

Philosophy 1100 online: Introduction to Ethics

University of Missouri

Course Description and Rationale

"What should I do?" – "What should we do?" – "How ought I to live?" – Finding answers to these questions is the goal of moral philosophy, or *ethics*. In this course, we will consider these questions in light of historical and contemporary philosophical thinking within the field of ethics. After familiarizing ourselves with the traditional moral categories and positions, we will turn to what is called *applied ethics*: evaluating *particular* actions and practices in a philosophically critical manner.

Course Goals

After completing the entire course, you should be able to:

1. Construct *formal* ethical arguments from *informal*, written passages and essays.
2. Distinguish between *metaethical* questions/views and *ethical* questions/views.
3. Grasp the pros and cons of some of the main ethical and metaethical theories.
4. Better defend and/or understand one's own ethical viewpoint concerning particular actions and practices (specifically: capital punishment, abortion, animal rights and poverty).

Textbook

The Fundamentals of Ethics, Second Edition – Russ Shafer-Landau

The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems, Second Edition – Russ Shafer-Landau

Online Course Access

You may access the course via <http://courses.missouri.edu>. Under course login, select Blackboard and enter your PawPrint. If you have difficulty logging in to the course or you do not see the course listed, please contact the *Mizzou IT Help Desk* at 573/882-5000. You *MUST* enable Compatibility View with Internet Explorer 8.

Library Resources and E-Res

Access to the library will be critical to your academic success. This course used resources and materials accessible via the Electronic Reserve System (E-Res): <http://eres.missouri.edu>. You may also access the University of Missouri Library Distance Education Support Service page at: <http://mulibraries.missouri.edu/distance/>.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Kenneth Shields, M.A.

Email: Kwsb56@mail.missouri.edu

Office Hours: Email (Monday through Friday) or by appointment.

Expectations

- **What to Expect from a Technology-Enhanced Course** - This course is designed for delivery online, over an eight-week period as opposed to a standard semester of 16 weeks. However, the expectations, workload, materials covered, and outcomes will be maintained. Therefore, you should plan to spend twice as much time per week on this course as you would if it were offered during a fall or spring semester. It is essential that

you access the course site Monday through Friday for course announcements, interact with your small discussion group, submit assignments, take online quizzes, etc.

- **What the Instructors and Your Peers Expect from You** - By enrolling in this course, you have agreed to contribute to weekly discussions by accessing the Discussion Board regularly (2-3 times per week, Monday through Friday). This will require a team effort, with respect and help for each other, as we build a community of learners. We also expect that you will have a foundational understanding of Internet terms and functions. All general class correspondence should be submitted to the relevant Discussion Board forum; only personal or confidential matters should be directed to the instructor in e-mail.
- **What You May Expect from the Instructor** - Monitor and facilitate class discussions (Monday through Friday), respond to private questions within 24 to 48 hours, provide timely feedback on written assignments and projects, and help build a learning community.

Weekly Schedule and Assignments

Your weekly routine: Every week, you should expect to login to the course site no fewer than 2-3 times. Each week of the course will have a corresponding folder which includes your assigned reading, instructor commentary, weekly discussion questions, and any assignments for that week. You should complete your readings and review of the course commentary before posting answers/reflections to the discussion questions. In addition to posting your own original posting addressing the discussion question by Wednesdays at noon, you must comment/reflect upon the postings of your peers by noon each Friday (at least two responses to peers, which makes for a total of three required posts a week).

Week	Section	Description	Assignment	Reading
1	1	Introduction to Philosophical Reasoning and Ethics	Discussion Board Weekly Quiz	Blue: Introduction
	2	Metaethics: Relativism		Blue: Ch. 19
2	3	Value Theory: Hedonism	Discussion Board Weekly Quiz	Blue: Ch. 1 & 2
	4	Mill, Huxley and Nozick		Gold: #2, #3 & #4
3	5	Value Theory: Desire-Satisfaction	Discussion Board Weekly Quiz First Exam Written Assignment 1	Blue: Ch. 3 & 4
	6	Metaethics: Nihilism and Objectivism		Blue: Ch. 20 & 21
4	7	Normative Ethics: Morality, Religion and Natural Law	Discussion Board Weekly Quiz	Blue: Ch. 5 & 6
	8	Normative Ethics: Psychological and Ethical Egoism		Blue: Ch. 7 & 8
5	9	Normative Ethics: Consequentialism	Discussion Board Weekly Quiz	Blue: Ch. 9
	10	Normative Ethics: Consequentialism		Blue: Ch. 10
6	11	Normative Ethics: Kantian Approach	Discussion Board Weekly Quiz Second Exam	Blue: Ch. 11
	12	Normative Ethics: Kantian Approach		Blue: Ch. 12
7	13	Applied Ethics: Capital Punishment	Discussion Board Weekly Quiz	Gold: #35 & #36
	14	Applied Ethics: Abortion		Gold: #32 & #33
8	15	Applied Ethics: Animals	Discussion Board Weekly Quiz Third Exam Written Assignment 2	Gold: #29
	16	Applied Ethics: Poverty		Gold: #22

