, October). The ones who walk away from Omelas. In R. Silverberg (Ed.), *New dimensions 3* (pp. 1–8). Nelson Doubleday.
- Williams, B. (1973). A critique of utilitarianism. In J. J. C. Smart and B. Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and against* (pp. 77–150). Cambridge University Press.
- Optional: Johnson, H. M. (2003, February 16). Unspeakable conversations. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/16/magazine/unspeakable-conversations.html>

Supplemental Module S3: Justice & The Greater Good

- Mill, J. S. (2003). On the connexion between justice and utility. In M. Warnock (Ed.), *Utilitarianism and on liberty* (2nd ed., pp. 216–235). Blackwell. (Original work from 1861)
- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). The defense of utilitarianism. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 125–131). McGraw-Hill.

Due March 31 (Monday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Unit 4 Exam

Posted at 12:00pm (noon) on Monday, November 4.

Unit 5: Deontological Approaches

Due April 5 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 18: Constraints on Action

- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). Harry Truman and Elizabeth Anscombe. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 133–135). McGraw-Hill.
- Nozick, R. (1974). Moral constraints and the state. In *Anarchy, state, and utopia* (pp. 26–53). Blackwell.

Module 19: The Nature & Ambiguity of Rights

- United Nations General Assembly. (1948, December 10). *The universal declaration of human rights* (Resolution 217 A).
- Kagan, S. (1998). Rights. In *Normative ethics* (pp. 170–177). Westview Press.
- *Optional*: United Nations. (2018, December 7). *The universal declaration of human rights - Add your voice* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBiA_7yU0nc

Supplemental Module S4: Moral Dilemmas & Dirty Hands

- Walzer, M. (1973, Winter). Political action: The problem of dirty hands. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 2(2), 160–180.
- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). Conflicts between rules. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 140–141). McGraw-Hill.

Due April 12 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 20: Kantian Ethics

- Korsgaard, C. M. (1998). Introduction. In I. Kant (Author) & M. Gregor (Trans. & Ed.), *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals* (pp. vii–xxx). Cambridge University Press.
- *Optional*: Kant, I. (1998). *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals*. (M. Gregor, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work from 1785)
- *Optional*: The Good Place. (2019, January 3). *Mother forkin' morals with Dr. Todd May - Part 4: Deontology - The good place (exclusive)* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2S_XuJTOEJY
- *Optional*: CrashCourse. (2016, November 14). *Kant & Categorical Imperatives: Crash Course Philosophy #35* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8blys6JoEDw>

Module 21: Sexual Consent

- Dixon, N. (2001, October). Alcohol and rape. *Public Affairs Quarterly*, 15(4), 341–354.

Due April 14 (Monday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Unit 5 Exam

Posted at 12:00pm (noon) on Monday, November 18.

Unit 6: Morality Beyond Universal Rules & Principles

Due April 26 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 22: Ethics of Care

- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (2018). Feminism and the ethics of care. In *The elements of moral philosophy* (9th ed., pp. 156–168). McGraw-Hill.
- *Optional*: Grimshaw, J. (1991). The idea of a female ethic. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A companion to ethics* (pp. 491–499). Blackwell.

Module 23: Virtue Ethics

- Wolff, J. (2018). Virtue ethics: Aristotle. In *An introduction to moral philosophy* (pp. 200–218). W. W. Norton & Company.
- Aristotle. (2009). [Particular moral virtues]. In W. D. Ross (Trans.) & L. Brown, (Ed.), *Nicomachean ethics* (pp. 32–34). Oxford University Press. (Original work from ca. 350 B.C.E.)
- *Optional*: Aristotle. (2009). *Nicomachean ethics*. (W. D. Ross, Trans., L. Brown, Ed.). Oxford University Press. (Original work from ca. 350 B.C.E.)
- *Optional*: CrashCourse. (2016, December 5). *Aristotle & Virtue Theory: Crash Course Philosophy #38* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrvtOWEXDIQ>

Supplemental Module S5: Excellence of Intellect

- Aristotle. (2002). [Excellence of intellect: Selections from book VI]. In S. Broadie (Ed.) & C. Rowe (Trans.), *Nicomachean ethics* (pp. 176–189). Oxford University Press. (D. E. Gray, supplementary footnotes with alternative typesetting). (Original work from ca. 350 B.C.E.)
- Maher, B. (Host). (2001, September 17). [Courage and the 9/11 hijackers] [TV series episode transcript]. *Politically incorrect*. American Broadcasting Company. (D. E. Gray, Transcription).

Due May 3 (Saturday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Module 24: Are Course Grades BS?

- Stommel, J. (2018, March 11). *How to ungrade*. Jesse Stommel. <https://www.jessestommel.com/how-to-ungrade/>
- *Optional*: Frankfurt, H. (1988). On bullshit. In *The importance of what we care about: Philosophical essays* (pp. 117–133). Cambridge University Press.
- *Optional*: Schneider, J., & Hutt, E. (2014). Making the grade: A history of the A–F marking scheme. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 46(2), 201–224.
- *Optional*: Stone, D., & Heen, S. (2014). Separate appreciation, coaching, and evaluation. In *Thanks for the feedback: The science and art of receiving feedback well* (pp. 29–45). Penguin Books.

Module 25: Philosophy, Ethics & Leadership

- Plato. (2004). [The allegory of the cave]. In C. D. Reeve (Trans.), *Republic* (pp. 208–212). Hackett. (Original work from ca. 380 B.C.E.)
- Plato. (1989). *Apology*. In R. E. Allen (Trans.), *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Gorgias, Menexenus* (pp. 79–104). Yale University Press. (Original work from ca. 380 B.C.E.)

