



Ethics

PHIL 181 – Spring 2025

Instructor: Dr. Stefano Giacchetti

M/W 5.15-6.30 – Office hours M/W Noon-1pm (by appointment)

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SUMMARY

Short Description: This course will investigate some of the central questions of philosophy and ethics: How should we, as human beings, live together? Are moral decisions the outcome of free choice or socially and naturally determined? What is the role of rationality in decision making? What are the social implications of moral evaluations?

Outcome Statement: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the major philosophical questions in the area of ethics with attention to the historical and conceptual development of these questions, and be able to articulate some of the major problems and responses central to this area of philosophy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students should be able to demonstrate

- (a) understanding of the relationships among cultural, economic, political, and social forces, and their impact on human behavior.
- (b) understanding of the processes and components of societies, states and cultures.
- (c) understanding of the differences of class, gender and race in societies, states and cultures.
- (d) awareness that human values and behavior, ideas of justice, and methods of interpretation are influenced by culture and time
- (e) ability to differentiate among historical and contemporary perspectives about the world with a view to fashioning a humane and just world.

Students should also be able to demonstrate

- (a) understanding of the major philosophical questions in the area of moral philosophy with attention to the historical and conceptual development of these questions
- (b) ability to articulate some of the major problems and responses central to this area of philosophy.

Students will learn to

- (a) recognize the way in which the basic principles governing how one ought to live are conditioned by one's involvement in and responsibilities toward the socially organized community in which one lives
- (b) understand different positions on this issue, to appreciate the concerns that account for these differences, to look for the reasons given in support of the different views, and to assess the forcefulness of the challenge that each poses for the others and for our own culture.

This course enables the student to

- (a) appreciate the profound issues involved in social relations, such as dignity and diversity
- (b) engage in dialogue with great philosophers, paying close attention to their meaning, their reasons, their concerns, their vision
- (c) examine the way different philosophically defended views challenge each other and see how they also challenge unexamined presuppositions in our own culture
- (d) include their own reflections into the dialogue
- (e) recognize reasons supporting a view, identify unexamined presuppositions, appreciate astute insights, expose vulnerabilities in established positions.
- (f) recognize the need for ethical judgment
- (g) distinguish alternative courses of action.
- (h) articulate the relevant ethical values, principles, rights, and virtues from the point of view of each stakeholder
- (i) formulate and support an ethical judgment
- (j) compare and contrast ethical theories and evaluate them in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

PROCEDURES

Full Course Description:

The course provides an overview of the theoretical background of ethics. The first part of the course will cover the theory of Kant, and his innovative perspective regarding the role of rational decisions and categorical imperatives. In the second part of the course we will examine the ethical approach of Schopenhauer who, starting from a Kantian perspective, developed his original ethical system based on the suppression of the will. The third part of the class will examine Nietzsche's critical approach to morality; his genealogical method and his radical criticism of rationality. In the final part of the class we will investigate contemporary issues in ethics; from the concrete analysis of case studies we will focus on crucial topics such as cultural relativism, subjectivism, religious influence, egoism and utilitarianism.

The aim of the course is to lead students to autonomously judge fundamental issues related to ethical decision making, with special reference to justice, fairness, adherence to norms and civil disobedience, rules and duties, cultural and social influences. This will provide students with the basic critical skills for recognizing different ethical approaches and for judging their feasibility and

correctness. The analysis of the philosophies which most consistently influenced the development of ethical and moral theories will be the tool for understanding moral dilemmas and constructing ethically informed decisions.

Required Texts:

- Kant's *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Moral*. (available online)
- Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation. Vol.I* (available online)
- Nietzsche's *On the genealogy of morals*. (available online)
- Rachel's *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*.

Assessment Components:

Student's final grade will be based on:

- One in-class test (Midterm): 40% of the final grade.
- One take-home paper (Final): 40% of the final grade.
- In-class presentations and participation: 20% of the final grade. Students will be requested to make presentations (15-20 min.) for one of the scheduled readings assigned.

Grading Policy:

The following grading scale will be applied for determining the final grade:

Presentation: A=20; A-=18; B+=17; B=16; B-=15; C+=14; C=13; C-=12; D+=12; D=11; F=10

Midterm and Final (each): A=40; A-=37; B+=36; B=34; B-=33; C+=32; C=30; C-=29; D+=27; D=26; F=24

Final Grade: A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 60-66; F = 59 and below

Attendance Policy:

Students should plan to regularly attend the class, since we will often broaden the topics contained in the texts to contemporary issues, and since this class is mainly intended to the rousing of students' personal thoughts and ideas.

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy:

This course meets twice a week, thus a total of two unexcused absences will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the "approved limit". **DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL.**

Class Conduct:

One important aspect of a Jesuit education is learning to respect the rights and opinions of others. Please respect others by (1) allowing all classmates the right to voice their opinions without fear of ridicule, and (2) not using profanity or making objectionable (including gendered, racial or

ethnic) comments, especially comments directed at a classmate.

