

Assessment Tasks & Grading:

1) 40% Class participation & Discussion -

Participation in the course's On-line forums: I will ask you to do the week's reading and provide 3 short answer questions. Once those have been submitted, I will provide a response and offer in-depth questions for you to answer in paragraph format by the end of the week.

2) 30 % Presentations/Essays

- **1st Presentation & Write up** - In this essay you will have the chance to examine one of the ethical theories in depth, pointing out its perceived strengths and weaknesses, as well as how it is relevant to the modern discussions, and the situation in today's world - **15%**

- **2nd Presentation & Write up** - You are to choose a topic of moral contention and debate and address it, using the tools and resources of at least 3 ethical theories. - **15%**

3) 10% Midterm – Exactly what you'd expect. Essay style format, as it is take-home like all assignments in this class.

4) 20% Final Exam

A final exam, testing your knowledge of the theories, and understanding of their application will be administered at the end of the semester.

Policy on Late submissions and rewrites:

Late assignments will be deducted 5% (half a letter grade) per day they are late, up to a period of one week. If they have not been turned in after one week and there have been no other arrangements made, then such work will be considered to be a missed assignment.

Policy on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved.

Any student who plagiarizes in this course will receive a failing grade and will be referred to the Dean.

Disability Statement

If you have a physical, sensory, health, cognitive, or mental health disability that could limit your ability to fully participate in this class, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Specialist Counselor to discuss reasonable accommodations that will help you succeed in this class. Ann Lemke can be reached at 235-7448, lemke@hawaii.edu, or you may stop by Hale 'Akoakoa 213 for more information.

COURSE CONTENT

(The Instructor reserves the right to change this schedule and readings if necessary.)

[ML = The Moral Life; HO = Hand Out]

Introduction

- **What is Ethics?**
- **Valuing & Valuation**
- **Thinking Tools, How to engage Philosophy**

a) Intuitive Ethics:

- **Egoism** -
 - “In Defense of Ethical Egoism” - Ayn Rand (ML)
 - “A Critique of Ethical Egoism” - James Rachels (ML)
- **Divine Command**
 - Euthyphro” - Plato (HO)
 - from “Summa Theologica” - St. Thomas Aquinas (HO – WP)
 - from the “Bhagavad-Gita”
- **Intuitive Realism**
 - “The Subject Matter of Ethics” - G. E. Moore (HO – Blackwell)

b) Rational Ethics:

- **Reason vs. Sentiment**
 - from “A Treatise on Human Nature” - David Hume (HO)
 - “The Nature of Ethical Disagreement” – Charles L. Stevenson (HO)
- **Kant - Categorical Imperative**
 - The Moral Law” - Immanuel Kant (ML)
 - from “Valuing our Humanity” - C. Korsgaard (HO)
- **The Golden Rule**
 - “The Deep Beauty of the Golden Rule” - R. Maciver (ML)
- **Utilitarianism: Bentham & Mill**
 - “Utilitarianism Refined” - J.S. Mill (ML)
 - “Against Utilitarianism” - Bernard Williams (ML)

Skills or Competencies

1. Understand historical & contemporary ethical theories
2. Increase their skills in thinking about and addressing moral situations.
3. Defend their own positions using reason, argument, and compassion
4. Learn how to understand the reasoning behind positions that they disagree with, and argue against them rationally rather than simply dismissing them
5. Be able to establish one's own basis for what makes a decision ethical, based on the theories we have covered, and explain how that provides a better criteria than alternative points of view, answering possible criticisms
6. Develop an awareness of the real-world consequences of ethical decisions
7. Examine what they think is the most important ethical problem in the world today, and identify actions which may help the situation based on one of the ethical theories.

- o from “Brave New World” - Huxley (ML)

c) Emotion Based Ethics

- **Cultural Relativism**
 - o “Custom is King” - Herodotus (ML)
 - o “The Case for Moral Relativism” - Ruth Benedict (ML)
 - o “The Subjectivity of Values” - J. L. Mackie (HO - Backwell)
- **Virtue Ethics - Aristotle,**
 - o “Virtue Ethics” - Aristotle (ML)
 - o “Virtue & the Moral Life” - Mayo (ML)
 - o from “After Virtue” - MacIntyre (HO)
 - o from “The Analects” - Confucius (HO -WP)
- **Buddhist Ethics of Compassion**
 - o “The Four Noble Truths” - (ML)
 - o from “The vows of the Bodhisattva” (HO)
- **Ethics of Care**
 - o “The Ethics of Care” Virginia Held – (HO – Cahn)

d) Other Ethical Approaches

- **Existentialism/Authenticity**
 - o “Existentialism is a Humanism” - Jean-Paul Sartre (ML)
 - o from “The Myth of Sisyphus” - Albert Camus (HO)
 - o from “The Ethics of Uncertainty” - Simone de Beauvoir
- **The question of Evil & Cruelty**
 - o “Beyond Good and Evil” - F. Nietzsche (ML)
 - o from “Meno” - Plato (HO)
 - o “An Experiment in Autonomy” - Stanley Milgram (ML)
 - o “The Sanford Experiment” - Philip Zimbardo (HO)
 - o from “The Banality of Evil “ - Hannah Arendt (HO)