Due May 5 (Monday) at 11:59pm (midnight):

Unit 6 Exam

Posted at 12:00pm (noon) on Monday, December 9.

Optional Readings & Supplemental Modules

In case you are curious to learn more and dig even deeper into some of these topics, I have provided optional readings and supplemental modules. These are *optional*: while I may discuss these materials in my lecture videos, *you are neither required nor expected to have actually done any of them*. However, you may **earn bonus philosophy experience points** by completing activities in the supplemental modules.

Activities (Course Requirements) & Grading Scheme

I will measure your progress and success in this course by having you engage in these three types of activities:

- Participation in **social annotating the readings** on Perusall, which has you work with your classmates in order to better understand what that material is trying to convey while applying it to your own lived experiences;
- **Quizzes** embedded in my videos and posted at the end of each module, that check your basic understanding of that material; and
- **Unit exams** that have you demonstrate your knowledge of key terminology and the arguments from the reading, apply course material to new cases, compare competing claims about ethics, and justify positions of your own on moral issues.

As you complete these activities, **you will earn philosophy experience points**:

Earning Philosophy Experience Points		
Activity	Experience Points	Total Points Available
Social Annotations	100 per module	2,500
Quizzes	100 per module	2,500
Unit Exams	1,000 per exam	6,000
Total		11,000

You have entered this class as a New Philosophy Student, but as you do these activities and earn philosophy experience points **you will advance to higher levels**. The level at which you end the semester will determine your final letter grade in the course:

Philosopher Advancement			
Experience Points	Level	Title	Letter Grade
Less than 3,399	1	New Philosophy Student	F1
3,400 to 3,899	2	Philosophy Student	D–
3,900 to 4,399	3	Philosophy Initiate	D
4,400 to 4,899	4	Novice Philosopher	D+
4,900 to 5,499	5	Apprentice Philosopher	C–
5,500 to 6,099	6	Unemployed Philosopher	C
6,100 to 6,699	7	Armchair Philosopher	C+
6,700 to 7,399	8	Stand-Up Philosopher	B–
7,400 to 8,099	9	Assistant Philosophy Professor	B
8,100 to 8,799	10	Associate Philosophy Professor	B+
8,800 to 9,599	11	Philosophy Professor	A–
9,600 to 10,399	12	Philosopher Royale	A
10,400 or higher	13	Philosopher Supreme	A+

UB does not allow final course grades to be an A+ or a D-. Therefore, a final course grade of an A+ will be assigned an A and a final grade of a D- will be assigned a D.

This philosophy experience point structure means that **you are free to choose some activities and skip others**. You are also free to decide how much you want to engage in the course.

Some students will reach the level of Unemployed Philosopher and then vanish. Fair enough! Others will not relent until they are Philosopher Supreme. Great—go for it! In the end, I will support whatever choice you make.

24-Hour Grace Period

All activities (including unit exams) have an automatic 24-hour grace period. This means that you are free to finish any activity up to 24 hours after its official due date/time without penalty.

In short, all activities have an automatic 24-hour extension. Further extensions will require the use of philosopher's stones and/or reasonable accommodations.

Frequently Asked Questions About Grades

Q: What is my current grade in the class?

One reason for using this philosophy experience point structure is so that no one needs to agonize over letter grades. The focus should be on doing better in the course (see the next question). This is why **I only calculate letter grades *once* for this course**: when I submit final letter grades to UB based on the total number of points you ultimately earned.

All that said, if you are earning less than 40% of the possible points on activities, then you may struggle to pass the course. Meanwhile, if you are earning more than 93%, you are well on your way to becoming Philosopher Supreme with an A+. My advice is that it is okay to relax if you are earning around 80% of the possible points—in that case, you're on track for earning something in the B+/A- range.

Finally, don't forget about philosopher's stones. For many students, these make a *huge* difference at the end of the semester, when they use them to make up for missed activities.

Q: How can I do better in the course?

Just keep focused on earning more philosophy experience points. This is the way to raise your level in the course and so earn a higher final letter grade. Doing the optional supplemental modules will almost certainly help with that.

Beyond that, the most common barrier to success in this course is **procrastination**. Students who start the modules early are then able to complete things without feeling stressed and rushed. Indeed, students who pace themselves throughout the week tend to earn significantly more points. This is why I post those weekly “Suggested Success Plans”. Follow those and I suspect you’ll start earning a lot more points! (There is also pretty robust data that says spreading things out is far better than cramming it all in at the last minute.)

Q: Can I still get a [Letter Grade] in this course?

Recall that your final course grade is based on your total number of philosophy experience points at the end of the semester. You can see this in the Philosopher Advancement table above, which converts experience points into letter grades. So earning your desired letter grade requires that you earn the number of points that grade requires.

You can log into UB Learns and see your current number of philosophy experience points. You can then look that number up in that Philosopher Advancement table above to see where you currently stand. You can then use that to see how many more points you still need in order to earn the grade you actually desire. If there are enough activities remaining in the semester, then it may indeed be possible for you to earn the grade you desire.

For instance, suppose you currently have 6,400 philosophy experience points—but you want a B+. Looking in that Philosopher Advancement table above, you’ll see that a B+ requires at least 8,100 points. So that means you’ll need to earn at least 1,700 more points to get that B+. Now you can then compare that 1,700 points you need to what activities remain for the course. Suppose there are still 6 modules and 2 unit exams remaining. In that case, there is a total of 3,200 more points that you may still earn—so it would be possible for you to earn a B+ (or even higher) in the course.