Assignments and Grading Criteria

Your course grade will be determined by your grade on three exams, two written assignments, weekly quizzes, and your discussion board posts.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

Written Assignment 1:	5%
Written Assignment 2:	10%
Quizzes:	10%
Discussion Board:	15%
First Exam:	20%
Second Exam:	20%
Third Exam:	20%
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Total:	100%

Grading Scale

97-100%	=	A+	73-76%	=	C
93-96%	=	A	70-72%	=	C-
90-92%	=	A-	67-69%	=	D+
87-89%	=	B+	63-66%	=	D
83-86%	=	B	60-62%	=	D-
80-82%	=	B-	0-59%	=	F
77-79%	=	C+			

Late Work Policy: Late work, including all written assignments, exams, quizzes, and discussion board posts, will not be accepted except in cases of verified medical excuse (or the equivalent), and only if the request is made within one day of the assignment due date.

Exams

There are three exams for this course. Each exam is made up of multiple choice and true/false questions (40 total questions for each exam). The exams will be available in the *Exams and Quizzes* area of Blackboard. There will be a date by which the exam must be completed (see below). Once the exam has begun, you will have *one hour* to complete it. If you lose your internet connection or are unable to submit the exam, *contact me as soon as possible!* Exams will not be cumulative. Below are the dates by which you must complete each exam (i.e., *the exam will no longer be available to take after the date posted*).

Exam	Week/Date Due	Points	Description
First Exam	Week 3 / June 21, 11:59p.m. *	20%	Introduction, Value Theory (Hedonism and Desire-Satisfaction Theory), and Metaethics (Relativism, Nihilism and Objectivism)

Second Exam	Week 6 / July 12, 11:59p.m.	20%	Normative Ethics (Morality, Religion, Natural Law, Psychological and Ethical Egoism, Consequentialism and the Kantian Approach)
Third Exam	Week 8 / July 26, 11:59p.m.	20%	Applied Ethics (Readings on Capital Punishment, Abortion, Animals and Poverty)

*** All times are Central Daylight Time (CDT). Please take note of this – you are responsible for getting assignments completed by CDT times.**

IMPORTANT: The following are key considerations to successfully completing an exam:

- Complete all assigned readings (textbook and lecture) prior to accessing the online exam.
- Force completion is turned ON: you must complete the exam once you start it – you may *NOT* come back to the exam later. If you are disconnected, send email to your instructor immediately. After contacting your instructor, please send an email to blackboard@missouri.edu, with your name, username, course name, the title of the exam, and a description of the problem.
- To ensure Blackboard logs every answer, click the "Save" at the bottom of the page every two or three questions. You must click "Submit" in order to have your exam graded.
- You *MUST* enable Compatibility View with Internet Explorer 8. A complete list of supported browsers is available [online](#).

First Exam grade: I realize that the first exam is usually the hardest, given that you don't know what to expect or how best to study for it. For this reason, you will have the option of replacing your first exam grade with the grade you make on either your second or third exam. So suppose you make a 60 on the first exam, a 75 on the second exam, and a 90 on the third exam. In this scenario, I will change your first exam grade to a 90.

Written Assignments

There are two written assignments for this course. Each written assignment must be submitted through the Blackboard Assignment Manager (accessible via the *Assignments* button on the Course Navigation Menu) by the date/time specified and using the naming convention provided (e.g., assignment1_smith.rtf). All course assignments must be submitted as Rich Text Format, or RTF (one of the *Save As* options in your word processing program). Assignments will not be accepted via E-Mail. Below are the dates by which you must submit each written assignment (i.e., I will not accept late work).

Written Assignment	Week/Date Due	Points	Instructions
Assignment 1	Week 3 / June 21, 11:59pm	5%	300-350 word summary of important point from either the Huxley #3 or Nozick #4 readings.
Assignment 2	Week 8 / July 26, 11:59pm	10%	700-750 word summary, argument reconstruction, and a criticism/objection. Choose any of the readings assigned within the "Applied Ethics" sections of the course.

Weekly Quizzes

This course uses weekly online quizzes to assess your comprehension of the assigned readings. The quizzes are essentially mini-exams – all of the above considerations for exams apply to the quizzes. Each quiz is made up of multiple choice questions (5 total questions for each quiz). The questions will come from the readings for that week. The quizzes will be available in the *Exams and Quizzes* area of Blackboard. Each quiz must be completed by *Friday at noon (CDT) of that week – each quiz will no longer be available after this time*. Once the quiz has begun, you will have *20 minutes* to complete it. If you lose your internet connection or are unable to submit the quiz, *contact me as soon as possible!* Quizzes will not be cumulative.

