

**ETHICS 1:**  
**PHL 101 – 820**  
**SPRING 2007:**  
**JANUARY 25<sup>th</sup> – MAY 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Instructor: Kevin J. Kukla**

- OFFICE: 236 Piez Hall
- OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11.30am – 1.00pm.  
If these times do not work for you, please contact me and we can set-up an alternate time to meet.
- OFFICE PHONE: 315. 312. 2791
- EMAIL: kukla@oswego.edu
- WEB PAGE: <http://web.syr.edu/~kkukla>

**Class Meets: Rich Hall 220, TTR: 3.55pm – 5.15pm**

**Final Exam: TBA**

**Textbooks:**

- The textbooks are available at Kraftees (<http://www.kraftees.com/oswego/index.php>) & The Campus Bookstore ([http://www.oswego.edu/student/services/college\\_store/](http://www.oswego.edu/student/services/college_store/)).
- *The Elements of Moral Philosophy (2007)* – Stuart Rachels. I will refer to this text by the letters, ‘EMP’.
- *Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings (2005)* – Edited by: Olen, Van Camp, & Barry. I will refer to this text by the letters, ‘AET’.

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to the major historical ethical theories, as well as contemporary ethical debates. Since good critical thinking skills are the backbone of philosophy, we will spend the first few days on informal logic. In particular, we will examine what makes an argument *good* (or *bad*). This is a helpful skill in all disciplines. After our introduction to informal logic, we will begin examining and discussing the following ethical theories and contemporary ethical debates:

- Cultural Relativism
- Subjectivism in Ethics
- Religion and Morality
- Abortion
- Ethical Egoism
- Utilitarianism
- Are Morals Absolute?
- Social Contract Theory
- Welfare & Social Justice
- Terrorism & Social Liberties

The subject matter of ethics is at times makes some uncomfortable and emotional. I ask that you treat these issues philosophically, in other words, please try to be open-minded even if positions or a particular subject matter we cover makes you uneasy. I ask that you be respectful of all arguments. If you are not respectful, you will be asked to leave class for that day and be counted absent for that day.

## Evaluation, Participation, & Grading Scale

- 3 Essays: 60% Each Worth 20%
- 4 Quizzes 25%
- Participation/Attendance: 15%
- **YOUR FINAL EXAM IS A REGULAR ESSAY THAT WILL BE TURNED IN ON THE DAY OF THE FINAL.**

Participation/attendance is very important. The reason is because a large part of doing philosophy is the ability to articulate your argument on position  $x$ . A good rule of thumb is that if you are unable to explain, for example, the difference between *Communism* & *Socialism*, then you do not understand the position. The ultimate test of knowing a position is being able to explain it to someone who has little or no understanding of that material – assuming the person is cognitively capable of understanding the material.

You are allowed no more than 2 unexcused absences to receive full participation/attendance i.e. 15%. Any undocumented absence (e.g., health issues, family emergencies, etc) beyond your second will result in 0%. Additionally, tardiness and sleeping in class is equivalent to an absence.

I use the following grading scale:

- A = 94 - 100%

- **A-** = 90 - 93%
- **B+** = 87 - 89%
- **B** = 83 - 86%
- **B-** = 80 - 82%
- **C+** = 77 - 79%
- **C** = 73 - 76%
- **C-** = 70 - 72%
- **D** = 60 - 69%
- **F** = 0 - 59%

## Additional Policies & Information

- (1) I give no extra credit. It is better for you to focus on the *required* material rather than extra work.
- (2) Family emergencies and illnesses are the only excuses for missed Quizzes or Papers.
- (3) The university policy on academic dishonesty will be enforced without exception. This means that if I find a student has cheated on a Paper or Quiz, that person will receive a 0. Plagiarized Papers will be given a 0 with no opportunity for a rewrite, and a meeting will be set-up between you, me and the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences.

### **Academic Dishonesty Web Page:**

[http://www.oswego.edu/cts/services/instructional/plagiarism\\_cheating.html](http://www.oswego.edu/cts/services/instructional/plagiarism_cheating.html)

- (4) If there is any student in class who has a need for test-taking or note-taking accommodations, please feel free to discuss this issue with me, but, of course, I will need appropriate documentation for verification.
- (5) Always bring your texts and handouts to class.
- (6) If it is evident that a majority of students have not read the assigned material, I will administer a quiz.
- (7) The use of cell phones in class is strictly prohibited. It is your responsibility to ensure that your phone is silenced while class is in session. You will lose points from your participation grade if your phone rings during class.
- (8) I do not permit the reading of newspapers in class. Part of what makes philosophy so engaging is being able to discuss various views with others. By excluding yourself from this process, you are preventing learning. In addition, as mentioned above, you must read the material to effectively engage others in discussion. If you are unwilling to either read the

material or attempt to express your thoughts, you should probably consider taking another course.

- (9) If you either sleep or are disrespectful to any member of the class, I will ask you to leave class, which will result in an absence.

## Readings, Handouts, & How to Study

The readings are to be done by the day they are listed. You should read the material at least one day before class; ideally, you should read each assignment at least twice before class. For each reading, I will post a handout on my web page at least two days before class. I will not bring handouts to class. So if you want to follow along in class that day, make sure you download my handout from my web page. If for some reason you are unable to download my handouts please let me know. Handouts are **NOT** substitutes for the readings. If you solely use my handouts, then you will not do well in my course. My handouts are meant to be guides to the readings, in the sense that they highlight what is important.

