



# MEDAILLE COLLEGE

## Course Syllabus

Course Number:	PHI 300
Course Title:	Ethics
Section:	01, M W F 10:20-11:20 a.m.
Semester:	Fall 2009
Credits:	3.0
Prerequisites:	none
Instructor:	Dr. Gerald J. Erion
Instructor Availability:	M 11:20 a.m.-12:20 p.m., 2:45-4:45 p.m. Tu 12:35-1:05 p.m. Th 12:35-1:05 p.m. and by appointment, 221 Main Hall  telephone: 716.880.2174 e-mail: <a href="mailto:gerion@medaille.edu">gerion@medaille.edu</a> course web: <a href="http://erion.humanitiesdepartment.com/phi300/">erion.humanitiesdepartment.com/phi300/</a> emergency Blackboard course link: <a href="https://learning.dcollege.net/webct/logon/552870294041">https://learning.dcollege.net/webct/logon/552870294041</a>

### A. Catalog Description of Course

The course examines rival theories of making ethical choices, clarifies what theories of human nature and self they presuppose, and directly tests their workability by requiring students to use them to resolve conflicts of values, personal and interpersonal.

### B. Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Use group interactions simulating ethical dilemmas and decision making as a tool of evaluation of theoretical constructs.
2. Develop critical thinking skills and use them as tools of analysis and evaluation of theoretical constructs.
3. Show what the function of theoretical constructs are and what the relation of such constructs are to practice on both a personal, social, and institutional basis.
4. Show how to use their own experience and the experience of others as evaluative tools.
5. Identify what theory or theories they utilize as their personal mechanism of ethical choosing or valuing.
6. Evaluate the strengths or weaknesses of their own mechanisms of choice through group interactions, role playing, and the employment of critical thinking strategies.

7. Decide, by being able to identify and evaluate their own mechanisms of choice, if these mechanisms need modification, what modifications are necessary, and how they might be modified.

### C. Outline of Course Content and Provisional Schedule Draft

To participate effectively and succeed in this course, it is *essential* that you complete your assigned work on schedule. When completing your reading assignments, be sure to study your texts *actively* and *carefully*, going over difficult sections more than once if necessary. You should also take notes, both to clarify your understanding of the material and to focus attention on those areas that you are having trouble with, so that you can raise worthwhile questions and comments during class.

date	topic	assignment
Mon. Sept. 7	holiday: Labor Day	
Wed. Sept. 9	introductions, course syllabus	
Fri. Sept. 11	Logic and Moral Philosophy	read <u>EMP</u> chapter 1
Mon. Sept. 14		read Rachels, "Some Basic Points About Arguments" (handout) <b>NB: drop/add deadline is Sept. 14</b>
Wed. Sept. 16		
Fri. Sept. 18	Cultural and Moral Relativism	read <u>EMP</u> chapter 2 <i>optional reserve reading: Sumner, "Cultural Relativism," RT pp. 31-36</i>
Mon. Sept. 21		
Wed. Sept. 23		
Fri. Sept. 25	Moral Subjectivism	read <u>EMP</u> chapter 3 ( <i>pages 36-41 and 44-47 optional</i> ) <i>optional reserve reading: Hume, "Morality as Based on Sentiment," RT pp. 59-63</i>
Mon. Sept. 28		
Wed. Sept. 30		
Fri. Oct. 2	exam 1	<b>study for exam</b>
Mon. Oct. 5		
Wed. Oct. 7	Religion and Moral Philosophy	read <u>EMP</u> chapter 4
Fri. Oct. 9		
Mon. Oct. 12	holiday: Columbus Day	
Wed. Oct. 14		<i>optional reserve reading: St. Thomas Aquinas, "Ethics and Natural Law," RT pp. 44-49</i>
Fri. Oct. 16	Utilitarianism	read <u>EMP</u> chapter 7 <i>optional reserve reading: Mill, "Utilitarianism," RT pp. 64-75</i>
Mon. Oct. 19		
Wed. Oct. 21		
Fri. Oct. 23	no class meeting	
Mon. Oct. 26		read <u>EMP</u> chapter 8
Wed. Oct. 28		
Fri. Oct. 30		
Mon. Nov. 2	exam 2	<b>study for exam</b>
Wed. Nov. 4	Kantian Deontology	<b>read EMP chapter 9</b> <b>optional reserve reading: Kant, "The Categorical Imperative," RT pp. 76-81</b>

<b>date</b>	<b>topic</b>	<b>assignment</b>
Fri. Nov. 6		<b>NB: pass/fail and withdrawal deadline is Nov. 6</b>
Mon. Nov. 9		
Wed. Nov. 11		read <u>EMP</u> chapter 10
Fri. Nov. 13		
Mon. Nov. 16	Virtue Ethics	read <u>EMP</u> chapter 12 <i>optional reserve reading: Aristotle, "The Virtues," RT pp. 37-43</i>
Wed. Nov. 18		
Fri. Nov. 20		
Mon. Nov. 23	exam 3	<b>study for exam</b>
Wed. Nov. 25	holiday: Thanksgiving	
Fri. Nov. 27	holiday: Thanksgiving	
Mon. Nov. 30	project workshop	
Wed. Dec. 2	conference/ writing day	
Fri. Dec. 4	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Mon. Dec. 7	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Wed. Dec. 9	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Fri. Dec. 11	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Mon. Dec. 14	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Tues. Dec. 15	final exams	<b>study for exams</b>
Wed. Dec. 16	final exams	<b>study for exams</b>
Thurs. Dec. 17	final exams	<b>study for exams</b>

