

PHI 3650: MORAL PHILOSOPHY
J. ROTHSCHILD
SPRING 2021 SYLLABUS

Instructor

Jennifer Rothschild

Contact: jrothschild@ufl.edu

Office Hrs: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-3:30 pm (and by appointment)

Zoom Meeting Room for Office Hrs: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3170033942>

To reserve an appointment during office hours, send an email at least 24 hours prior to the requested meeting. During office hours, open time slots are available for drop-ins.

Teaching Assistant

Schuyler Sturm

Contact: tsturm@ufl.edu

Office Hrs: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30 am-12:00 pm (and by appointment)

Zoom Meeting Room for Office Hrs: See Canvas course site (under Zoom Conferences)

To reserve an appointment during office hours, sign up on Schuyler's google doc at

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t3VaMUtoTBLnzUvnWDJvZ5MWjGRVYdjOtsGqVMGPoX4/edit?usp=sharing>

During office hours, open time slots are available for drop-ins.

Schuyler will lead your Friday classes, keep attendance, grade your papers, and do many other things besides. He is your email contact for questions about administrative matters in the course.

Course Time and Location

Lecture: MW Period 3 (9:35-10:25 am)

F2F students meet in TUR 2319

Online students join the meeting in Canvas under Zoom Conferences

Discussion: All discussion sections for this course will meet online only. You can join the meeting for your designated section in Canvas under Zoom Conferences.

Sections 17895, 28245 F Period 3 (9:35 – 10:25 am)

Sections 21887, 28247 F Period 5 (11:45 am – 12:35 pm)

Sections 25235, 28256 F Period 6 (12:50 – 1:40 pm)

Course Description

This course is an introduction to some of the foundational issues and influential theories in Western moral philosophy. We will concentrate most of our efforts on a few ethical theories: utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, and Aristotle's virtue ethics. The main goal of our engagement with these few is to understand what resources the theories have to help us describe and assess what is good in human motivations, actions, activities, and even complete human beings and human lives. We will also attend to some of the framing issues of moral theory, such as the potential for objectivity of some sort in moral thinking, the extent to which moral theory is relevant to everyday living, and the potential for things beyond our control to limit our possibilities for doing and being good.

Required Materials

Students are required to have the day's assigned reading readily available during class meetings. Failure to do so may result in loss of participation points.

Books are available at the UF bookstore. Remaining readings (#3 below) can be printed from the course website on Canvas.

1. Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Hackett) ISBN: 087220166X
2. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford) ISBN: 0199213615
3. Additional readings available on course Canvas website at (<http://lss.at.ufl.edu>)

General Education Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs):

Students will gain a basic understanding of philosophy and learn how to utilize this knowledge to evaluate and develop their own ideas. Students will pursue these goals across these three categories, all of which will be assessed via quizzes, written assignments and participation in discussion:

- *Content*: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the discipline.
- *Communication*: Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written or oral forms appropriate to the discipline.
- *Critical Thinking*: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Humanities Credit:

This course provides Humanities credit (H) for the purpose of general education requirements.

All such courses include the following objective:

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

- (From: <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/program-area-objectives.aspx>)

These objectives are incorporated into the SLOs above.

Assessment

Excelling in the Course:

To do well in this course you must come to class on time and prepared to engage the assigned material. This includes: keeping current on the reading assignments, having the current reading available to you class, and being aware of the course schedule and activities as discussed in class and posted on the course web page. You are responsible for regularly checking your UF email. Important announcements are often made at the beginning of class and are not repeated.

Attendance is critical for your grade in the course. Among the material I expect you to engage in your written work is the material I offer in the lecture part of the course. Also, missing class means missing the material on which quizzes will be based. Finally, unexcused absences from more than four classes will negatively affect your participation grade.

Most people who do well on writing assignments for this course begin writing well in advance of deadlines. You are welcome to meet with us to discuss your plans for your papers. You should expect to write and revise drafts of your essays.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Points:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Participation Grade | 125 points |
| 2. Quizzes | 125 points |
| 3. 3 Written Assignments (1400-1600 words each, 250 points each) | <u>750 points</u> |
| | Total: 1000 points |

Points for all written materials and quizzes will be posted as soon as they are graded, so you will be able to monitor your progress on Canvas. Participation grades will be not be recorded until the end of the semester.

Grading Scale:

A	4.0	94-100
A-	3.67	90-93
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.0	84-86
B-	2.67	80-83
C+	2.33	77-79

C	2.0	74-76
C-	1.67	70-73
D+	1.33	67-69
D	1.0	64-66
D-	0.67	60-63
E	0.0	0-59

If your total number of points for the course falls between two grades in the end, I will round to the nearest mark. X.5 rounds up; for example, 93.5 percent of all points will earn you an A. Any 93 below 93.5 is an A-. UF policy on assigning grade points: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Participation Grade:

Attendance and discussion are vital to learning the material, to the classroom conversation, and to your grade for the course. The participation portion of your grade will depend on your attendance, engagement, and contribution to class discussion (quality, not quantity), particularly in your discussion section.

