Introduction to Ethics
MWF 8:30-9:20am
BRNG 1268

Contact information:
Instructor: Nicolae Morar (nmorar@purdue.edu)
Office: PRCE 195
Office Hours: MW 9:20-10:20am and by appointment

Course Description:
It is important to reflect on the moral dimension of our lives: how we ought to act, which goals are worth pursuing, and how we should relate to others. These key issues have been differently answered throughout the history of philosophy. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to some of the major ethical theories and to their application to a range of contemporary social issues.

Required Texts & Materials:
- Additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard (online)

A (tentative) reading & discussion schedule:
Section I – Moral Theories

- WEEK 1 Introduction

Jan 11 – Introduction - course & syllabus (no readings)
Jan 13 – The Nature of a Moral Theory (Timmons 1-8)
Jan 15 – The Evaluation of a Moral Theory (Timmons 8-13)
• **WEEK 2 Moral Egoism**

Jan 18 – NO CLASSES (Martin Luther King Jr Day)
   - Plato - “The Myth of Gyges” (Timmons 16-18)
Jan 20 – Shoemaker – Egoisms (Timmons 18-24)
Jan 22 – Shoemaker – Egoisms (Timmons 24-34)

• **WEEK 3 Ethics by Authority**

Jan 25 – Mortimer, Morality is based on God’s Commands (Timmons 35-38)
Jan 27 – Timmons – Does morality depend on God’s commands? (Timmons 39-49)
Jan 29 – Benedict – A defense of ethical relativism (Timmons 49-54)
   - Rachels – The challenge of cultural relativism (Timmons 55-60)

• **WEEK 4 The Natural Law Theory**

Feb 1 – Aquinas / Harris, The ethics of Natural Law (Timmons 61-79)
Feb 3 – Foot – The Doctrine of the Double Effect (Timmons 79-83)
Feb 5 – Barcalow – Problems for Natural Law Theory (Timmons 84–87)

• **WEEK 5 Consequentialism**

Feb 8 – Bentham – The Principle of Utility (Timmons 88-94)
Feb 10 – Mill – Defense of Utilitarianism (Timmons 94-100)
Feb 12 – Darwall – Utilitarianism: Act or Rule? (Timmons 100 – 106)

• **WEEK 6 Consequentialism + Exam 1**

Feb 15 – Hooker – Rule - Consequentialism (Timmons 106-113)
Feb 17 – **Review 1st exam**
Feb 19 – **1st exam**

• **WEEK 7 Kantian Ethical Theory**

Feb 22 – Kant – The Moral Law and the Autonomy of the Will (Timmons 115 – 126)
Feb 24 – Glasgow – Kant’s Principle of Universal Law (Timmons 126-139)
Feb 26 – O’Neill – Kant on Treating People as Ends in Themselves (Timmons 139-144)
WEEK 8 Kantian Ethical Theory + Virtue Ethics
Mar 1 – Feldman – On Treating People as Ends in Themselves (Timmons 144-150)
Mar 3 – Aristotle – Virtue and Character (Timmons 151-161)
Mar 5 – Hursthouse – Normative Virtue Ethics (Timmons 161-171)

WEEK 9 Virtue Ethics + The Ethics of Care + Pluralism
Mar 8 – Swanton – A Virtue Ethical Account of Right Action (Timmons 172-186)
Mar 10 – Gilligan/ Halwani (Timmons 195-203 & 217-229)
Mar 12 – Ross (Timmons 233-237)

WEEK 10 SPRING VACATION
Mar 15 – SPRING VACATION
Mar 17 – SPRING VACATION
Mar 19 – SPRING VACATION

WEEK 11 Pluralism and Particularism + Exam 2
Mar 22 - Ross/ McNaughton (Timmons 233-245)
Mar 24 – Review 2nd Exam
Mar 26 – 2nd Exam

Section II - Problems in Ethics (all readings are available on blackboard)

WEEK 12 Animal Ethics
Mar 29 – Peter Singer – Animal Liberation (1st chapter) “All Animals are Equal…”
Mar 31 – Steinbock, Speciesism and the Idea of Equality
Apr 2 – Singer, Speciesism and Moral Status & Kant, The Status of Non-Human Animals

