



Virtue Ethics

Philosophy Department
PHI 229, Spring, 20011 11:30-12:20
Old Main G24 MWF
3 Credit Hours
Instructor: Dr. Andy Fitz-Gibbon

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Course Description

Catalog Description:

(O) Selected topics. May be taken more than once as subtitle changes. Prerequisites: Designated by department as appropriate for content and academic level of credit. (1-4 cr. hr.)

In this course, we will examine virtue ethics through the lens of virtue ethicists including: Alasdair MacIntyre, Confucius, Aristotle and Nel Noddings.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- a) Give an account of the major concepts and theories associated with virtue ethics in the eastern and western traditions.
- b) Apply these concepts and theories to areas of contemporary moral concern.
- c) Construct a reasoned philosophical argument.

Required Texts

Alasdair MacIntyre. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. London: Duckworth, 1981.

Confucius. *The Analects (Lun yü)*. Tr. D.C. Lau. London and New York: Penguin, 1979.

Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Tr. J.A.K. Thomason. London and New York: Penguin, 1976, 2004.

Nel Noddings. *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Caring*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, 2003.

Course Requirements

The course has a large discussion requirement, based on the required texts. Set reading and class participation are essential. Classes missed without prearrangement or a medical excuse will have negative consequences on final grade.

Each student will be required to write four 3-4 page take home papers, take part in a group presentation in class with a 3-4 page paper.

Final grade will be based on the following:

Class participation/attendance	10%
Two 5-7-page critical philosophical book reviews	40%
Final 10-14-page critical philosophical book review	50%

Self-reflection: 1-page. Due last day of class with three elements:

- a) How many classes you have missed and why?
- b) Grade you would give yourself for participation
- c) 2-3 paragraphs on what you got out of the course

Papers Due On

Presentation paper is due on the day of your presentation

February 28

April 11

Final paper due last day of class, May 9

The Syllabus

Week One

General introduction and expectations

What are virtue ethics?

Virtue ethics in the canon of ethics

Week Two

Reading Alasdair MacIntyre

Week Three

Reading Alasdair MacIntyre

Week Four

Reading Alasdair MacIntyre

Week Five

Reading Alasdair MacIntyre

Week Six

Reading Confucius

Week Seven

Reading Confucius

Week Eight

Spring Break No Classes

Week Nine

Reading Aristotle

Week Ten

Reading Aristotle

Week Eleven

Reading Aristotle

Week Twelve

Reading Aristotle

Friday is Scholars' day. No Class.

Week Thirteen

Reading Noddings

Week Fourteen

Reading Noddings

Week Fifteen

Reading Noddings

Week Sixteen

Last Day of classes May 9

Paper Requirements

Writing a Critical Philosophical Book Review

Total 5-7 Pages. Divide your review into three parts:

- a) Description 1 page (2 page final)
- b) Analysis 2-3 page (3-5 page final)
- c) Response 2-3 page (3-5 page final)

Description

Summarize the author's thesis or argument.

Analysis

In your analysis you might want to consider these questions (amongst others): What philosophical positions does the author take? How does the author justify her/his argument? Are the author's premises true, probable or plausible? Is the argument of the book sound? Are there historical comparisons? What was the context of the writing? Which other philosopher's have taken a similar/opposite view to the author? *You will not be able to cover all of this in 3 pages, so careful thought and writing is important.*

Response

Do you agree with the author? Present a reasoned argument why you do or do not? What other philosophy/philosophers would you use to support your response? How would you modify the author's position?

Online helps:

http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/book_reviews.shtml

<http://www.lavc.cc.ca.us/Library/bookreview.htm>

Policies and Information

1. SUNY Cortland is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act 1973.

If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact the office of Disability Services located in B-40 Van Hoesen Hall or call (607) 753-2066 for an appointment. Any information regarding your disability will remain confidential. Because many accommodations require early planning, requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible. Any request for accommodations will be reviewed in a timely manner to determine their appropriateness to this setting.

2. **No late work will be accepted unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.** Such arrangements will be made only under unusual circumstances.

3. Plagiarism. All work submitted must be your own. Ideas either borrowed from others, directly, or through paraphrase, must be well documented through endnotes or footnotes. If plagiarism is suspected the student will be reported to the Provost and can either accept the charge or defend her or himself in the Grievance Tribunal.

4. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what went on in class, whether any assignments were given, and for keeping up with your work.

SUNY Cortland Conceptual Framework

The mission of teacher education at SUNY Cortland is to build upon the foundation of liberal learning in the development of teachers who have exceptional pedagogical knowledge and skills. The foundation of liberal learning informs the professional education strand in an innovative thematic approach that emphasizes personal responsibility, global understanding and social justice. Graduates of SUNY Cortland's teacher education program will be prepared to think critically, utilize technology, communicate effectively, understand and value diversity, contribute to their communities, and make a difference in the lives of their students.