

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

80-130, SUMMER II 2008

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Time: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 10:30–11:50 AM

Room: Baker Hall 150

INSTRUCTOR

Name: David Gray

Office: Baker Hall 143

Email: degray@andrew.cmu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 12:00–1:30 PM or by appointment

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

Important course information will be posted on the Blackboard for this class on the web. Please routinely check for updates at:

<http://www.cmu.edu/blackboard/>

REQUIRED TEXTS

- James Rachels. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy (EMP)*. Fourth Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- James Rachels and Stuart Rachels. *The Right Thing to Do: Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy (TRTTD)*. Fourth Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007.

Additional readings will be made available in PDF format on Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ethics is the branch of philosophy exploring the nature of morality, good and evil, and right and wrong action. On an immediate and concrete level, a moral theory attempts to provide an answer to the most practical of questions, “What ought I to do?” Speaking of ethics, Socrates, the first moral philosopher, said: *what we are talking about is how one should live*. Ethics is therefore a basic aspect of human life, addressing the fundamental concern of what sort of person each of us should strive to become.

In this course, we will undertake an analysis of some of the most influential theories in moral philosophy. Throughout, we will discover how the contestations between these theories frame most present-day debates concerning controversies such as cloning, abortion, torture, the death penalty, and responses to terrorism. In class discussions and assigned work, students are encouraged to present and critically examine their own views on these controversies.

With an emphasis on both theory and practice, we shall witness not only how moral theory informs our practices, but also how these practices inform the theory.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this term, I expect that you will be able to

- Describe some problems that trouble moral philosophers,
- Clearly articulate the arguments that attempt to solve these problems,
- Critically evaluate these arguments,
- Compare and contrast how different moral approaches apply to real-life issues, and
- Communicate all the above through both verbal and written discourse.

Each course requirement and assignment is designed with these objectives in mind.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading Quizzes	= 30% (10 @ 3% each)
Analytical Analyses	= 20% (2 @ 10% each)
Critical Position Paper	= 15%
Course Project	= 35%

Philosophy is a full-contact sport, but conducted as a cooperative process. Together, we wrestle with arguments and not attack those advocating them. Classes will typically follow a seminar format and, as a result, the quality of the course depends critically on the quality of each individual's participation. The purpose of us coming together as a class is to engage in philosophical activity together.

To help in your learning, I strongly suggest that you also discuss this course's issues outside of class with your instructor, fellow classmates, friends, and family. However, all written work must be done independently, unless otherwise noted. Students are expected to be familiar with the university policies on cheating and plagiarism. If you have any questions, please ask; do not assume.

GRADING SCALE

Each assignment will be graded on a 100 point scale. Unless you are notified of otherwise, the grading distribution will be as follows:

90–100	A	60–69.9	D
80–89.9	B	0–59.9	R
70–79.9	C		

Your final course grade will be on the same 100 point scale, with each assignment weighted as indicated in the course requirements section above.

COURSE SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION – ETHICS AND ARGUMENTATION

June 30: Course Introduction.

July 1: James Rachels, “Some Basic Points About Arguments” (*TRTTD*), only pp. 20–22.
Irving M. Copi and Carl Cohen, “Propositions and Arguments from *Introduction to Logic*” (handout).

July 2: Gregory E. Pence, “Will Cloning Harm People?” (*TRTTD*).

July 3: Douglas Husak, “The Immorality of SUVs and Trucks” (*TRTTD*).

July 4: No Class

PART I – WHERE DO MORAL VALUES COME FROM?

July 7: Ruth Benedict, “Anthropology and the Abnormal” (handout).

James Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism” (*EMP*).

July 8: David Hume, “Morality as Based on Sentiment” (*TRTTD*).

James Rachels, “Subjectivism in Ethics” (*EMP*).

First analytical analysis due via TurnItIn at 11:59:59 PM on Tuesday, July 8.

July 9: Plato, *Euthyphro* (handout).

James Rachels, “Does Morality Depend on Religion?”, sections 4.1 and 4.2 (*EMP*).