WEEK 13 Animals and Biotechnologies (Genetic Engineering)
Apr 5 – JS Robert & F Baylis, Crossing Species Boundaries & R. Streiffer, In Defense of the Moral Relevance of Species Boundaries
Apr 7 – R. Streiffer, At the Edge of Humanity: Human Stem Cells, Chimeras, and Moral Status
Apr 9 – Bernie Rollin, On Telos and Genetic Engineering
• WEEK 14 Environmental Ethics
Apr 12 – Leopold, The Land Ethic
   – the movie “HOME” available on www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqxENMKaeCU (and on reserve)
Apr 14 – Rolston III, "Duties to Endangered Species," BioScience
Apr 16 – Shue, Responsibility to Future Generations & the Technological Transition

• WEEK 15 Genetic Enhancement and Human Nature
Apr 19 – Sandel, The Case against Perfection
Apr 21 – A Buchanan, Moral Status and Human Enhancement

• WEEK 16 The Ethics of Human Nature
Apr 26 – Habermas, The Future of Human Nature (Chapter 1)
Apr 28 – Daniels, Can anyone really be talking about ethically modifying Human Nature?
Apr 30 – Review Final Exam

• WEEK 17 Final Exam Week
   Final Examination: TBA
Course Requirements and Grading Policy:

Three exams will be written in class. They will consist of essays. No late exams will be accepted without a medical certificate or proof of death in the family. I do not accept incompletes.

1) 1st Midterm Exam (20%) on Friday February 19th
2) 2nd Midterm Exam (20%) on Friday March 26th
3) The final exam (30%) is TBA (administrated during the final exam period)
4) 8 Write-up(s) (20%) – or discussion essays (each worth 2.5%)

A large portion of your grade will be determined by the eight discussion essays that you submit throughout the semester. These essays give you the opportunity to read carefully the readings, to summarize them (1 page), and to raise a question or an objection (1 page) to the texts being discussed the following day. If you choose to write a discussion essay for a given week’s readings, it must be submitted no later than 7 pm – the day before the reading you write about is scheduled in the syllabus.

Ex. Suppose you decide to write about Darwall – Utilitarianism: Act or Rule? (T100 – 106) – the reading is scheduled for Feb 12. It means that the discussion essay has to be in my email box no later than Feb 11 by 7:00pm. Make no mistake, this rule is nonnegotiable.

I will then read it over and return it to you on Friday. If time permits, I will ask students to read their essays as a way of generating classroom discussion. There is no set schedule for when your discussion essays must be written over the course of the semester, but I would strongly encourage you to write some essays early on in the course.

Essential details
Length: 2 pages, double spaced, Font: Times New Roman, ‘normal margins’ (don’t play with this)
Due: By 7:00pm, the day BEFORE the reading you write about is scheduled in the syllabus
Assignment: Focus on the reading, summarize the text, and raise a question or an objection that you think we should discuss

5) Participation/ Attendance (10%) Attendance is mandatory. If you are not going to be in class, please let me know in advance, i.e. email me before class. Class participation is strongly encouraged. Assigned readings are to be completed prior to class.
If you believe you have the flu or flulike symptoms contact ASAP the Purdue Student Health Center at (765) 494-1700. With a medical certificate in hand, I could waive your missing classes from your record.
**Academic Integrity**

Absolutely no form of academic dishonesty in any of its various manifestations will be tolerated. I take this matter very seriously. Cheating, copying, plagiarizing, etc. of any sort will at the very least result in a failing grade for that particular assignment, and may result in a failing grade in the course, as well as a formal letter being written to the Office of the Dean of Students, informing the Dean of your misconduct. In short, it can make your life miserable. I strongly encourage you, if you are at all unsure about what constitutes academic dishonesty, to look it up at www.purdue.edu/ODOS/osrr/integrity.htm. Ignorance on this matter is not a valid excuse.

**Disclaimer**

I reserve the right to change the contents of this syllabus and to change the schedule at any time. If changes are made, you will be notified in advance in class.

Optional (participation highly recommended)

Extra credit up to 4.75% for the 3 Bioethics Lectures (Spring 2010) - www.purdue.edu/bioethics