

## GENERAL ETHICS – PHL 202-007

Monday and Thursday 8:30-9:45am – Feinstein 118

*Instructor:* Antonella Mallozzi

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*Office:* Siena Hall, Room 139

*Office Hours:* Monday 12-2pm and by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

What does a good life consist in? Are there universal principles regulating what is right and what is wrong? Or is it all relative? Is it right to eat animals? And to use drugs? In this course we will address these and many other questions that are central in ethical theory. We will explore the three standard branches in the contemporary discussion—*normative ethics*, *value theory*, and *metaethics*—and discuss a number of practical applications to problems such as famine relief, animal rights, environmental ethics, and abortion. The course assumes no prerequisite philosophical knowledge.

### READINGS:

- The required textbook is:  
Russ Shafer-Landau, *Living Ethics*, Oxford University Press 2018 - ISBN 9780190272197
- Additional readings will be made available in electronic format on Sakai

All readings are required, and must be completed before class.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This is a writing-intensive course, including several low-stakes assignments and peer-review sessions throughout the semester. You will discuss the topic of your final paper with me in advance, and submit a draft one week before the semester ends. Aim to give yourself enough time to write several drafts before submitting! I also strongly encourage you to participate in the class discussion, as it can boost your final grade up to 10%.

This is how your final grade will be calculated:

10 Blog Posts	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Paper	20%
Final Exam	20%
10 Reading Assessments	10%
Participation	10%

**BLOG POSTS (20 points):**

300-350 words on the current week's reading, to be submitted weekly, by Sunday night 11:59pm, on the Sakai class blog (CLOG). In order to get full credit, you must submit 5 posts before the midterm exam and 5 after the midterm and before the final, for a total of 10 posts. Late posts will automatically count for the following week.

The first post is due on February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**MIDTERM EXAM (20 points):**

A combination of short answers and multiple-choice questions on the topics covered during the first part of the semester. It will take place on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**FINAL EXAM (20 points):**

A combination of short answers and multiple-choice questions on the topics covered during the second part of the semester. It will take place on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

**FINAL PAPER (20 points):**

Approximately 1200 words, to be submitted on Sakai by 11am on May 11<sup>th</sup>. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

A draft of the paper is due a week before, on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Bring two printed copies of your draft to class. Although you won't receive a grade on your draft, failure to turn it in will result in a 10% deduction from the mark you receive on the final version of the paper.

**READING ASSESSEMENTS (10 points):**

Reading assessments are short questions based on the assigned readings. They will be given randomly at the beginning of class and you will have 5-8' to respond in paragraph form. You will not receive a letter grade for the reading assessment, but *minus (-) check (✓)*, or *plus (+)*. These assignments will ensure that everyone is on time and has done the readings, and they will be a springboard for discussion.

**ATTENDANCE & CLASS PARTICIPATION (10 points):**

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Unjustified absences are not allowed: your final grade will drop a whole letter if you are absent after two unexcused absences. You should come to class prepared and ready to engage in philosophical discussion. Actively participating in the in-class discussion will count towards 10% of your final grade.

**EXTRA CREDIT:**

No extra credit! You will have enough opportunities to improve your grade through assignments and class participation.

GRADING SCHEME:

A	95-100%
A-	91-94%
B+	87-90%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	0-59%

RESOURCES:

If you need clarification on the readings always make sure to ask in class, or during office hours, or to email me at [amalloz1@providence.edu](mailto:amalloz1@providence.edu)

I also recommend looking at the following sites as a resource on philosophical topics and authors:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

As part of the College Core Curriculum, this course will

- Explore the meaning and purpose of the ethical life
- Examine the complexity of the decision-making process and provide guidance for making good moral decisions
- Provide opportunities for students to nurture a habit of reflective moral judgments through the study of moral problems
- Include a consideration of the philosophical traditions of Aristotle and/or St. Thomas Aquinas

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not tolerated and will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity. All papers will be submitted to Turnitin on Sakai. Make sure you understand what plagiarism is and the consequences it might have. You can find the most recent policy here:

[http://catalog.providence.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=856#Academic\\_Honesty](http://catalog.providence.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=856#Academic_Honesty)

A broader listing of Providence College Academic policies is located here:

<http://catalog.providence.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=856>

*Students with documented disabilities (learning, physical, medical, temporary) will be provided reasonable academic accommodations in this course, coordinated by the Office of Academic Services (OAS). Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the assistant director for disability services to discuss their needs and arrange individualized services. You are also encouraged to contact me at the beginning of the course to make me aware of your needs.*

\*\*\*There might be changes to the schedule below in due course. Always make sure to refer to the latest version of the syllabus by checking Sakai or asking me at [amalloz1@providence.edu](mailto:amalloz1@providence.edu) \*\*\*

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

(All chapter and page references are to our textbook: Russ Shafer-Landau, *Living Ethics*.)

Date	Topic	Readings
1/14	Syllabus & Policies + What Is Morality?	Ch. 1
1/17	Moral Reasoning	Ch. 2
1/21		<b>NO CLASS</b> (Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday)
1/24	Skepticism about Morality	Ch. 3 pp. 24-35
1/28	<i>Writing Workshop:</i>	Pryor, "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper" (distributed in class)
1/31	The Good Life	Ch. 4 pp.46-52 + Mill "Hedonism" pp. 53-58
2/4	The Good Life (continued)	Nozick, "The Experience Machine" pp. 59-60
2/7	Consequentialism	Ch. 5 pp. 61-68
2/11	Consequentialism (continued)	Mill, "Utilitarianism" pp. 70-75
2/14	Kantian Ethics	Ch. 6 pp. 76-85
2/18		<b>NO CLASS</b> (President's Day Holiday)
2/19 (Monday schedule)	Kantian Ethics (continued)	Kant, "The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative" pp. 86-92
2/21	Kantian Ethics (continued)	O'Neill: "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics" (Sakai)

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2/25	Social Contract Theory	Ch. 7, pp. 94-100
2/28	Social Contract Theory (cont.)	Hobbes, "Leviathan" pp. 101-106
3/4	Natural Law	Ch. 8, pp. 108-116
3/7	Natural Law (continued)	Aquinas, "Natural Law" pp. 116-123
3/11 3/14		<b>NO CLASS</b> (Spring recess)
3/18		<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
3/21		<b>NO CLASS</b> (instructor away at a conference)
3/25	Virtue Ethics	Ch. 10 pp. 137-143 + Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics" pp. 143-150
3/28	Virtue Ethics (continued)	
4/1	Feminist Ethics	Ch. 11 pp. 151-156 + Lindemann, "What Is Feminist Ethics?" pp. 157-163
4/4	Animal Rights	Singer, "All Animals Are Equal" pp. 221-230 [*optional: Ch. 13, pp. 209-219]
4/8	The Environment	Ch. 14 pp. 265-276
4/11	Abortion	Ch. 12 pp. 167-180
4/15	Abortion (continued)	Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" pp. 185-193
4/16 4/22		<b>NO CLASS</b> (Easter Recess)
4/24 (Monday schedule)	Globalization & Immigration	Ch. 17 pp. 384-397
4/25	Racism	Ch. 18 pp. 433-446
4/29	Drugs	Ch. 21 pp. 563-576
5/2		Final review + <i>Writing Workshop</i> . <b>Draft of final paper due. Bring two copies</b>
5/11		<b>FINAL EXAM (11:00AM-1:00PM)</b> <b>FINAL PAPER DUE (11am)</b>