Philosopher’s Stones

You initially have 3 philosopher’s stones to use during this course. Based on your performance on the modules and unit exams, you will earn even more philosopher’s stones. You may then exchange your philosopher’s stones to unleash special philosophical powers!

Earning Philosopher’s Stones

You will earn additional philosopher’s stones based on the philosophy experience points you earn for each module (that is, the sum total of points you earn from that module’s social annotations and quizzes):

Points Earned for a Single Module	Stones Earned
0 to 119	0

120 to 139	0.01
140 to 159	0.03
160 to 179	0.06
180 or higher	0.1

Please note that any philosophy experience points earned through the Decipher Script and Borrow Knowledge powers do not count towards earning new philosopher's stones. In addition, stones are not earned from Module 0 and/or any of the supplemental modules.

You will also earn additional philosopher's stones based the philosophy experience points you earn on each unit exam:

Points Earned on a Single Unit Exam	Stones Earned
0 to 399	0
400 to 549	0.1
550 to 699	0.3
700 to 849	0.6
850 or higher	1

Please note that any philosophy experience points earned through the Reverse Time power do not count towards earning new philosopher's stones.

You use your philosopher's stones by filling out an online Google Form. Once you have submitted this form, you will receive an email receipt. This receipt is official approval, so once you receive it, go ahead and do the thing you used the philosopher's stones on. (I will contact you if there is an issue with your request.)

Using Philosopher's Stones

As you earn philosopher's stones, you may exchange them to unleash special philosophical powers!

Time Stop (M)

Cost: 1 philosopher's stone.
Area of Effect: 1 module.
Duration: Up to 48 hours.

You select 1 module and give up 1 philosopher's stone. You then gain an extra 48-hour extension for completing that module's social annotations and quizzes. Please note that this extension begins *immediately after* the 24-hour grace period has ended.

If you have enough stones, you may use this power multiple times for additional 48-hour extensions on the same module.

Please note that this *cannot* be used on any of the supplemental modules. Those modules must be completed before the grace period ends.

Time Stop (E)

Cost: 1 philosopher's stone.
Area of Effect: 1 unit exam.
Duration: Up to 6 hours.

You select 1 unit exam and give up 1 philosopher's stone. You then gain an extra 6-hour extension for completing that exam. Please note that this extension begins *immediately after* the 24-hour grace period has ended.

If you have enough stones, you may use this power multiple times for additional 6-hour extensions on the same unit exam.

Decipher Script

Cost: 2 philosopher's stones.
Area of Effect: All the social annotations for 1 module.
Duration: Instantaneous.

You select 1 module and give up 2 philosopher's stones. You then gain the full 100 philosophy experience points for all that module's social annotations.

Please note that this does *not* give you the points for the social annotations in Module 0 and/or any of the supplemental modules. Those points must be earned by actually making those annotations.

You may do Decipher Script at *any time* during the semester. For example, in week 12 you may use your stones on the social annotations for module 3.

Borrowed Knowledge

Cost: 2 philosopher's stones.
Area of Effect: All the quizzes for 1 module.
Duration: Instantaneous.

You select 1 module and give up 2 philosopher's stones. You then gain the full 100 philosophy experience points for all that module's quizzes.

Please note that this does *not* give you the points for the quizzes in Module 0 and/or any of the supplemental modules. Those points must be earned by actually completing those quizzes.

You may do Borrowed Knowledge at *any time* during the semester. For example, in week 10 you may use your stones on the quizzes from module 2.

Reverse Time

Cost: 6 philosopher's stones.
Area of Effect: 1 unit exam.
Duration: Up to 1 week.

You select 1 unit exam and give up 6 philosopher's stones. You then have up to 1 week—from when it was returned—to redo that entire exam. (This includes a unit exam that you missed, skipped, or otherwise did not complete.) The points you earn on this second attempt—regardless of whether that new number of points is higher or lower than your original number—will completely replace the points you earned on your first attempt.

Reverse Time may only be done once for any given unit exam.

Finally, for each philosopher's stone that you do not use by the end of the course, you will earn 20 philosophy experience points.

So use your philosopher's stones wisely!

Modules & Units

This course consists of 25 modules across 6 units. Each module will cover a specific topic within ethics and consist of the following activities:

- A **social annotations reading activity** (in Perusall) with reading questions,
- Several **video lectures** (in Panopto) with embedded quiz questions, and
- An **end-of-module quiz** (in UB Learns).

You are expected to complete 2 modules a week, according to the class schedule. For these purposes, each week ends on Saturday at 11:59PM (midnight), Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

However, keep in mind that you also have an automatic, additional 24-hour grace period for completing your weekly modules. That means **there is no penalty if you complete a week's modules by that Sunday at 11:59PM (midnight)**, Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

Each unit will end with a unit exam, which is due on the Monday after that unit ends, at 11:59PM (midnight), Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time. A unit exam will be made available at least 12 hours before it is due, so by 12:00PM (noon), Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time on that Monday. You will then have the full 12 hours in which find a time to take that exam.

Once again, though, keep in mind that you also have an automatic, additional 24-hour grace period for finding a time to take a unit exam. That means **there is no penalty if you complete the unit exam by that Tuesday at 11:59PM (midnight), Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.**

Just to repeat one last time: if you are running late in completing an activity, **do not panic.** All activities, including exams, have an automatic, additional 24-hour grace period.

Participation

This course challenges each of us to share in the difficult process of understanding and evaluating important works of philosophy. While this course is entirely online, ongoing discussion and deliberation with your classmates is very important in understanding and retaining course material.