IMPORTANT: The following are key considerations to successfully completing a weekly quiz:

- Complete all assigned readings (textbook and lecture) prior to accessing the online quiz.
- Force completion is turned ON: you must complete the quiz once you start it – you may *NOT* come back to the quiz later. If you are disconnected, send email to your instructor immediately. After contacting your instructor, please send an email to blackboard@missouri.edu, with your name, username, course name, the title of the quiz, and a description of the problem.
- To ensure Blackboard logs every answer, click the "Save" at the bottom of the page every two or three questions. You must click "Submit" in order to have your quiz graded.
- You *MUST* enable Compatibility View with Internet Explorer 8. A complete list of supported browsers is available [online](#).

Discussion Board Postings

You are required to make one original post concerning the weekly discussion prompt and then at least two response posts to other students' original posts. This makes for a total of at least three discussion board posts a week (1 original post and 2 response posts). Your original posting addressing the weekly discussion prompt should be made no later than **noon each Wednesday**. Your two response postings commenting and reflecting upon the comments of your peers should be made no later than **noon each Friday** -- late postings will not be given credit. If you post weekly and interact with your peers, you may expect full credit unless otherwise notified. Of course, the quality of your posts will also be assessed.

The following rubrics assess the *quality* of your postings and not the *quantity* (we're not looking for simply "I disagree" or "I think this is wrong" – you must elaborate and give *reasons* for your position).

Weekly Discussion Posting Grading Criteria	Weekly Point Value (10) – [1.875% of course grade]
Reasons given for one's position: Messages present others with <i>reasons to adopt one's own position</i> , rather than just listing things that you happen to believe, but don't really care if others believe it or not.	5
Message Coherence: Messages explain issues, provide new perspectives, effectively question, or meaningfully elaborate on topic	2
Relevance of Replies to Other Messages: Responses elaborate, contradict, modify, or explain the original message	3

Help Available

If you are having any technical difficulties (e.g., logging in, accessing the discussion board) please email helpdesk@missouri.edu or contact the *DoIT Help Desk* at 573/882-5000 (for out-of-area MizzouOnline students, toll-free at 866/241-5619).

Online Class Netiquette

Your instructor and fellow students wish to foster a safe on-line learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an *idea* but you are not to attack an *individual*.

Our differences, some of which are outlined in the University's nondiscrimination statement below, will add richness to this learning experience. Please consider that sarcasm and humor can be misconstrued in online interactions and generate unintended disruptions. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course ambience.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

Academic Dishonesty includes but is not necessarily limited to the following:

- A. Cheating or knowingly assisting another student in committing an act of cheating or other academic dishonesty.
- B. Plagiarism which includes but is not necessarily limited to submitting examinations, themes, reports, drawings, laboratory notes, or other material as one's own work when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person.
- C. Unauthorized possession of examinations or reserve library materials, or laboratory materials or experiments, or any other similar actions.
- D. Unauthorized changing of grades or markings on an examination or in an instructor's grade book or such change of any grade report.

Academic Integrity Pledge: *"I strive to uphold the University values of respect, responsibility, discovery, and excellence. On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this work."* Students are expected to adhere to this pledge on all graded work whether or not they are explicitly asked in advance to do so.

The University has specific academic dishonesty administrative [procedures](#). Although policy states that cases of academic dishonesty must be reported to the Office of the Provost for possible action, the instructor may assign a failing grade for the assignment or a failing grade for the course, or may adjust the grade as deemed appropriate. The instructor also may require the student to repeat the assignment or to perform additional assignments. In instances where academic integrity is in question, faculty, staff and students should refer to [Article VI of the Faculty Handbook](#). Article VI is also available in the [M-Book](#). Article VI provides further information regarding the process by which violations are handled and sets forth a standard of excellence in our community.

Restrictions on Disclosure and Distribution

Students may make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member. To foster a safe environment for learning, however, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Unauthorized distribution of such materials is a violation of academic standards and may violate copyright laws and/or privacy rights. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of [Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations](#) of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

University of Missouri Notice of Nondiscrimination

The University of Missouri System is an Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action institution and is nondiscriminatory relative to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or status as a Vietnam-era veteran. Any person having inquiries concerning the University of Missouri's compliance with implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, or other civil rights laws should contact the Assistant Vice Chancellor, [Human Resource Services](#), University of Missouri, 1095 Virginia Avenue, Columbia, Mo. 65211, 573/882-4256, or the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

Students with Disabilities (Residential & Online Courses)

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

Intellectual Pluralism Statement

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions concerning the quality of instruction in this class may address concerns to either the Departmental Chair or Divisional leader or Director of the [Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#) (<http://osrr.missouri.edu/>). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

Grievance Policy

Information concerning student grade appeal procedures and non-academic grievances and appeals may be found in the Student Handbook.