#### **D. Method of Evaluating Students**

Final marks will be determined by three examinations (for which essay-based make-up examinations will be granted only in *extreme, documented* medical or personal emergencies), a group presentation and paper assignment, and participation in class meetings, each weighted as follows.

examinations (3)	60%
presentation	15%
paper	15%
participation (includes attendance)	10%

Please note that your class participation will determine a significant portion of your final grade. To do well here, you must not only *attend* class, but also arrive *prepared to raise interesting and relevant questions and comments on the day's assignment*. (On the other hand, students who are chronically unprepared or absent will reduce their participation grades to zero; see section E below.)

As in any Medaille course, the grading of student writing in this course will reflect standard English usage; thus, in addition to thoroughly addressing the required content, your *essays and papers should be well organized, well written, and properly documented* in MLA or APA style.

Numerical grades will be converted to letter grades with the following table.\*

A $\geq$ 94 (high distinction)	B 84-87 (above average)	C 74-77 (average)	D 64-67 (below average)
A- 91-93	B- 81-83	C- 71-73	D- 61-63
B+ 88-90	C+ 78-80	D+ 68-70	F $\leq$ 60 (unsatisfactory)

### E. Attendance Policy

See section D above on the importance of attendance and active class participation; moreover, *chronic unexcused absences (four or more) will reduce your participation grade to zero.*

### F. Textbooks

required: Rachels, James and Stuart Rachels. The Elements of Moral Philosophy 6e. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010.  
*optional* supplement: Rachels, James. The Right Thing to Do 3e. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

Copies of The Elements of Moral Philosophy are available through the Medaille College Bookstore. Copies of The Right Thing to Do are available on reserve in the College Library.

### G. Suggested Reading List

Aquinas, St. Thomas. Summa Theologica. Trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York: Christian Classics, 1981.  
Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics. Trans. Terence Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985.  
Becker, Lawrence C. and Charlotte B. Becker, eds. The Encyclopedia of Ethics 2e. New York/ London: Routledge, 2001. **170.3 E56 REF (3 vols.)**  
Benedict, Ruth. Patterns of Culture. Boston/ New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1934.  
Bentham, Jeremy. Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation. Ed. J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996.  
Borchert, Donald M., ed. Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005. **103 E56 REF (10 vols.)**  
Craig, Edward, ed. The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. New York/ London: Routledge, 2000. **103 C748 REF**  
Craig, Edward, ed. The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. New York/ London: Routledge, 2005. **103 S559 REF**  
Edwards, Paul, ed. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy. New York/ London: Macmillan, 1967. **103 ED97 REF (9 vols.)**  
Honderich, Ted, ed. The Oxford Companion to Philosophy. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995. **100 O98 REF**

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\* Grading guidelines appear in the current *Medaille College Academic Undergraduate Catalog*.

Kant, Immanuel. Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals. Trans. Lewis W. Beck. New York: Macmillan, 1990.

LaFollette, Hugh. ed. The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory. Oxford, UK/ Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003. **170 B632**

Mill, John Stuart. Utilitarianism 2e. Ed. George Sher. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001.

Plato. "Euthyphro." Five Dialogues. Trans. G. M. A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981.

Rand, Ayn. The Virtue of Selfishness. New York: Signet, 1964.

Singer, Peter, ed. A Companion to Ethics. Oxford, UK/ Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Reference, 1993. **170 S64**

Sumner, William Graham. Folkways. Boston: Ginn, 1906.

#### **H. Other Specifications, Requirements, or Arrangements**

To help create an effective learning environment, we will conduct our class activities in accordance with the following policies.

- You should be in the classroom, seated, and ready to participate at the start of each class meeting.
- Please do not bring food into our classroom; beverages with secure lids are acceptable, though.
- If you must bring a mobile phone to class, kindly turn it off before we begin so that you are not distracting your classmates with calls, text messages, etc.
- Try not to talk out of turn; instead, simply raise your hand when you have a question or contribution, and you will be recognized as soon as possible.
- We will ordinarily meet for the entire class period. If you need to leave a particular class meeting early, though, please let me know beforehand.
- Medaille's faculty and administration expect all students to complete their academic work with honesty and integrity. Students who engage in any form of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, forging signatures or College documents, etc.) will be dealt with severely, with penalties ranging from an F on a given assignment to failing a course or even academic suspension. Students should consult the Medaille College Policy Manual Volume VI (available online), paragraph 6.2.2.5, for full details on the College's policy and procedures for handling formal charges of academic dishonesty.

In the event of a long-term emergency campus closure, please log on to Blackboard (Bb) at <http://learning.medaille.edu> to continue with our course requirements via our course link. You should familiarize yourself with this course link early in the semester, and report any access or usage problems to your course instructor.

Any student with a disability who believes he/ she needs accommodation(s) in order to complete this course should contact the Academic Support Center as soon as possible. The staff in the Academic Support Center will determine what accommodations are appropriate and reasonable under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Academic Support Center is located in the Main Building, room M314, and can be reached by telephone at (716) 880-2338.