To facilitate this, you will work together with your classmates in making social annotations of the readings on Perusall.

Beyond that, I strongly encourage you to **form a study group** with some of your classmates using your UB Zoom account. A study group may prove extremely helpful for having study sessions, holding each other accountable for keeping up with the course material (and not putting things off until the last minute), coordinating your discussions on Perusall and Twitter, supporting each other when struggling with course material, and checking in on the health and wellbeing of each other.

Social Annotations

Each course module has assigned reading that you are expected to read and think about. Each module will also have posted reading questions to help you check your comprehension of the main claims and arguments within those readings.

To assist you in this process, you will work with your classmates on Perusall to collaboratively annotate the readings within each course module.

You are expected to complete 2 modules a week, according to the class schedule. So the annotations of their readings are due at the end of the week they are assigned. For these purposes, each week ends on Saturday at 11:59PM (midnight), Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

However, **keep in mind that you also have an automatic, additional 24-hour grace period for completing all your social annotations for the week.** That means **there is no penalty if you complete a week's annotations by that Sunday at 11:59PM (midnight),** Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

Here's What I Want You to Do

Make at least 4 annotations to the reading for each module. 2 modules are assigned each week, so that is a total of at least 8 annotations per week.

Substantive responses to the annotations of your classmates will count as annotations of your own. Indeed, this is meant to be a real social experience for us, so **I would strongly prefer that at least half of your annotations are in response to those of a classmate.**

Here's Why I Want You to Do It

The purpose of social annotating is pretty straightforward: it has you practice with your classmates the skills necessary for critically reading philosophical texts about ethics while also connecting that material to your own interests and experiences.

As such, social annotating will continually push you towards achieving the last 4 learning outcomes for this course:

2. Explain and summarize arguments within philosophical texts,
3. Apply important ethical concepts and theories to various hypothetical and real-world situations,
4. Assess competing claims concerning the demands that morality places on your actions and decisions, and
5. Reflect on your own assumptions and form more considered judgments on moral issues.

To these ends, work with your classmates connecting the readings to current events and your experiences, assessing the positions those texts try to establish, and reflecting on what it is you believe about all of this.

Here's How to Do It

In general, each of your annotations must *do at least 1* of these 5 tasks:

1. Highlight text that **helps us answer a reading question**—and then give the number of the reading question and explain why you believe the highlighted text helps answer that question. The reading questions are found in the “Read & Annotate This” section on each

module's page on the course website. (Do not write out the question itself. Giving the question's number is enough.)

2. Highlight text that **resonates with your own *personal* experiences**—and then explain what in that highlighted text connects to your own experiences.
3. Highlight text that **relates to *current* events**—and then explain what in that highlighted text connects to current events.
4. Highlight text that **you *personally* find controversial**—and then explain why *you personally* find that highlighted text controversial.
5. **Respond to annotations** made by your classmates, expanding in a *substantive* way on whatever it is they are saying by connecting it to *your own perspective*.

Your annotations may do any combination of these task. The choice is yours.

No matter what task you choose, though, all your annotations must be...

1. Relevant,
2. Substantive, and
3. Respectful.

By *relevant*, I mean that your annotations are clearly doing at least 1 of the 5 tasks above while making clear connections to the topic of the readings, their arguments, or the themes of ethics and this class.

By *substantive*, I mean more than generic commentary, simply repeating whatever the text or a classmate says, or giving a thoughtless “I agree”. No matter which task(s) you choose, **I want to see you making meaningful connections to ethics and the course material while presenting your own careful reasoning by substantiating your claims and providing concrete examples.**

By *respectful*, I mean that you critically assess the claims the readings and your classmates are making while not attacking the person(s) making those claims. It is fine to disagree with the reading and your classmates—*and even with me!*—but it is disrespectful to besmirch the integrity or character of another person. Indeed, personal attacks suggest it is your position that is weak and unsound. So please no flame wars, no bullying, and **no being a jerk!**

Here's How You'll Earn Philosophy Experience Points

You will earn up to 100 philosophy experience points for each module's social annotations. With 2 modules a week, that is 200 possible points per week.

The number of points you earn will be based upon the Perusall autoscoring algorithm. This works by first evaluating each of your annotations as “deficient”, “improvement needed”, or “meets expectations”.

After that, Perusall takes into other considerations for determining your score. For instance, Perusall gives a penalty if your annotations are not distributed throughout the reading. The idea is that **you should be reading the whole text** and not just one small part of it. Your score will also be slightly modified by other considerations as well, such as how many people are responding to your annotations.

The good news is that Perusall itself will encourage and help you make better annotations to improve your score. Because of that, I have found that this autoscoring algorithm works quite well. Even so, I will still regularly check its results, making sure that the points it awards are reasonable. Of course, **if you feel that your annotations are not being fairly scored by Perusall, let me know and I'll gladly assign your points myself!**

Using Philosopher's Stones

The following two philosophical powers apply to the social annotations activities:

Time Stop (M)

Cost: 1 philosopher's stone.
Area of Effect: 1 module.
Duration: Up to 48 hours.

You select 1 module and give up 1 philosopher's stone. You then gain an extra 48-hour extension for completing that module's social annotations and quizzes. Please note that this extension begins *immediately after* the 24-hour grace period has ended.

If you have enough stones, you may use this power multiple times for additional 48-hour extensions on the same module.

Please note that this *cannot* be used on any of the supplemental modules. Those modules must be completed before the grace period ends.

Decipher Script

Cost: 2 philosopher's stones.
Area of Effect: All the social annotations for 1 module.
Duration: Instantaneous.

