

PHI 3650 (27841, SECTION 3500): MORAL PHILOSOPHY
J. ROTHSCHILD
FALL 2023 SYLLABUS

Course Time and Location: MWF Period 5 (11:45 am – 12:35 pm) AND 0021

If we should have a day where we need to meet on Zoom instead of in person, a link to join virtually will be available on our course website (Canvas, under Zoom Conferences).

Instructor

Jennifer Rothschild, jrothschild@ufl.edu, 352-173-1831

Office Hrs: M 1:00 – 3:00 pm FLO 307

To reserve a time slot during my office hours, use the sign-up sheet on my office door.

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

Email me for appointments outside of office hours.

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

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>)

Students should have hard copies of the assigned reading readily available during class meetings.

General Education Credits and Objectives

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.

Most people who do well in this course review recent notes quickly before each class begins, and make it to class on time every day (this helps with quizzes). You should plan to begin work well in advance of deadlines. You are welcome to meet with me to discuss upcoming oral exams or 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>.

Distribution of Points:

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Participation Grade | 175 points |
| 2. Quizzes | 125 points |
| 3. 2 Oral Exams, 225 Points Each | 450 points |
| 4. 1 Final Paper, 250 Points (2000 words) | <u>250 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.

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

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 (Including Attendance):

Students must come to class on time and prepared. This means keeping current on the reading assignments and being aware of the course schedule and activities, as presented in this syllabus, discussed in class, and announced on the course website. It also means having the day's reading in class with you. Your participation grade is based on how prepared you are for class on a regular basis, your willingness to participate by contributing questions and comments while responding to others in a respectful and attentive way, and the quality of your comments. (Note: your participation grade can also be reduced by penalties from unexcused absences. See below.)

To do well, you should demonstrate consistent, high-quality participation. *High-quality* contributions to discussion are *informed* (i.e., show evidence of having done assigned work), *thoughtful* (i.e., show evidence of having understood and considered issues raised in readings and other discussions), and *considerate* (e.g., take the perspectives of others into account).

Your participation grade is determined in accordance with the following rubric.

Grade	Criteria
A	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Student makes consistent, high quality contributions to class discussion.2. Student is present and ready when class begins, remains alert and focused on the class discussion the entire period, keeps electronic devices silenced and off the desktop, and only begins packing belongings when class is over.3. Student has brought a copy of all relevant course materials to class (e.g., current reading, handouts) and consults them as appropriate.
B	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Student is often an active participant in class discussion whose contributions are sometimes of high quality.2. Student is present and ready when class begins, remains alert and focused on the class discussion the entire period, keeps electronic devices silenced and off the desktop, and only begins packing belongings when class is over.3. Student has brought a copy of all relevant course materials to class (e.g., current reading, handouts) and consults them as appropriate.
C	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Student is an active listener of class discussion but is mostly silent.2. Student is present and ready when class begins, remains alert and focused on the class discussion the entire period, keeps electronic devices silenced and off the desktop, and only begins packing belongings when class is over.3. Student has brought a copy of all relevant course materials to class (e.g., current reading, handouts) and consults them as appropriate.
D	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Student is disruptive of class space or conversation, either actively or passively.2. Student is disrespectful of other students or instructors.
E	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Student fails to participate in any non-trivial way.

Attendance is mandatory. Much of what you learn in this class turns on participating in serious discussions, and you cannot benefit from those unless you are here.

Attendance is not figured into the grade as a separate factor, though absences can bring penalties by bringing down your participation grade. You are allowed four “free” unexcused absences over the course of the semester—no questions asked, no penalty. Unexcused absences after your fourth and until your ninth will cost you 20 points apiece (2% of your overall grade each). At ten unexcused absences, your attendance and participation grade becomes a zero. If you are absent for an excused reason, you will not lose any points and the absence will not exhaust one of your free absences. In

most cases you need documentation of the excuse (see below). Excused absences are typically limited to the following cases:

Issue	Documentation needed
Mental or physical health	Note from a medical professional or from the Dean of Students within one week of absence, including the date(s) you are unable to attend class/work—no private medical information should be included in this; alternatively, if the STP system lists you as “not cleared for campus” you are automatically excused from class
Personal, e.g., death in the family	Note from the office of the Dean of Students
(Some) UF activities	Notes must come from the activity supervisor, such as a coach, prior to the day of absence. Regular activities absences will lead to make-up assignments.
Religious observances	None required. Please talk to us at the beginning of the semester about this.

