

# Introduction to Philosophy: Morals and Society

Leeward Community College

Spring 2011 MWF 9:00-9:50 BS 208A CRN 52031 and TR 9:00-10:15 BS 208A CRN 53093

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A copy of this syllabus is available on line at <<http://www2.hawaii.edu/~stroble/phil101.html>

**Catalog Description:** An introductory study of moral values, nature of ends or goals, the voluntary, virtues and vices, natural law, happiness, and the nature of morality. Prerequisite: ENG 21 or ENG 22 with a grade of C or better or equivalent

**Course Description:** This course will examine the major ethical theories of the Western tradition, with some comparisons with Asian thought. Our major task will be to make some sense of the prime directive of morality, "do the right thing". Throughout we will be considering the relation between philosophy and morality, whether philosophy should critique or justify ethical systems, attempt to discover or define the good, or mind its own business. We will examine three major ethical theories, virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and deontology, and compare the grounds they propose for morality. And finally we will keep an eye on the political implications of morality for current issues, law, social justice, and war.

**Objectives:** Students who successfully complete Philosophy 101 will have developed a range of philosophical thinking skills and abilities which are useful in the acquisition of philosophical knowledge and knowledge generally. The successful student will demonstrate the ability to (among other things):

1. define key ethical terms
2. demonstrate familiarity with major ethical theories
3. articulate various moral issues and questions clearly and precisely
4. reason carefully from stated philosophical premises
5. recognize key questionable ethical assumptions
6. identify relevant competing ethical views
7. characterize those points of view in terms of the different types of ethical theories

Unsuccessful students we are not so sure about.

**Evaluation:** Philosophy requires careful reading, especially since many of our texts are ancient and/or translated from other languages. Keep a dictionary handy. The most important thing, though, is to try to understand the ideas of the author and critically engage them. Grades will be based on class participation and preparation (participation in discussions -10% and pop quizzes- 15%), and a 9-11 page term paper on an ethical issue, *to be decided upon by the class*, with four stages: a proposal/research bibliography(15%), a rough draft(15%), a second draft (15%), and the final paper (30%). Quizzes will be random (which could be *every day!*), based on reading assignments, and cannot be made up.

**Plagiarism:** Your paper is expected to be *yours*, to show your own thinking and mastery of the subject. Plagiarism is claiming someone else's writing as your own, and is the most serious form of academic dishonesty. Just don't do it, especially in an ethics class. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and can have more serious penalties. And it's just unethical.

**Student with Disabilities Statement:**

*Leeward Community College abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which stipulate that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education "solely by reason of a handicap." Students with documented disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Coordinator of the Kako'o 'Ike (KI) program as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. The KI office is located in L-208, across from the elevator in the library building. Students may also contact the coordinator by phone at 455-0421.*

**Student Assessment and Human Experimentation Notification**

With the goal of continuing to improve the quality of educational services offered to students, Leeward CC conducts assessments of student achievement of course, program, and institutional learning outcomes. Student work is used anonymously as the basis of these assessments, and the work you do in this course may be used in these assessment efforts.

**Texts :** Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*

Bentham, Jeremy, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (available on-line)

Kant, I. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, James Ellington, tr.

de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*

*Optional text:* Antoine de Saint-Exupéry *The Little Prince*.

E-text versions of these are available, links at <<http://www2.hawaii.edu/~stroble/phil101.html>>

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**Schedule:** (subject to revision or catastrophe, assignments have \*'s)

• **Week One**

Jan. 10: Introduction to philosophy and ethics.

Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1: The Good for Man

**Jan. 14: Last day to register; Last day to withdraw with 100% refund.**

• **Week Two** Jan. 17 : *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2: The moral virtues

MLK, Jr Day (Holiday - No Classes) Monday, January 17

• **Week Three** Jan. 24 : *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 3 Virtues and Vices.

• **Week Four** Jan. 31: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 4: Virtues and Vices, Book 5: Justice (skim)

**Monday, Jan. 31: Last day to withdraw with 50% tuition refund and no "W".**

• **Week Five** Feb. 7: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 8, 9: Friendship.

• **Week Six** Feb. 14: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 7:11-14, Pleasure, Book 10: Happiness

**\*\*Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> /18<sup>th</sup> : Paper proposal/bibliography due.**

• **Week Seven** Feb. 21: Utilitarianism: Bentham, *Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Chapters 1-4

Presidents' Day (Holiday - No classes) Monday, February 21

• **Week Eight** Feb. 28 More Utilitarianism: Bentham, Chapters 12 and 13 and 14.

**\*\*\*Mar. 2<sup>nd</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup>: First draft due**

Professional Development Day for faculty & staff (no classes) Friday, March 4

• **Week Nine** Mar. 7: Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface and First Section

• **Week Ten** Mar. 14: *Metaphysics of Morals* Second Section (first half)

March 21-25, Spring Break!!

**Monday, March 28: Last day to withdraw: point of no-return.**

• **Week Eleven**

Mar. 28 : *Metaphysics of Morals* Second Section (second half)

• **Week Twelve**

Apr. 4 *Metaphysics of Morals* Third Section

**\*\*\*\* Apr. 7<sup>th</sup> /8<sup>th</sup>: Second Draft Due.**

• **Week Thirteen**

Apr.11 : Simone de Beauvoir *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Chapter I

• **Week Fourteen**

Apr. 18: *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Chapter II

**Good Friday (Holiday - No classes)Friday, April 22**

• **Week Fifteen**

Apr. 25: *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Chapter III

• **Week Sixteen**

May 2: Applications and Current Controversies

Last day of classes: Wednesday, May 4.

**\*\*\*\*\*Final Draft of Paper due at last class meeting.**