You select 1 module and give up 2 philosopher's stones. You then gain the full 100 philosophy experience points for all that module's social annotations.

Please note that this does *not* give you the points for the social annotations in Module 0 and/or any of the supplemental modules. Those points must be earned by actually making those annotations.

You may do Decipher Script at *any time* during the semester. For example, in week 12 you may use your stones on the social annotations for module 3.

Considerations for Your Perusall Account

This means that you need a Perusall account. The good news is that this should be set up automatically when you start clicking on the Perusall links I have posted on the course website.

The first time you use Perusall, **please be sure that you are using your real first and last name**, so I can identify you. I also recommend making sure that it is linked to your UB email. (When someone tags you on Perusall, you get an email message letting you know.) You may also need to enter your student ID. To keep things simple, please use either your UB Student ID Number or your UB email for that ID.

Keep in mind that **you cannot be anonymous** on Perusall. However, only people enrolled in the course will see your annotations. No outsiders are allowed!

If you have any trouble setting up or using Perusall, please do not hesitate to seek help from me.

Quizzes

Each course module will have 2 types of quizzes:

1. Quizzes embedded into my Panopto videos, and
2. End-of-module quizzes posted on UB Learns.

You are expected to complete 2 modules a week, according to the class schedule. So their quizzes are due at the end of the week they are assigned. For these purposes, each week ends on Saturday at 11:59PM (midnight), Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

However, keep in mind that **you also have an automatic, additional 24-hour grace period for completing all your quizzes for the week**. That means **there is no penalty if you complete a week's quizzes by that Sunday at 11:59PM (midnight)**, Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

Here's What I Want You to Do

As you are watching my Panopto videos for a module, occasionally the video will pause and you will have to complete a multiple-choice problem. Take your time, as needed, to carefully respond. Once you have done that, you should then be able to continue watching the video.

Meanwhile, each module also has a separate end-of-module quiz posted on UB Learns. These module quizzes consist of an Commitment to Academic Integrity Pledge and 5 multiple-choice problems. Each problem will appear one at a time, and once you have completed a problem you cannot go back later to change your response. Also, once you begin an end-of-module quiz, you have 15 minutes to finish it. If you stop, you cannot restart. (1 minute per multiple-choice problem is standard for college-level quizzes. I am giving you a little extra time, so you may consult your notes during the quiz.)

If you have any technical difficulties with any quiz, let me know immediately! I will gladly go into UB Learns and try to fix things for you.

Here's Why I Want You to Do It

All these quizzes act as the starting point on your path towards the first 3 learning outcomes for this course:

1. Identify and employ common terminology for philosophical approaches to ethics,
2. Explain and summarize important arguments within philosophical texts, and
3. Apply important ethical concepts and theories to various hypothetical and real-world situations.

This means that quizzes will have problems that involve definitions, summarizing basic points, and doing simple applications.

In addition, the Panopto video quizzes will also help you pay attention while checking your understanding of the material as it is presented. Meanwhile, the end-of-module quizzes will assess your basic understanding of the material presented in the Panopto videos *and* in the posted readings.

Here's How to Do It

Each module includes reading questions that will help you identify important points and ideas in the texts. So as you are reading, I highly encourage you to **take simple notes** that attempt to answer (or at least sketch out an answer to) those reading questions. If convenient, you might consider printing out the reading and writing your answers directly on the text itself.

After that, as you are watching the Panopto videos, I encourage you to take notes as you would do in any regular, face-to-face course. However, do not feel like you must write down literally everything they cover. Just try to capture their main points, such as definitions, premises and

conclusions to arguments, and any applications of course conceptions. You should also note anything else that helps you answer those reading questions.

All quizzes are open note, open book, and open video—so taking notes is a great way to prepare yourself for success!

If you take notes in these ways, then the quizzes should be pretty straightforward. You will immediately know the solutions to quiz problems, or, at least, know where to quickly find those solutions. Of course, some problems may still challenge you, but I do not intend for any of them to trick you!

Here's How You'll Earn Philosophy Experience Points

Unless I say otherwise, each **Panopto video quiz** problem will be worth 2 philosophy experience points. There will be 25 of these problems per module, for a total of 50 possible philosophy experience points per module.

Again, unless I say otherwise, each **end-of-module quiz** will be worth a total of 50 philosophy experience points. Each problem on a module quiz is scored in the following way:

- Each correct response earns 10 points,
- Each incorrect response earns 0 points, and
- Each response of “I don't know” earns 2 points.

I award points in this way to discourage random guessing on the end-of-module quizzes. It also highlights problems that I may need to reassess.

Putting this together, you can earn up to 100 philosophy experience points per module for completing all these quizzes. With 2 modules a week, that is a total possible 200 points per week.

You will also notice that Panopto video quizzes are worth significantly fewer points than the more comprehensive end-of-module quizzes. This is because I expect a lot of incorrect responses with the video quizzes—hey, doing something for the first time can be tough! Make those mistakes, learn from them, and do not stress that your course grade is being destroyed in the process.

In addition, if you think there is a problem with a quiz problem, let me know! In fact, if I correct a mistake you identify, **I'll give you 0.20 (i.e., one fifth) of a philosopher's stone**. Boo-ya!

Using Philosopher's Stones

The following two philosophical powers apply to the quizzes:

Time Stop (M)

Cost: 1 philosopher's stone.
Area of Effect: 1 module.
Duration: Up to 48 hours.

You select 1 module and give up 1 philosopher's stone. You then gain an extra 48-hour extension for completing that module's social annotations and quizzes. Please note that this extension begins *immediately after* the 24-hour grace period has ended.