Sakai:

All course materials will be located on Sakai which can be accessed at <https://sakai.luc.edu> Sakai is a web based learning management system. You will be able to access it from any computer connected to the internet. Instructional guides and video tutorials for using Sakai are available at: <http://www.luc.edu/itrs/sakai/sakai-student-tutorials.shtml> Course content, including syllabi, reading material etc. will be available online. Students should check Sakai often for announcements, assignments, and other course content.

Student Support Resources:

- ITS Service Desk: helpdesk@luc.edu 773-508-4487
- Library Subject Specialists: <http://libraries.luc.edu/specialists>
- Student Accessibility Center: sac@luc.edu
- Writing Center: <http://www.luc.edu/writing/>
- Ethics Hotline: <http://luc.edu/sglc/aboutus/> 855.603.6988

Email Messages:

All email messages sent to students about this course will be sent to their Loyola email address. Students are expected to check their Loyola email address on a regular basis. You can access your web based LUC email account at <https://outlook.luc.edu>

Special Circumstances--Receiving Assistance:

Students are urged to contact their instructors should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have any special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work, please let your instructors know so they can establish a plan for assignment completion. If you require assignment accommodations, please contact your instructors early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with Student Accessibility Center (SAC) (<http://www.luc.edu/sac/>).

Copyright:

Copyright law was designed to give rights to the creators of written work, artistic work, computer programs and other creative materials. The Copyright Act requires that people who use or reference the work of others must follow a set of guidelines designed to protect authors' rights. Unfortunately, copyright law is complex and too often incomprehensible; that does not, however, excuse users from following the rules. The safest practice is to remember (1) to refrain from distributing works used in class (whether distributed by the professor or used for research); they are likely copyright protected and (2) that any research or creative work should be cited. For LUC's copyright resources check online: <http://www.luc.edu/copyright>

Intellectual Property:

All lectures, notes and other instructional materials in this course are the intellectual property of the professor. As a result, they may not be distributed or shared in any manner, either on paper or virtually without my written permission. Lectures may not be recorded without my written consent; when consent is given, those recordings may be used for review only and may not be distributed. Recognizing that your work, too, is your intellectual property, I will not share or

distribute your work in any form without your written permission.

Privacy Statement

Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Students will be informed of such recordings by a statement in the syllabus for the course in which they will be recorded. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. Recordings including student activity that have been initiated by the instructor may be retained by the instructor only for individual use.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Harassment (Bias Reporting):

It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias.

In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link:

<http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/>

Technology:

Students are expected to know how to use Sakai and its features, be able to navigate the internet to explore resources, and to use the electronic resources available through LUC's library homepage.

Workload Expectations:

As an average, students should expect to dedicate about 8 hours per week to fulfill course activities, including readings/review of materials, assignments, lessons, etc.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Loyola University Chicago, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle.

Failing to meet the following academic integrity standards is a serious violation of personal honesty and the academic ideals that bind the University into a learning community. These standards apply to both individual and group assignments. Individuals working in a group may be held responsible if one of the group members has violated one or more of these standards.

1. Students may not plagiarize; the use of AI is considered plagiarism too and treated as such.
2. Students may not submit the same work for credit for more than one assignment (known as self-plagiarism).
3. Students may not fabricate data.
4. Students may not collude.
5. Students may not cheat.
6. Student may not facilitate academic misconduct.

Follow this link for more details about these standards, sanctions, and academic misconduct procedures: (https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

01/20 Introduction

01/22 Introduction to Kant

01/27 Kant pp. 7-17

01/29 “ “ pp. 19-32

02/03 “ “ pp. 33-48

02/07 “ “ pp. 49-62

02/10 Introduction to Schopenhauer

02/12 Schopenhauer Ch. 54, 56

02/17 “ “ Ch. 57, 58, 63

02/19 “ “ Ch. 65, 66

02/24 “ “ Ch. 68

02/26 Introduction to Nietzsche

03/03 Study day

03/05 Midterm Exam

03/17 Nietzsche First Essay, Sections 1 to10

03/19 “ “ First Essay, Sections 11 to17

03/21 “ “ Second Essay, Sections 1 to 7

03/24 “ “ Second Essay, Sections 8 to 15

03/26 “ “ Second Essay, Sections 16 to 25

03/31 “ “ Third Essay, Sections 8, 9, 14 and 15

04/02 “ “ Third Essay, Sections 18, 23, 24, 26, 27 and 28

04/07 Rachels Ch. 1, 2

04/09 “ “ Ch. 7, 8

04/14 “ “ Ch. 9, 10

04/16 “ “ Ch. 13, 14

04/23 Study Day

04/28-05/01 Final Exam