Unexcused absences from more than four classes (lecture or discussion) will negatively affect your participation grade. For each unexcused absence beyond the fourth, you will lose 10% of your participation grade (e.g. a 100% will become a 90%). If you miss class and your absence is an excused absence, your absence will not count against you. See the Course Policies section of this syllabus for more about what counts as an excused absence and the documentation needed to secure one.

Quizzes:

We will have a substantial number of unannounced quizzes in order to assess preparedness and comprehension of recent material. Quizzes will be announced at the beginning of class, posted on Canvas, and you will have 24 hours to submit them. In a regular semester you would get these quizzes in class with no more than 10 minutes to complete them. At home, please give yourself no longer than 20 minutes, unless you have a DRC accommodation allowing for extra time. No late quizzes will be accepted unless your absence from class the day of announcement is an excused absence.

Writing Assignments:

This course will have written assignments of 1400-1600 words each, one for the material from the utilitarianism unit, one for the Kant unit, and one for the Aristotle unit. I will assign topics for your writing assignments. All papers must be typed, double-spaced with one-inch margins, page numbers, and 12 point Times New Roman font. You must include a word-count at the top of your first page. Please also include your name, the date you hand in the assignment, and title and staple your essays.

No outside sources, including other books, articles, web sources, and so on, should appear in your written work for this course. All you need is the following: the texts for the course, the conversations we have in class, and some careful thinking, writing, and revising.

Each paper is to be uploaded onto the course's e-learning site in Canvas. The papers will be graded electronically, and returned to you electronically. We will consider allowing you to turn in a paper late without penalty only if you have a valid and documented reason for doing so. If you turn in a paper without a valid or documented reason, 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for each day it is late (including weekend days!). See Course Policies for the full information on submitting late work.

Course Policies and Student Resources

Excused Absences:

Documentation of an excused absence needs to be provided within one week following an unforeseeable absence (such as an illness or family emergency); documentation for all foreseeable excused absences (a mock trial tournament, a basketball game) must be provided prior to the date of absence. Most excused absences are of these kinds:

1. *Health*. If your physical or mental health causes you to miss class, a note from your doctor will count as documentation for this.
2. *Some UF Activities* are excused absences. (Ask instructor to see whether particular activities count.) You must provide a note for activities absences *prior to the day of absence*. Notes may come from the activity supervisor, such as a coach. Students with regular activities will have some extra writing assignments to make up for missed classes.
3. *Religious observances*. See me at the beginning of the semester about this.
4. *Personal*. The Dean of Students office will send me a note of excuse if you have personal reasons for needing one, such as a family emergency or an ongoing medical issue. Note: I do not get involved in adjudicating good personal reasons from bad ones. I let the DOS handle that.

All other absences are typically unexcused, including some very good reasons to miss a class, like an important job interview or your grandmother's 80th birthday weekend. I support your interest in these things, and understand why you might prioritize them over attending class, but that does not make them excused absences.

Late work:

Extensions on essays without penalty will only be considered if you have a valid and/or documented reason for your request, and if you take the initiative to make contact as soon as the need arises. If you have a foreseeable conflict with a due date for any reason, including activities, religious observances, and so on, you should make alternative arrangements with me well in advance so that we can arrange an early deadline.

For the first two assignments, late work will be accepted with penalty for up to seven days after the deadline. The penalty for taking extra time is 1/3 of a letter grade deducted immediately at the deadline, and again at each 24-hour mark beyond the deadline until the work is submitted (including weekend days). For the final essay, no late assignments will be accepted—exceptions only in cases of instructor approval.

No quizzes will be accepted after 24 hours unless the student has an excused absence for the day the quiz is announced.

Computer errors (including disk, printer, or e-mail problems) are not acceptable excuses for late work.

Zoom Policies:

The participation portion of your grade for this class will be calculated on the basis of your attendance and your participation in class activities. Since the pedagogical approach of this course depends heavily on student engagement and interaction, you are required, at a minimum, to participate in class activities through the audio function of Zoom.

A good discussion course depends upon our being able to assess your attention and reactions and uptake of the material, and on fellow students being able to see engagement from one another. We therefore request your video presence in all class meetings. Students unable or unwilling to turn on cameras for some or all meetings may ensure a full attendance grade by coming to two office hours appointments over the course of the semester to talk about the content of the course; at least one of these must be with Professor Rothschild.

Zoom sessions will not be recorded by the instructor and may not be recorded by students. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded material is prohibited.

Accessibility:

Meeting. I encourage you to come see us, in office hours if possible. We will talk to you about the reading, about the assignments, about specific strengths and weaknesses of essays that have been returned to you with comments, about your interest in or struggles with this course or with philosophy more broadly.

Email. Please email us if you have administrative questions your syllabus and other documents cannot answer, if you want to arrange a meeting, or if you need to inform us of relevant difficulties on your end. If you have substantive philosophical questions, email is not the best place for these; please come visit us in office hours so that we can have a better conversation.

Electronic devices:

F2F Students: All electronic devices need to be silenced and stowed away (in other words, off the tabletop) during class. The one exception to this is the device on which you have the day's readings, which you should use only for the readings.