If you have enough stones, you may use this power multiple times for additional 48-hour extensions on the same module.

Please note that this *cannot* be used on any of the supplemental modules. Those modules must be completed before the grace period ends.

Borrowed Knowledge

Cost: 2 philosopher's stones.
Area of Effect: All the quizzes for 1 module.
Duration: Instantaneous.

You select 1 module and give up 2 philosopher's stones. You then gain the full 100 philosophy experience points for all that module's quizzes.

Please note that this does *not* give you the points for the quizzes in Module 0 and/or any of the supplemental modules. Those points must be earned by actually completing those quizzes.

You may do Borrowed Knowledge at *any time* during the semester. For example, in week 10 you may use your stones on the quizzes from module 2.

Collaboration & Academic Integrity

Since quizzes are meant to assess *your* progress through the course modules and the extent to which you are achieving the learning outcomes, I expect you to do all quizzes on your own without assistance. Naturally, I also expect that you are not helping others with their quizzes either. If anyone does ask you for help, just send them to me. I'll gladly assist them. In short, **all quizzes are closed to collaboration.**

Please remember that quizzes are not group assignments. Let me know if you are struggling and I'll gladly help!

Furthermore, please do not try to find solutions to the quizzes online. Also please do not attempt to use an automated text generator or other form of artificial intelligence (AI) to find solutions. (Honestly, *you will likely not have enough time to find solutions in those ways anyhow.*) With all the weekly quizzes being open book, open note, and open video, you really should already have everything you need to do well on them.

Unit Exams

At the end of each unit, there will be a unit exam.

These exams are *not* cumulative, focusing primarily on new material covered since the previous unit exam. However, keep in mind that some important concepts will remain relevant throughout the whole course.

Each unit exam is due on the Monday after that unit ends, at 11:59PM (midnight), Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time. A unit exam will be made available 12 hours before it is due, so on that Monday at 12:00PM (noon), Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time. You will then have the full 12 hours in which find a time to take that exam.

However, keep in mind that **you also have an automatic, additional 24-hour grace period for finding a time to take a unit exam.** That means **there is no penalty if you complete the unit exam by that Tuesday at 11:59PM (midnight)**, Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

Here's What I Want You to Do

Each unit exam will be posted on UB Learns. These unit exams consist of a Commitment to Academic Integrity Pledge and 50 multiple-choice problems. Each problem will appear one at a time, though **you *can* backtrack** to change your response to an earlier problem. Once you begin a unit exam, you have 50 minutes to finish it. If you stop, you cannot restart. (1 minute per multiple-choice problem is standard for college-level quizzes. Most students finish in about 35 minutes and use the rest of the time to double-check their answers.)

If you have any technical difficulties with a unit exam, let me know immediately! I will gladly go into UB Learns and try to fix things for you.

Here's Why I Want You to Do It

The purpose of these unit exams is to provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate your progress towards the first 3 learning outcomes for this course:

1. Identify and employ common terminology for philosophical approaches to ethics,
2. Explain and summarize important arguments within philosophical texts, and
3. Apply important ethical concepts and theories to various hypothetical and real-world situations.

This means that exams will have problems that involve definitions, summarizing important points, and applying the course material. All that will assess your understanding of the material presented in the Panopto videos *and* in the posted readings.

Here's How to Do It

Continue to follow my advice for the weekly quizzes by **taking notes and fleshing out your responses to the reading questions**. I also suggest that you **consult the learning outcomes for each individual module**, since I like to create exam problems based on these.

Like the quizzes, all unit exams are open note, open book, and open video—so developing your course notes remains a great way to prepare yourself for success!

Just like with the quizzes, well-crafted and organized notes should make the exams relatively straightforward. You will immediately know the solutions to exam problems, or, at least, know where to quickly find those solutions. I do want these unit exam problems to challenge you, but I never intend to trick you or demand the impossible!

Here's How You'll Earn Philosophy Experience Points

Unless I say otherwise, each unit exam will be worth a total of 1,000 philosophy experience points. Each problem on a unit exam is scored in the following way:

- Each correct response earns 20 points,
- Each incorrect response earns 0 points, and
- Each response of "I don't know" earns 4 points.

Like with the quizzes, I award points in this way to discourage random guessing on the unit exams. It also highlights problems that I may need to reassess.

If you miss, skip, or otherwise do not take a unit exam, then you will earn 0 points on that exam. However, see the Reverse Time power below, which will allow you use 6 philosopher's stones to retake an exam that you may have missed!

Finally, if you think there is a problem with an exam problem, let me know! In fact, if I correct a mistake you identify, **I'll give you 0.20 (i.e., one fifth) of a philosopher's stone**. Boo-ya!

Using Philosopher's Stones

The following two philosophical powers apply to the unit exams:

Time Stop (E)

Cost: 1 philosopher's stone.
Area of Effect: 1 unit exam.
Duration: Up to 6 hours.

You select 1 unit exam and give up 1 philosopher's stone. You then gain an extra 6-hour extension for completing that exam. Please note that this extension begins *immediately after* the 24-hour grace period has ended.

If you have enough stones, you may use this power multiple times for additional 6-hour extensions on the same unit exam.

Reverse Time

Cost: 6 philosopher's stones.
Area of Effect: 1 unit exam.
Duration: Up to 1 week.

You select 1 unit exam and give up 6 philosopher's stones. You then have up to 1 week—from when it was returned—to redo that entire exam. (This includes a unit exam that you missed, skipped, or otherwise did not complete.) The points you earn on this second attempt—regardless of whether that new number of points is higher or lower than your original number—will completely replace the points you earned on your first attempt.