All other absences are typically unexcused, including some very good reasons to miss a class, like career or family events. I support your interest in these things, and understand why you might prioritize them over class, but that does not make them excused absences. If you think you have an exceptional case, contact me and we will discuss it.

Quizzes:

We will have a substantial number of unannounced quizzes in order to assess preparedness and comprehension of recent material. Quizzes will take place in the first ten minutes of class. No late quizzes will be accepted unless your absence from class is an excused absence.

Oral Exams:

This course will have two oral exams, one for the utilitarianism unit and one for the Kant unit. The oral exam will be 30 minutes, one on one with me, scheduled outside our regular class time. Without a documented excuse, late arrivals to an oral exam will not get extra time, and no-shows will not be rescheduled (and will result in a zero for the exam).

I will provide some study prompts 7-10 days before exams begin.

The material for the exams will be similar to what would be required to write a good philosophy paper: working knowledge of the relevant views and issues, clarity of presentation of that material, discernment of which part of the material is relevant to a particular question about it, ability to formulate quality objections and replies to the material, use of examples to illustrate the material, and nimbleness of movement in the view.

Final Paper:

This course will have one final paper of 2000 words corresponding to the Aristotle unit. The paper 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.

The 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.

I will consider allowing you to turn in a paper late without penalty only if you have a valid, unforeseeable, and documented reason for doing so. If you turn in the 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!) for up to seven days. One week past the deadline, the paper becomes a zero. Computer errors (including disk, printer, or e-mail problems) are not acceptable excuses for late work.

Papers are graded in accordance with the following rubric.

Grade	Criteria
A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The paper responds to the topic question and reflects a command of the relevant texts and material. 2. The paper identifies relevant issues and the thesis makes a significant and debatable claim. 3. The argumentative line of the paper is fully intact, flowing without gaps and without redundancy/irrelevant material. 4. The structure of the paper is easy to discern and the content easy to follow. 5. Paragraphs make a point with clear topic sentences governing them. 6. The paper effectively engages objections and replies that make the line of argument stronger. 7. There are few if any mechanical errors.
B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The paper responds to the topic question and reflects competence with relevant texts and material. 2. The paper identifies relevant issues and the thesis makes a significant and clear claim. 3. The argumentative line of the paper is mostly intact; hitches in flow are not obstacles to understanding, and gaps in presentation / irrelevant material do not make it difficult to discern the argument. 4. The structure of the paper is easy to discern. 5. Most paragraphs make a point with clear topic sentences governing them. 6. The paper engages objections and replies in line with the overall argument. 7. There are some mechanical errors but not enough to make them distracting for the reader.
C	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The paper responds to the topic question & mostly reflects competence with relevant texts/material. 2. The paper identifies relevant issues and the thesis makes a reasonable and clear claim. 3. The argumentative line of the paper is discernible, even if the presentation includes gaps and irrelevant material or the flow is somewhat choppy. 4. The structure of the paper can be discerned, even if it is not easy to discern. 5. The paper attempts objections and replies, but does not support them well or use them to great effect in service of the larger argument. 6. There are enough mechanical errors to be distracting for the reader.
D	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The paper responds to the topic question but does not reflect a command of the relevant texts and material. Alternatively, the paper is missing responses to key parts of the paper topic. 2. The paper does not identify relevant issues and the thesis is unclear or inappropriately weak or inappropriately strong. 3. The argumentative line is hard to discern. 4. The structure of the paper is minimal. 5. There are enough mechanical errors to be distracting for the reader.
E	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The paper does not respond to the topic question and does not reflect a command of the relevant texts and material. 2. The paper lacks a definite thesis or has one that is unclear or inappropriate. 3. There is no definite argument to be found. 4. There is no structure to be found. 5. There are enough mechanical errors to be distracting for the reader.

Course Policies and Student Resources

Accessibility:

Meeting. I encourage you to come see me, in office hours if possible.

Email. Please email 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:

Electronic devices—including phones, computers, tablets, and recording devices—should be silenced, and you will need to suspend interaction with them during class. This means you will need to bring a hard copy of your reading and a way to take notes, as you won't be able to use your devices to facilitate in-class activity.