Online Students: Please silence your other devices, email notifications, and all other background noise so far as you are able. Please keep your microphones on mute when you are not talking.

Working together:

You are encouraged to talk to one another outside of class about philosophy and about this course as much as possible. This includes discussion of paper topics, and it includes reading drafts of one another's work. If you do work together, please be mindful of the following:

(1) Your final product must be your own original work, and not a repetition of another course member's ideas or essay. (Exception: assignments designed to allow for group submissions.)

(2) Each essay must be a piece of written thinking in itself. Sometimes conversation in advance of writing can make you feel like the conclusions of that conversation are now established, such that you can now talk about them by stating them (or assuming, or implying). But your essays need to "show your work"—if the argument is not explicitly on the page, you haven't made the argument. We need to see the important pieces of reasoning.

(3) You must be willing to endorse what ends up in your paper. Beware of letting others persuade you to go in the wrong direction. You are ultimately responsible for both the understandings and misunderstandings in the papers you submit.

Class Demeanor:

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and give the class your full attention the entire class period. Conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be kept to a minimum.

Philosophy is sometimes mistakenly understood to be a combative exercise. That style does not impress me at all. I encourage you to direct your first effort toward trying to understand and develop both the contributions of the authors we read and the contributions of others in the class. Where those are limited, of course, good philosophy also happens when you (respectfully) disagree, note tensions, make distinctions, reshape the question, and so on. Students who repeatedly act aggressively, in ways which attempt to incite unnecessary conflict or to dominate the discussion and/or other people, will receive a zero for participation and may be asked to leave the classroom.

Academic Honesty:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism

includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

Students Requiring Accommodations:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Materials and Supplies Fees:

There are no additional fees for this course.

Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

PHI 3650: Moral Philosophy (J. Rothschild)
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

DATE	READING	ASSIGNMENT
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1. Utilitarianism

<i>Week 1</i>	Classical Utilitarians	
Jan 11-15	Introduction Bentham, <i>Principles</i> : Chs. 1, 4-6, pp. 6-9, 22-43 (esp. Ch. 1, 4)	

<i>Week 2</i>	Classical Utilitarians	
Jan 18-22	NO CLASS ON JAN 18th Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> : Chapter 2, pp. 159-185	

<i>Week 3</i>	Utilitarians, Classical and Contemporary	
Jan 25-29	Bentham and Mill Continued Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," pp. 1-8	

<i>Week 4</i>	Critiques of Utilitarianism	
Feb 1-5	Nozick, "The Experience Machine," pp. 42-45 Nussbaum, excerpt from <i>Frontiers of Justice</i> , pp. 71-74 Williams, "Against Utilitarianism," pp. 133-142 For further reading, see: Taurek, "Should the Numbers Count?"	

<i>Week 5</i>	Wrapping Up Utilitarianism	
Feb 8-12	Williams Continued Utilitarianism Wrap-Up	M: assignment posted

2. Kantian Ethics

<i>Week 6</i>	Kant on Duty, Moral Psychology	
Feb 15-19	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> : Preface, First Section, pp. 1-17	Su 21 st : assignment due 11:59 pm

<i>Week 7</i>	Kant, Categorical Imperative First Formulation	
Feb 22-26	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> : Second Section, pp. 19-32	

<i>Week 8</i>	Kant, Categorical Imperative Second and Third Formulation	
Mar 1-5	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> : Second Section, pp. 32-48 Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> : Third Section, pp. 49-62	

<i>Week 9</i>	Contemporary Kantians, Critiquing Kant	
Mar 8-12	Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie," pp. 360-373	

Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie," pp. 63-67 Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," pp.16-19

<i>Week 10</i>	Contemporary Kantians, Kant Wrap	
Mar 15	Kant Wrap-Up	M: assignment posted

3. Aristotle's Virtue Ethics

<i>Week 10 (cont)</i>	Introducing Aristotle, Teleology	
March 17-19	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Book I (entire), except I.6	
<i>Week 11</i>	Aristotle on Function, Habituation, Skill & Virtue	
Mar 22-26	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Book II (entire), VI.4-VI.5 NO CLASS MARCH 24 – UF RECHARGE DAY	Su 28: assignment due 11:59 pm

<i>Week 12</i>	Aristotle's Moral Psychology	
Mar 29- Apr 2	Catch-up day Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Book VI (entire), X.6-8; also review I.7, I.13, II.5-II.9	

<i>Week 13</i>	Aristotle's Moral Psychology, Animating Aristotle I: Naturalism	
Apr 5-9	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : III.1-5, VII.1-10 Foot, <i>Natural Goodness</i> Ch. 2 and 3, pp. 25-51	

<i>Week 14</i>	Animating Aristotle II: Moral Perception, Moral Luck	
Apr 12-16	Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection," pp. 1-44; Aristotle VI.8, 11 Sophocles, <i>Philoctetes</i> , pp. 190-254	W: assignment posted

<i>Week 15</i>	Moral Luck, Aristotle Wrap	
Apr 19-21	Sophocles continued Aristotle Wrap-Up	Su 25 th : papers due 11:59 pm

No final exam.