Reverse Time may only be done once for any given unit exam.

Collaboration & Academic Integrity

Since the unit exams are meant to assess *your* progress through the course units and the extent to which you are achieving the learning outcomes, I expect you to do all exams on your own without assistance. Naturally, I also expect that you are not helping others with their exams either. If anyone does ask you for help, just send them to me. I'll gladly assist them. In short, **all unit exams are closed to collaboration.**

Please remember that exams are not group assignments. Let me know if you are struggling and I'll gladly help!

Furthermore, please do not try to find solutions to the exams online. Also please do not attempt to use an automated text generator or other form of artificial intelligence (AI) to find solutions. (Honestly, *you will likely not have enough time to find solutions in those ways anyhow.*) With all the unit exams being open book, open note, and open video, you really should already have everything you need to do well on them.

Course Policies

Late Coursework

Online classes become quite overwhelming when deadlines are missed, making it is easy for coursework—and anxiety!—to pile up. This is why **late work is not accepted** and I expect you to complete activities on time.

That said, you have lives outside of this course and there may be times when you cannot get things done as expected. If that happens, **do not panic!** The additional, automatic grace period gives you some extra time and philosopher's stones can get you even more. If the situation is truly extraordinary, then contact me about a reasonable accommodation for getting caught up.

Reasonable Accommodations

You are a human being with all the usual challenges associated with human finitude. Illness, family emergencies, job interviews, other professors, and so on will inevitably lead to legitimate conflicts over your time. If you expect that you will be unable to turn your coursework in on time, please notify me as soon as possible and we can agree on a reasonable accommodation.

Please recognize that most reasonable accommodations will require that you use philosopher's stones, receive reduced points for an activity, or do additional work. This is done to keep things fair between you and your classmates—after all you are asking for extra time that they do not get. So when you propose a reasonable accommodation, please reflect on what would preserve that fairness.

Challenging an Activity's Assessment

I am human also: mistakes may occasionally occur when assessing your coursework. Therefore, you have *one week* after an activity is assessed to challenge the number of philosophy experience points that you earned. To do so, you must provide a clear written explanation

(email is preferred) outlining your reasons for why you believe you earned more points. I take all such requests extremely seriously, with a spirit of humility. I will then meet with you, as necessary, to work on resolving things satisfactorily.

Of course, I always encourage you to talk with me about how you may improve for future activities!

Sharing Course Materials

All my course materials, which are available digitally online, are protected by copyright laws. You may use these materials and make copies for your own personal use, but unauthorized distribution and/or uploading of course materials without my written permission is strictly prohibited.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is embodied by commitments to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, diligence, and rigor in the pursuit of knowledge. As a student in this class, academic integrity means following all directions for activities, clearly distinguishing your own original work from the work done by others, and seeking help whenever you are struggling. This is laid out in the academic honor code for this course. You are also expected to sign an honor agreement to adhere to that code.

In this class, the typical violation of academic integrity is cheating on quizzes and unit exams. Common examples of this include copying the answers of a classmate, finding solutions online, and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to determine the answers.

Quizzes and unit exams assess your progress in developing your proficiency with the course material along with the extent to which you are achieving this course's learning outcomes. As such, I expect you to do all the quizzes and exams on your own without assistance. Naturally, I also expect that you are not helping others with their quizzes and exams either. If anyone does ask you for help, just send them to me. I'll be happy to assist them.

In short, **all quizzes and unit exams are closed to collaboration**. Furthermore, please do not try to find solutions online or by using artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

The good news is that all quizzes and exams are open-book and open-notes, giving you the resources to perform at your very best. You also have the option to use philosopher's stones for extensions if you need some extra time to prepare. Finally, if you are ever struggling with the quizzes, exams, or anything else in this course, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I'll gladly help get you on track!

To assist in reminding you of your obligations, every end-of-module quiz and unit exam requires you to complete a Commitment to Academic Integrity Pledge. Please remember that **end-of-module quizzes and unit exams without a properly filled out Commitment to Academic Integrity Pledge will automatically earn 0 philosophy experience points.**

While I treat violations of academic integrity on a case-by-case basis, I carefully follow the University at Buffalo's process of consultative resolution. According to this process, when I suspect an academic integrity violation, I first meet with the student for an explanation. If, after that meeting, I remain convinced that there is a violation, I will report it to the Chair of the Philosophy Department, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Academic Integrity Office. This protects the student's right to appeal.

Beyond that, I typically impose a penalty that exceeds the penalty of not having done the work at all. For instance, the penalty for cheating on a unit exam is usually a *deduction* of philosophy experience points. Again, the student retains the right to appeal any such decision.

In particularly severe cases, or when the student has committed previous academic integrity infractions, there may also be further penalties imposed by the Academic Integrity Office. For more information, please consult their website:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/academic-integrity.html>

If you ever find yourself tempted to violate these standards of academic integrity, please seek an alternative course of action. Email me for a reasonable accommodation, or turn in partially completed work. I assure you that the impact will be far more generous in these ways.

Academic Honor Code

Students at the University at Buffalo, because they part of a community of scholars, must share its commitment to learning and discovery. The nature of this commitment generates fundamental obligations to the highest standards of academic integrity, honesty, and ethics. Adhering to these principles ensures that the academic endeavors we undertake garner us the greatest personal satisfaction and intellectual gain.

The University at Buffalo academic community is composed of learners—individuals dedicated to an open exchange of ideas and who share their ideas for the purpose of improving knowledge for all people. In order for this academic enterprise to be successful, we must embrace personal, ethical, and moral principles to guide our interactions.