July 10: Saint Thomas Aquinas, “Ethics and Natural Law” (*TRTTD*).

James Rachels, “Does Morality Depend on Religion?”, sections 4.3 and 4.4 (*EMP*).

July 11: Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral” (*TRTTD*).

Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion” (*TRTTD*).

PART II – DO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS MATTER?

July 14: Plato, “The Ring of Gyges from the *Republic*” (handout).

James Rachels, “Psychological Egoism” (*EMP*).

July 15: Ayn Rand, “Value Yourself from *Atlas Shrugged*” (handout).

James Rachels, “Ethical Egoism” (*EMP*).

July 16: Mylan Engel, Jr., “9/11 and Starvation” (*TRTTD*).

Peter Singer, “The Singer Solution to World Poverty” (*TRTTD*).

Garrett Hardin, “Lifeboat Ethics” (handout).

July 17: Jeremy Bentham, “The Principle of Utility from *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*” (handout).

James Rachels, “The Utilitarian Approach” (*EMP*).

James Rachels, “The Debate Over Utilitarianism”, section 8.1 (*EMP*).

Robert Nozick, “The Experience Machine” (*TRTTD*).

Second analytical analysis due via TurnItIn at 11:59:59 PM on Thursday, July 17.

July 18: Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal” (*TRTTD*).

Tibor R. Machan, “Do Animals Have Rights?” (*TRTTD*).

PART III – UTILITARIANISM AND ITS LIMITS

- July 21: John Stuart Mill, “Utilitarianism” (*TRTTD*).
- July 22: James Rachels, “The Debate Over Utilitarianism”, sections 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4 (*EMP*).
E.F. Carritt, “Criticisms of Utilitarianism from *Ethical and Political Thinking*” (handout).
Bernard Williams, “Utilitarianism and Integrity” (*TRTTD*).
- July 23: John Stuart Mill, “On the Connexion Between Justice and Utility from *Utilitarianism*” (handout).
James Rachels, “The Debate Over Utilitarianism”, section 8.5 (*EMP*).
- July 24: Robert Nozick, “Side Constraints from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*” (handout).
- July 25: Michael Walzer, “Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands” (handout).
Charles Krauthammer, “The Truth About Torture” (handout).
Andrew Sullivam, “The Abolition of Torture” (handout).

PART IV – DEONTOLOGICAL APPROACHES

- July 28: Immanuel Kant, “Duty, Imperatives, and Happiness from the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*” (handout).
James Rachels, “Are There Absolute Moral Rules?” sections 9.1 and 9.2 (*EMP*).
- July 29: Immanuel Kant, “The Categorical Imperative from the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*” (handout).
James Rachels, “Are There Absolute Moral Rules?” sections 9.3, 9.4, and 9.5 (*EMP*).
James Rachels, “Kant and Respect for Persons” (*EMP*).
- July 30: Ernest van den Haag, “In Defense of the Death Penalty” (*TRTTD*).
Hugo A. Bedau, “The Case Against the Death Penalty” (*TRTTD*).
- July 31: Thomas Hobbes, “The Social Contract” (*TRTTD*).
James Rachels, “The Idea of a Social Contract” (*EMP*).

Critical position paper due via TurnItIn at 11:59:59 PM on Thursday, July 31.

August 1: Douglas P. Lackey, “The Ethics of War and Peace” (*TRTTD*).

PART V – MORALITY BEYOND UNIVERSAL RULES AND PRINCIPLES

- August 4: Christina Hoff Sommers, “The Feminist Revelation” (*TRTTD*).
James Rachels, “Feminism and the Ethics of Care” (*EMP*).
- August 5: Aristotle, “The Virtues” (*TRTTD*).
James Rachels, “The Ethics of Virtue” (*EMP*).
- August 6: Martha Nussbaum, “Compassion and Terror” (handout).
- August 7: Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?* (handout).
- August 8: Course Project Presentations.

Course project paper due via TurnItIn at 11:59:59 PM on Sunday, August 10.

EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Reading: Every day of class there will be an assigned reading that you will be expected to have read and thought about before class. This will allow us to devote class time to collaborate with each other in understanding the arguments in these texts. Hence, you need to do more than merely peruse the readings: you must endeavor to understand the author's position and how the author justifies it. In some cases, this may take multiple readings to accomplish. However, reading assignments are relatively short so that this is feasible. In addition, it is good to take notes while reading, so that you can remember the author's main points. Finally, feel free to bring questions to class. This material is hardly obvious and, despite a tremendous amount of scholarship, it still challenges the most intelligent of people.

Class Participation: Class attendance and participation are very important in understanding and retaining the class material. As noted above, class will follow a seminar format. Unlike lecture based classes, seminar-style courses challenge each of us to share in the difficult process of understanding and evaluating complex and important works of philosophy. Do not confuse this cooperative style of learning with mere conversation or informal, organized chatting. You are expected to participate thoughtfully, to take notes, and to have a grasp of what was accomplished in each meeting. I recognize that not everybody is comfortable speaking in class, and so only repeated absences will lower your grade. Nevertheless, active class participation can increase your final grade if you are in a borderline situation.

Reading Quizzes: In order to motivate you to keep up with the assigned reading, there will be fifteen reading quizzes, of which your five lowest will be dropped. A reading quiz will consist of three multiple choice questions covering the main points from the reading for that day. These questions ought to be straightforward for anyone who has done the reading. You are allowed to use a single page of your own reading notes for reference.

Each reading quiz will be given no earlier than five minutes after the beginning of class and collected **EXACTLY FIVE MINUTES LATER**. If you come in late before they are collected, you will not be given extra time. If you come in after they are collected, you will have missed your chance to take the quiz. **SO ARRIVE PROMPTLY FOR CLASS EACH DAY**. Reading quizzes will not be announced in advance and cannot be made up. The reason that only ten of the fifteen quizzes count towards your overall reading quiz grade is to give you the freedom to miss a few classes with no questions asked. Please note, however, these are not vacation days, they are for illness, job interviews, projects in other courses, and emergencies. To summarize: **THERE WILL BE NO MAKE UP QUIZZES**.

Each reading quiz will be graded on the 100 point scale. Writing your name on the quiz earns you 61 points. Each correct answer to a question earns you another 13 points.

Films: Depending on student interest, I will show some films outside of class time that explore the subject matter we are covering in the course. You will not be required to attend these, but you can complete a write-up for extra credit towards your overall reading quiz grade.

Short Assignments: There will be several short assignments, all of which will be optional. They will count for extra credit towards your overall reading quiz grade. Each of these assignments will involve you organizing the ideas and claims of a reading into a structure called an argument diagram. We will discuss argument diagrams in great detail in class and you will see many examples of them throughout the course. A short assignment will earn 10 points if done well with trivial errors. It will earn 6 points if it displays an understanding of most of the ideas but with substantial errors. It will earn 3 points if it displays limited understanding with major errors. It will earn 0 points if there is no evidence of any understanding whatsoever.

Analytical Analyses: There will be two analytical analyses, each of which will count towards 10% of your final course grade. These will involve communicating, in your own words, the ideas we have studied. The first analysis will concern the presentation of just one argument. The second analysis will have you describe two opposing arguments on the same issue. In both cases you will explain arguments found in the reading, but not critically evaluate them. More details concerning each analysis will be announced and discussed in class. See the course schedule for when analytical analyses are due. Late analyses will be accepted, but with a penalty.

Each analytic analysis will be graded on the 100 point scale, based on a traditional A–F scale with +/- gradations, according to the following distribution:

A+	100	B+	87.5	C+	77.5	D	65
A	95	B	85	C	75	F	55
A-	92.5	B-	82.5	C-	72.5		

Failure to hand in an analysis will result in a 0.

Critical Position Paper: There will be one critical position paper, in which will you be asked to explain and then critically evaluate two opposing arguments on the same issue. In doing so, you will defend one of the arguments by providing it a reasoned defense against the other one. More details concerning the critical position paper will be announced and discussed in class. See the course schedule for when the critical position paper is due. Late position papers will be accepted, but with a penalty. The critical position paper will be graded on the 100 point scale in the same manner as the analytical analyses.

