

**Syllabus for PHI 3650: Moral Philosophy**  
**Class number 22703**  
**Dr. Molly Gardner**  
**University of Florida, Spring 2025**

**COURSE MEETINGS:**

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 9:35 – 10:25 a.m., Matherly Hall, Room 115

**CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DR. GARDNER:**

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Office phone: 352-294-0426

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2 – 4 p.m. and by appointment

Office Hours Sign-Up Sheet: <http://bit.ly/2vYpCmI>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

What do morally wrong actions have in common? What do right and wrong have to do with things that are good and bad? In this course we will explore normative ethics, the branch of philosophy that attempts to systematize and explain our moral judgments. The major theories we will consider include ethical egoism, utilitarianism, Kantianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. We will also briefly study some problems in metaethics, the field that considers what morality really is and whether moral knowledge is possible; and applied ethics, the field that considers specific moral issues. This course satisfies one of the area distribution requirements for either the philosophy major or the philosophy minor, and it counts toward the Humanities (H) general education requirement.

**COURSE MATERIALS:**

The following two required textbooks can be purchased at the campus bookstore or online:

- John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Hackett, 2002. ISBN 087220605X
- Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: With On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Hackett, 1993. ISBN 087220166X

All the other course readings will be uploaded to our Canvas website as PDFs.

**GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT:**

PHI 3650 is a General Education Course in Humanities. 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. <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/program-area-objectives.aspx>

**Humanities Gen Ed SLOs:**

	<b>Content</b>	<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>Communication</b>
Humanities	Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used.	Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.	Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.

The general education objectives will be accomplished through incentivizing reading, participating in class discussions, and writing. Each of the SLOs will be assessed primarily through the two assigned papers, but also through the quizzes and exam.

**COURSE GOALS:**

*“Knowledge That”:*

- Better understand some of the central developments in the field of ethics

*“Knowledge How”:*

- Improve your ability to read for arguments, reconstruct the arguments you have read, and evaluate the arguments you have reconstructed
- Improve your ability to reason about moral theories, arguments, and concepts
- Improve your ability to express yourself in speech and writing with clarity, depth, and precision

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

<b>4 Quizzes:</b> 10 points each, lowest grade dropped (30 points total) <i>Each quiz will consist of 4 multiple-choice questions and 3 short-answer questions.</i>	<b>Attendance and Participation:</b> 10 points <i>(See chart on next page.)</i>
<b>2 Papers:</b> 65 points each (130 points total) <i>Each paper should be between 1000 and 1200 words.</i>	<b>Final Exam:</b> 30 points <i>The final exam will consist of 4 multiple-choice questions, 3 short-answer questions, and 2 essay questions.</i>

**Total:** 200 points

- **Lowest Quiz Grade Dropped:** Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

- **Extra Credit:** You will have the opportunity to get up to 3 extra credit points over the course of the semester. Information about extra credit opportunities will be posted periodically on Canvas.
- **Attendance and Participation:** See chart on next page

**DETERMINING YOUR SEMESTER GRADE:**

A	186 to 200 points
A-	180 to 185 points
B+	172 to 179 points
B	164 to 171 points
B-	160 to 163 points
C+	152 to 159 points
C	144 to 151 points
C-	140 to 143 points
D+	132 to 139 points
D	124 to 131 points
D-	120 to 123 points
E	0 to 119 points

Please note that your course grade is determined by points, not percentages, and that all points have equal weight, regardless of the assignment. Canvas is sometimes misleading when it tells you what “percentage grade” it thinks you have; if you are in doubt about what your true course grade is going to be, ***ignore the percentage that Canvas gives you*** and simply calculate the number of points you have earned and the number of points you can still earn, keeping in mind that I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

**UNIVERSITY GRADING POLICIES:**

For information on how your grade for this course will be averaged with your grades in other courses at the University of Florida, see the following: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> . Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies.

## ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

This semester our class will meet 40 times. Five absences will be *automatically excused*, but any additional absences will lower your attendance and participation grade according to the following chart: (Remember that attendance and participation are worth 10 points out of 200 for the semester.)