These principles require personal integrity, a commitment to honesty without compromise, as well as truth without equivocation and knowing when to place the good of the community above the good of the self. Obligations once undertaken must be met, commitments kept.

The discovery, advancement, and communication of knowledge are not possible without these commitments. Creativity cannot exist without acknowledgment of the creativity of others. New knowledge cannot be developed without credit for prior knowledge. Without the ability to trust that these principles will be observed, our academic community cannot exist.

The commitment of its faculty, staff, and students to the highest of personal, ethical, and moral standards also contributes to the respect in which the University at Buffalo degree is held. Students must not destroy or otherwise diminish that respect by their failure to meet these standards.

Student Responsibilities

For this course, it is important that no one gains an unfair advantage through academic misconduct. Academic misconduct is any act that does or potentially could improperly distort student grades or other academic records. Such acts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any assignment for the course;
- Unauthorized collaboration with others and/or use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in the commission of coursework;
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the student; and
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person, without adequate citations.

In addition, each student enrolled in this class must sign an honor agreement affirming their commitment to uphold this code. This agreement may reappear during activities to remind everyone of their responsibilities.

Faculty Responsibilities

As the instructor, I am also expected to help create an environment where honesty flourishes. To that end, I will do my utmost to make it known as specifically as possible, on multiple occasions, what constitutes appropriate academic conduct as well as what comprises academic misconduct in this course.

Throughout all this, I will also provide clarification to any student questions concerning any of the above.

University Policies

Accommodations for Equitable Access

The University at Buffalo is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for equal access to this course for all students. To access accommodation services, you must initiate the request with Accessibility Resources at Student Life.

If Accessibility Resources determines that your request for accommodation is reasonable, they will provide you with an Accommodation Memo. Keep in mind that you will need a new Accommodation Memo each semester. (If you are a returning student and your needs have not changed, you can simply contact Accessibility Resources for an updated Accommodation Memo.)

Once you receive your Accommodation Memo, it is *your* responsibility to inform faculty and staff of any accommodations that they may need to know about. The Accessibility Resources staff will explain in more detail how (and when) to share this Accommodation Memo with others.

For more information, please visit the website for Accessibility Resources at Student Life:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/who-we-are/departments/accessibility.html>

Sex Discrimination & Sexual Harassment

The University at Buffalo is committed to ensuring that all members of our community can work and learn in a safe environment, free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking.

For my part, I am committed to preserving a classroom and university environment in which each student can contribute and learn free from discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. I am also committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, and so on.

Please note that all University at Buffalo faculty members are required to report disclosures of sexual misconduct to the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to me, I am required to share that with EDI. EDI, will, in turn, reach out to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. EDI will keep all information private, and will only proceed with an investigation with the consent of the student, or if there is a risk to the health or safety to the reporting student or others if the university does not take action.

For more information, please contact the University at Buffalo's Title IX Coordinator at 716-645-2266, or visit their website:

www.buffalo.edu/equity/support/obtaining-assistance/sex-discrimination-and-sexual-harassment.html

For confidential assistance, contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at 716-796-4399.

Support for Students' Health & Wellness

Take care of yourself. Of course, I know this may be easier said than done, but please do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and better cope with stress.

If you are struggling with strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, health concerns, or unwanted sexual experiences, please know that you are not alone. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. Indeed, there are many helpful resources available, and an important part of the university experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking sooner rather than later is almost always helpful.

Counseling, Health Services, and Health Promotion are here to help. To schedule an appointment with a counselor, visit their office in 120 Richmond Quad or call 716-645-2720.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call the University Police to speak to the counselor on call at 716-645-2222 or the Erie County Crisis Services 24-hour hot-line at 716-834-3131. You may also find support via the Crisis Text Line by texting "GOT5" to 741-741.

If the situation is life threatening, call 911.

Resources

Accessibility

I have endeavored to ensure that all course materials that I have personal control over (e.g., this website, the syllabus, and assignments) have been formatted so that they are easily accessible in different formats. If I have made mistakes on any of this, let me know immediately and I will get it fixed! Beyond that, there may remain material that I have limited control over, such as other webpages I may ask you to read.

“The University at Buffalo is committed to providing equal access to individuals with disabilities, including physical access to programs and reasonable accommodations for members of the university community.”

One potential issue is that a majority of the course readings are scanned PDFs, and so you may have challenges adapting them into different formats. If this is a problem for you, let me know! We can work with the University Libraries and/or Accessibility at UB to get you access to those materials. I have also provided the full citations for all course readings (found in the syllabus), in case you already have experience tracking down accessible formats.

Once more, **please do not be shy about seeing me** (or even the folks at Accessibility Resources) about any of this. Philosophy is already hard enough as it is; I do not wish to pile on any further difficulties!

Technical Support

Here is a list of resources for technical support that should cover everything that you will be using for this course:

- UB Learns Technical Support:
 - <http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/learning-resources-for-students/ublearns.html>
- Adobe Acrobat Reader Technical Support:
 - <https://helpx.adobe.com/support.html>
- Panopto Technical Support from UB:
 - <http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/learning-resources-for-students/viewing-video-recorded-courses-panopto.html>
- Box Technical Support from UB:
 - <http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/ubbox.html>
- Perusall Technical Support:
 - <https://support.perusall.com/hc/en-us/categories/360002173133-Students>
- Zoom Technical Support from UB:
 - <http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/services/zoom.html>
- UB Tech Squad & Help Center:
 - <http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/get-help/services.html>