Course Project: The analytical analyses and the critical position paper are intended to give you practice clearly communicating the ideas of others, as well as critically evaluating them. In your course project you will continue to do this, but also go further by taking your own considered position on an issue and providing a reasoned defense of it. This is one of the most essential skills you can learn in college. This particular project will involve (1) selecting a moral issue of your own choosing, (2) considering how two different major moral theories address it, and (3) defending your own position on it. Throughout the term, there will be assigned milestones to keep you on track and help you organize your thoughts and writing

on the matter. During the final examination period, you will make a short presentation of your issue and your position on it. More details on the course project will be announced and discussed throughout the term. See the course schedule for the day presentations will be made and when the finished course project paper is due. Late course projects will only be accepted until extraordinary, documented circumstances and with a penalty. The course project will be graded on the 100 point scale in the same manner as the analytical analyses.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

I recognize that most students are human beings with occasional human problems associated with human finitude. Illness, family emergencies, job interviews, Other Professors, etc. . . will inevitably lead to legitimate conflicts over your time. If you expect that you will be missing class or be unable to turn in an assignment on time, please notify me (either in class or via email) **IN ADVANCE** and we can agree on a reasonable accommodation. Arrangements after the fact will only be made in extraordinary, documented circumstances.

CHALLENGING AN ASSIGNMENT GRADE

I also recognize that I and your TAs/graders are human too: mistakes will occasionally occur when grading your papers. Therefore, you have **ONE WEEK** after an assignment is handed back to challenge its grade. To do so, you must return the assignment plus a clearly written explanation of your reason for challenging the grade to whomever graded it. We will promptly and seriously consider all such challenges and meet with you, if necessary, to resolve them. Assignments without a written explanation will not be considered. After one week, no challenges will be accepted, except in extraordinary, documented circumstances. Of course, if you are not satisfied with your grade, but recognize that it was not due to a fault in the grading, I encourage you to talk with either myself or your TA/grader to learn how to improve on future assignments.

EXTRA CREDIT

Opportunities for extra credit will be provided at my discretion. If provided, extra credit will only count towards your overall assignment grade. If there are any community lectures, documentaries, television specials, news reports, web content, etc. . . on topics related to course material, please bring them to my attention. I may provide extra credit opportunities for the class based upon them.

A NOTE ON CLASSROOM COURTESY

Classes begin on the half-hour. Students are expected to be seated by that time and to remain seated until the class is dismissed. If you must leave before the class ends because of a medical appointment, or similar commitment, notify me before class begins and sit near the door. Students who leave without providing such notice and have not suddenly taken ill will be expected to file a drop form and not to return.

VIDEO TAPING AND AUDIO RECORDING

Under Pennsylvania state law, consent is required to record any communication uttered by a person who has an expectation that it will not be recorded by any electronic device. Your classmates and I have a reasonable expectation to not be recorded in this course. Therefore, video taping and audio recording are prohibited without the expressed permission of both your classmates and myself.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

plagiarism (plā'jĕ-rĭz/ĕm) *n* 1: a piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work. 2: the act of plagiarizing; taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own.

Plagiarism is bad. Do not do it. It amounts to lying, cheating, and stealing. Anyone caught doing it can fairly assume that they will not pass this course, as it is an affront to the very spirit of a course on **ETHICS**.

To encourage proper citing of sources, www.turnitin.com will be used for submitting your assignments. Beyond this, it is the responsibility of each student to be aware of the university policies on academic integrity, including the policies on cheating and plagiarism. This information is available at <http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Cheating.html> and in the section on "University Policies" in the most recent edition of *The Word: Undergraduate Student Handbook*.