I will provide the essay topics at least one week prior to their due date. These will also be posted on my web page.

I am more than happy to read rough drafts. But they *must* be emailed to me at least three class days before the due date. **I highly encourage you to email me a draft of your paper.**

I suggest the following strategy for studying:

- (1) Read the text at least one day prior to class. Ideally, you should read it twice before coming to class.
- (2) Read the relevant handout when it is available.
- (3) Re-read the text along with the relevant handout before coming to class.
- (4) A day after class, repeat the above mentioned process in (3) – in addition to your notes.
- (5) If you cannot orally explain the concepts in the readings and my handouts (without looking), then that is a good reason to believe that you do not adequately understand the material.
- (6) If (5) is true of you, then you should contact me to schedule an appointment with me to discuss the material.

## Some Useful Links

- Academic Calendar:  
<http://www.oswego.edu/administration/registrar/academiccalendar.html>
- Academic Dishonesty Web Page:  
[http://www.oswego.edu/cts/services/instructional/plagiarism\\_cheating.html](http://www.oswego.edu/cts/services/instructional/plagiarism_cheating.html)
- Penfield Library:  
<http://www.oswego.edu/library/index.html>

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/>
- EpistemeLinks:  
<http://www.epistemelinks.com/Main/MainTopi.aspx>
- The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy  
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

## TENTATIVE READING SCHEDULE

DATE	READING	TOPIC OF THE DAY
Day 1 01/25/07		Introductions and Discussion of Course
Day 2 01/30/07	Handout	Informal Logic
Day 3 02/01/07	Finish Handout	Finish Informal Logic
Day 4 02/6/07	<b>EMP: Chapter 1; QUIZ 1 ON INFORMAL LOGIC</b>	What is Morality?
Day 5 02/08/07	<b>EMP: Chapter 2</b>	Cultural Relativism
Day 6 02/13/07	<b>EMP: Chapter 3</b>	Subjectivism
Day 7 02/15/07	<b>AET: pp 117 – 128; QUIZ 2 ON EMP 1 – 3</b>	Introduction to Abortion
Day 8 02/20/07	<b>AET: <i>An Almost Absolute Value in History</i>, John T. Noonan, pp. 128 – 133</b>	Abortion, Continued
Day 9 02/22/07	<b>AET: <i>A Defense of Abortion</i>, Judith Jarvis Thomson, pp. 133 – 144</b>	Abortion, Continued
Day 10 02/27/07	<b>AET: <i>On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion</i>, Mary Ann Warren, pp. 144 – 154 &amp; EMP Chapter 4</b>	Abortion, Continued
Day 11 03/01/07	<b>AET: Case Presentations, pp. 161 – 164</b>	Finish Abortion
Day 12 03/06/07	<b>EMP: Chapter 4</b>	Religion & Morality
Day 13 03/08/07	<b>EMP: Chapter 5</b>	Ethical Egoism
Day 14 03/13/07	<b>EMP: Chapter 6; QUIZ 3 ON EMP 4 – 5</b>	Utilitarianism
Day 15 03/15/07	<b>EMP: Chapter 7; PAPER 1 DUE</b>	Utilitarianism, Continued

## READING SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

DATE	READING	TOPIC OF THE DAY
Day 16 03/20/07		<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>
Day 17 03/22/07		<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>
Day 18 03/27/07	<b>EMP:</b> Chapter 8	Are Morals Absolute?
Day 19 03/29/07	<b>EMP:</b> Chapter 9	Kantian Ethics
Day 20 04/03/07	<b>EMP:</b> Chapter 10; <b>QUIZ 4</b> ON EMP 6 – 9	Social Contract Theory
Day 21 04/05/07		<b>GOOD FRIDAY &amp; SPRING BREAK DAY!</b>
Day 22 04/10/07	<b>AET:</b> pp. 357 – 368	Introduction to Welfare & Social Justice
Day 23 04/12/07	<b>AET:</b> <i>What Libertarianism is</i> , John Hospers, pp. 368 – 375	Welfare & Social Justice, Continued
Day 24 04/17/07	<b>AET:</b> <i>The Right to Eat and the Duty to Work</i> , Trudy Govier, pp. 375 – 384	Welfare & Social Justice, Continued
Day 25 04/19/07	<b>AET:</b> <i>Radical Egalitarianism</i> , Kai Nielsen, pp. 384 – 392 & Case Presentations, pp. 303 – 313	Finish Welfare & Social Justice
Day 26 04/24/07	<b>AET:</b> pp. 303 – 313	Terrorism and Civil Liberties

## READING SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

DATE	READING	TOPIC OF THE DAY
Day 27 04/26/07	<i>AET: Just War and Human Rights</i> , David Luban, pp. 313 – 323; <b>PAPER 2 DUE</b>	Terrorism and Civil Liberties, Continued
Day 28 05/01/07	<i>AET: Reflections on War and Political Discourse: Realism, Just War, and Feminism in a Nuclear Age</i> , Jean Bethke Elshtain, pp. 323 – 331	Terrorism and Civil Liberties, Continued
Day 29 05/03/07	<i>AET: Violence, Terrorism, and Justice</i> , R.G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris, pp. 331 – 337	Terrorism and Civil Liberties, Continued
Day 30 05/08/07	<i>AET: Enemy Aliens</i> , David Cole, pp. 337 – 350	Terrorism and Civil Liberties, Continued
Day 31 05/10/07	<i>AET: Case Presentations</i> , pp. 350 – 356	Finish Terrorism and Civil Liberties