Students are allowed by law to record video or audio of class lectures. If you choose to do this, please set up recording prior to class start time. The purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. A student who circulates a recording, even to another student in the course, without written consent of the instructor may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

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 who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

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. Framing Concepts – Objective Value, Action, Decision, Moral Psychology

Week 1

W, Aug 23	Introduction	Overview
F, Aug 25	C.S. Lewis, "Men Without Chests," pp. 1-26	Objective Value

Week 2

M, Aug 28	Anscombe, "Mr. Truman's Degree," pp. 1-8	Action
W, Aug 30	Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism," pp. 17-54 Althusser, "Ideology & ISAs," 170-177	Decision
F, Sept 1	continued	

Week 3

M, Sept 4	No class—holiday	
W, Sept 6	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , pp. 558-570, 139-144	Moral Psychology
F, Sept 8	Hume, <i>Treatise</i> , 2.3.3, pp. 413-418; 3.1.1, pp. 455-476	Moral Psychology

2. Utilitarianism

Week 4

Classical Utilitarianism

M, Sept 11	Bentham, <i>Principles</i> : Chs. 1, 4-6, pp. 6-9, 22-43 (esp. Ch. 1, 4)	Hedonism, consequentialism, quantitative value
W, Sept 13	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> : Chapter 2, pp. 159-185	Qualitative value
F, Sept 15	continued	

Week 5

M, Sept 18	Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," pp. 1-8	Contemporary Consequentialism
W, Sept 20	Nozick, "The Experience Machine," pp. 42-45 Nussbaum, excerpt from <i>Frontiers of Justice</i> , pp. 71-74	Critiques of Utilitarianism
F, Sept 22	continued	

Week 6

M, Sept 25	Williams, "Against Utilitarianism," pp. 133-142	Critiques of Utilitarianism
W, Sept 27	continued	
F, Sept 29	Utilitarianism wrap	

UTILITARIANISM ORAL EXAMS WILL BE WEEK 7, BY APPOINTMENT (30 MIN)

3. Kantian Ethics

Week 7

M, Oct 2	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> : Preface, First Section, pp. 1-17	Duty
W, Oct 4	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> : Second Section, pp. 19-32	Moral Psychology, Four Examples
F, Oct 6	No Class - holiday	

Week 8

The Three Formulations of the Categorical Imperative

M, Oct 9	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> : Second Section, pp. 32-48	First Formulation
W, Oct 11	continued	First Formulation

F, Oct 13	continued	Second/Third Form.
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Week 9

M, Oct 16	Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie," pp. 360-373 Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie," pp. 63-67	Contemporary Kantians, Critiques of Kant
W, Oct 18	Korsgaard continued Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," pp.16-19	
F, Oct 20	Kant wrap	

KANT ORAL EXAMS WILL BE WEEK 10, BY APPOINTMENT (30 MIN)

5. Aristotle's Virtue Ethics

Week 10

M, Oct 23	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Book I (entire), except I.6	Teleology and Function
W, Oct 25	Foot, <i>Natural Goodness</i> Ch. 2 and 3, pp. 25-51	Naturalism
F, Oct 27	continued	

Week 11

M, Oct 30	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Book II (entire), VI.4-VI.5	Habituation
W, Nov 1	continued	Skill & Virtue
F, Nov 3	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Book VI (entire), X.6-8; also review I.7, I.13, II.5-II.9	Soul

Week 12

M, Nov 6	continued	Unity
W, Nov 8	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : VII.1-10 Recommended but not required: Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection," pp. 1-44	Continence, Incontinence, Vice
F, Nov 10	No class – holiday	

Week 13

M, Nov 13	continued	Bad People
W, Nov 15	Sophocles, <i>Philoctetes</i> , pp. 190-254	Moral Luck
F, Nov 17	Aristotle Wrap	

6. Concluding Tasks

Week 14

M, Nov 20	Overflow day	
W, Nov 22	No class – holiday	
F, Nov 24	No class – holiday	

Week 15

M, Nov 27	Final Paper Writing Workshop	
W, Nov 29	Final Paper Writing Workshop	
F, Dec 1	Final Paper Writing Workshop	

FINAL PAPER DUE SUNDAY, DEC 3, BY 11:59 PM ON CANVAS

Week 16

M, Dec 4	Final Paper Presentations	
W, Dec 6	Final Paper Presentations	

No final exam.