	Poor participation	Excellent participation
0 absences	8	10
1 absence	8	10
2 absences	8	10
3 absences	8	10
4 absences	8	10
5 absences	8	10
6 absences	7	9
7 absences	6	7
8 absences	5	6
9 absences	4	5
10 or more absences	0 to 3	4

**There is almost never a need to email me to have your absences excused. I do not need to know why you were gone.** As the chart above illustrates, 5 absences are *automatically excused* no matter what reason you had to be absent, and any additional absences will lower your attendance and participation grade *regardless of your reason for being absent*.

There is one exception to this policy: in a case where at least *six* of your absences are justified by what the university deems to be “acceptable reasons,” please email me, and I will consider evaluating you on participation only. Please see the University of Florida’s policy for a list of acceptable reasons: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>. If this exception applies to you, your participation grade will still be worth 10 points, and it will be determined by how actively engaged you are in our classroom discussions.

**This “participation only” exception to the attendance policy does not apply to you when fewer than six of your absences are for good reasons.** For example, if you had good reasons for being absent 5 times but were absent a total of 7 times, then the exception does not apply to you, and your maximum attendance/participation grade is 7 out of 10, as the chart above indicates. Absences due to illness or to adding this class after the first day are treated as described above, exactly like any other absences.

## LATE PAPERS OR MISSED QUIZZES:

If you miss a quiz deadline, you will receive a 0 for that quiz; there will be no make-up quizzes this semester. (But remember that your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.)

If you miss the deadline or anticipate that you *will* miss the deadline for a paper, please send me an email at [mollygardner@ufl.edu](mailto:mollygardner@ufl.edu) *as soon as possible*, and I will consider whether to grant you

an extension. I reserve the right to deduct between 0 and 10 points from your grade for each assignment for lateness.

### **WORKING WITH OTHERS:**

#### **Papers:**

You may discuss your paper ideas with me or other students. For help brainstorming, formatting, and writing your papers, you are welcome to take drafts of your papers us or to the writing studio.

However, you must ultimately write your papers and complete the worksheets on your own, and you must cite your sources. Any citation style—MLA, Chicago, APA, or some variation—is acceptable. For information about how to avoid plagiarism, see the handouts I have uploaded to the non-required readings folder on Canvas.

Please note that you can bring me drafts of your papers for feedback. However, I do not give *written* feedback on drafts—instead, I will provide you with *oral feedback* only, which means that you must come to a Zoom or in-person meeting with me to get feedback. If my office hours are close to being full, I reserve the right to limit the number of meetings I have with you before each paper is due.

You are not permitted to use ChatGPT or any other form of artificial intelligence *at any stage of your writing process*.

#### **Quizzes and Final Exam:**

The quizzes and final exam are timed, and you will be taking them on Canvas using the Respondus Lockdown Browser. While you are taking the quizzes and the final exam, you may consult printouts of your notes, the lecture slides, the readings, and any study guides you may have prepared in advance by yourself or with others. However, you are not permitted to consult with others or search the Internet for answers *while you are taking the quiz or the exam*. (The Respondus Lockdown Browser will prevent you from doing this.) Nor are you permitted to use ChatGPT or any other form of artificial intelligence while answering quiz or exam questions. After you have taken a quiz or exam, you are not permitted to share any information about it with students who haven't taken it yet.

#### **Extra Credit:**

If an extra credit assignment requires written work, that work must be entirely your own. You are not permitted to work with others on the extra credit, nor are you permitted to copy and paste from the internet or from artificial intelligence.

#### **HONOR CODE:**

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 specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions; for more information see this page: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>. You are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me or your TA.

### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center: <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 EVALUATIONS:

At the end of the semester, you 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 is here: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. You will be notified when the official evaluation period opens, and you can complete evaluations through the email you receive from GatorEvals, in your Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to you here: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### COURSE SCHEDULE:

*This schedule is tentative. Please check Canvas for updates.*

Date	What we will do in class	Reading (to be done before class)
1/13/25	Course Overview	None
1/15/25	How to Reason About Ethics	<b>David Boonin and Graham Oddie</b> , <i>What’s Wrong? Applied Ethicists and Their Critics</i> (excerpt 1)
1/17/25	How to Reason About Ethics	<b>David Boonin and Graham Oddie</b> , <i>What’s Wrong? Applied Ethicists and Their Critics</i> (excerpt 2)
1/20/25	<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, no class</b>	
1/22/25	Cultural Relativism	<b>James Rachels</b> , “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism”
1/24/25	Cultural Relativism	None
1/27/25	<b>Quiz 1 due at 9:35 a.m.</b> Psychological Egoism	<b>Joel Feinberg</b> , “Psychological Egoism”
1/29/25	Ethical Egoism	<b>Russ Shafer-Landau</b> , “Ethical Egoism”

1/31/25	Ethical Egoism	None
2/3/25	Virtue Ethics	<b>Aristotle</b> , <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (excerpt)
2/5/25	Virtue Ethics	None
2/7/25	Consequentialism	<b>Russ Shafer-Landau</b> , “Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions”
2/10/25	<b>Quiz 2 due at 9:35 a.m.</b> Utilitarianism	<b>John Stuart Mill</b> , <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapters 1 and 2
2/12/25	Utilitarianism	<b>John Stuart Mill</b> , <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapters 3 and 4
2/14/25	Utilitarianism	None
2/17/25	Utilitarianism	<b>John Stuart Mill</b> , <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapter 5
2/19/25	Hedonism	<b>Robert Nozick</b> , <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> (excerpt)
2/21/25	Hedonism	None
	<b>Paper 1 due on Canvas</b> <b>2/23/25 at 11:59 p.m.</b>	
2/24/25	Options	<b>Peter Singer</b> , “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
2/26/25	Options	<b>Colin McGinn</b> , “Our Duties to Animals and the Poor”
2/28/25	Options	<b>Travis Timmerman</b> , “Sometimes There Is Nothing Wrong With Letting a Child Drown”
3/3/25	Aggregation	<b>John Taurek</b> , “Should the Numbers Count?”
3/5/25	Aggregation	<b>Fiona Woollard</b> , “The New Problem of Numbers in Morality”
3/7/25	Aggregation	None
3/10/25	<b>Quiz 3 due at 9:35 a.m.</b> Aggregation	<b>Alastair Norcross</b> , “Great Harms from Small Benefits Grow: How Death Can Be Outweighed by Headaches”
3/12/25	Collective Harm	<b>Shelly Kagan</b> , “Do I Make a Difference?”
3/14/25	Collective Harm	None
	<b>Spring Break March 15 – 23, no class</b>	
3/24/25	Deontology	<b>Immanuel Kant</b> , <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , First Section: Transition from the Ordinary Rational Knowledge of Morality to the Philosophical
3/26/25	Deontology	None
3/28/25	Deontology	<b>Immanuel Kant</b> , <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , Second Section: Transition from Popular Moral Philosophy to a Metaphysics of Morals

3/31/25	Deontology	<b>Christine Korsgaard</b> , “The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil”
4/2/25	Deontology	None
4/4/25	Deontology	<b>W.D. Ross</b> , “What Makes Right Acts Right?”
4/7/25	<b>Quiz 4 due at 9:35 a.m.</b> Deontology	<b>Tom Regan</b> , “The Case for Animal Rights”
4/9/25	Deontology	None
4/11/25	Constraints	<b>James Rachels</b> , “Active and Passive Euthanasia”
	<b>Paper 2 due on Canvas 4/13/25 at 11:59 p.m.</b>	
4/14/25	Constraints	<b>Thomas Sullivan</b> , “Active and Passive Euthanasia: An Impertinent Distinction?”
4/16/25	Constraints	None
4/18/25	Constraints	<b>Philippa Foot</b> , “The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect”
4/21/25	Constraints	<b>Andreas Mogensen and William MacAskill</b> , “The Paralysis Argument”
4/23/25	Lessons from the Course and Review for Final Exam	None

*The **final exam** will be due on Canvas at 12 p.m. on Friday, May 2.*