Students who cheat or plagiarize face serious sanctions at both the course level, and the university level. At the course level, faculty at Carnegie Mellon University have significant discretion to determine the sanctions that are appropriate to individual cases of cheating and plagiarism. Within the Philosophy Department, it is customary to give plagiarized assignments a failing grade and, where appropriate, to fail students for the course. Additionally, a letter is sent to the Dean of Students indicating that the student in question has submitted plagiarized material and received a course-level sanction. Plagiarism is also a violation of the community standards of Carnegie Mellon University. As such, allegations of plagiarism may be brought before a University Academic Review Board, which will determine whether a violation of community standards has taken place and level additional sanctions if appropriate. Although this body also has significant discretion over the sanctions that it levels, plagiarism can result in academic probation, suspension, and even expulsion.

SETTING UP YOUR TURNITIN ACCOUNT

80-130

For this course your instructor will be using turnitin.com to check each of your assignments for their originality. For each assignment, you will be expected to submit a copy to turnitin (no hardcopies need be submitted). If you have trouble submitting please email a copy to your instructor.

Before you can turn anything in, you must set up an account on turnitin and get it connected to this course. This is a relatively painless process so don't be scared. Of course, you are a CMU student, which means you should already be friendly with technology and have already hacked into this website and are capable of making it do your bidding. On the other hand, if computers frighten you then you just may wish to reconsider your choice in colleges. I hear the Amish are quite welcoming this time of year with their green bean casseroles and whatnot.

Regardless, follow these simple instructions in order to begin your journey on the path of originality:

1. Get a computer with Internet access.
2. Open up a web browser and go to: <http://www.turnitin.com>.
3. Look at the top right of the webpage and click on NEW USERS.
4. On the next screen, select that you are a STUDENT from the pull down menu, and then click the NEXT button.
5. On the next screen, enter the following information based on what section you are in:

Turnitin class ID: **2273736**
Turnitin class enrollment password: **plato**

And click the NEXT button.

6. On the next screen, enter your *andrew email address (or whatever email address you actually check)* and click the NEXT button.
7. On the next screen, make up a password (*and write it down! No serious, write it down right now! Just write it here:* _____) and enter it into the two fields and then click the NEXT button.
8. On the next screen, select a “secret question” from the pull down menu and then type the answer in the field provided. Then click the NEXT button.
9. On the next screen, enter your (real) first name and last name. Then click the NEXT button.


10. On the next screen, pretend you read and understand everything there, or (like your instructor) just skip it and click on I AGREE – CREATE PROFILE.
11. On the next screen it should say yippy, you are done. And so you are. Ignore the instructions it gives you—you do not need to turn anything in (yet).

TURNING IT IN WITH TURNITIN

80-130

Now that you have set up your turnitin account (see the previous handout on this), you are now ready to submit your highly original assignments. Please note that you are expected to submit all assignments via the turnitin website by their respective due date/time in order to avoid a late penalty. Turning in a hardcopy in class is not required as long as the assignment has been successfully submitted to turnitin.

In order to turn in your first analytical summary, please follow these monkey-approved instructions:

1. Finish the assignment. Make sure it is all in a *single* text file (acceptable formats are MS Word, WordPerfect, PostScript, PDF, HTML, RTF, and plain text) on a computer.
2. Find a computer with Internet access and somehow put your paper's file on it.
3. Open up a web browser and go to: <http://www.turnitin.com>.
4. Look at the top of the webpage and enter your email address and password (which you had better have written down) and then click on LOGIN.
5. On the next screen, click on 80-130.
6. On the next screen, click on the submit icon () next to where it has the name of the assignment you wish to turn in.
7. On the next screen, for SUBMISSION TITLE enter "My Assignment" (or "Plato Approved" or something else witty and clever). Then click the CHOOSE FILE button to find the location of the assignment's file on the computer. Then click the SUBMIT button.
8. On the next screen, make sure this is the file you wish to submit and then click YES, SUBMIT.
9. On the next screen it should say zip-a-dee-doo-dah and that you are done. And yes you are. Congratulations.

If any problems occur when trying to submit, please email a copy of your assignment to your instructor. They can then submit it for you. If you cannot do this before the due date/time, then you must submit a hardcopy in the instructor's mailbox (in Baker Hall 135) to avoid a late penalty.