

PH 1100: Introduction to Ethics

Syllabus for Fall 2019

Instructor: Joseph Frigault (joseph.frigault@colorado.edu)
Office / Hours: Hellems 276 / Fridays, 3:00 - 5:00 PM, and by appointment.

The interest of the public centers in such question as: What is the distinctive purpose and business of philosophy anyway? How is it related to those concerns and issues which today stand out as the problems of men? --- John Dewey (1946)

Course Description

What is morality, and what does it require of us in the course of our daily lives?

In this course, we'll look at some of the major *theories* that answer these questions, and at specific moral *issues* to which these theories apply. In particular, we will consider a variety of topics bound up with some of the most pressing moral and political movements currently underway in the United States, including: *free speech, gun control, sexual consent, sexual harassment, affirmative action and racial reparations*.

Regular readings from the course text will occasionally be supplemented with additional philosophical texts, as well as materials from social science, journalism and podcasts, to be made available online or by email.

Required Text

Cahn, Steven M. & Andrew T. Forcehimes (Eds.) 2017, *Exploring Moral Problems: An Introductory Anthology*. (Oxford University Press) [EMP]

Class Details & Policies

Class Format:

This is primarily a *discussion-based* course. Throughout the term (but especially in UNITS 1, 2 and 3) I'll introduce new material with a short lecture, but the goal will always be more of a back-and-forth among the group. In my experience, this is almost always more fruitful and enjoyable for students. Most days (but especially in UNITS 4, 5 and 6) we'll break up into randomized groups of three or four to discuss the readings for 15 or 20 minutes, before coming together to talk things over for the remainder of the period. On these days, I'll provide some questions for discussion, but you should feel free to bring up any aspect of the material that you found confusing or worthy of further discussion.

This course will cover some topics that can be difficult to engage with in the classroom, especially for individuals who have experienced racialized, gendered, or gun violence. If any reading or topic we are planning to discuss elicits trauma or panic in you, I encourage you to discuss the issue with me and/or excuse yourself from class at any time. While discomfort can sometimes be an important aspect of learning, no one should have to endure needless anxiety in order to make it through our meetings.

All cell phones, tablets and laptop computers must be put away for the duration of class. Useful as they are, they are ultimately too distracting. If I see you using your phone, I may ask you to stow it, or even leave the room for the day. If you feel you have a good reason for using your laptop in class, please come and discuss it with me at the start of term.

Plagiarism Policy:

If you cheat or plagiarize on an exam or essay *you will fail the course*. After that, you'll have to go before the Honor Council. This is an unpleasant experience for everyone. As a college student, you are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is, so ignorance is not an excuse. However, if ever you are unsure about whether something counts as plagiarism, please feel free to ask me about it. Note that for the purposes of this class, you are *not expected or required* to consult sources beyond those assigned, but if you do so, and find something you think is worth repeating, just cite it. It's that easy.

Evaluation:

Attendance -----	7%
Participation -----	7%
26 Reading Responses (1% each) -----	26%
3 In-Class Exams (6%, 12%, 12%) -----	30%
2 Short Essays (15% each) -----	30%

Assignments:

Attendance (7%) Attendance is essential to success in this course. I will circulate a sign-up sheet at the start of each class meeting, and it is *your responsibility* to make sure you sign it. If you miss a meeting, it is *your responsibility* to keep up to date on any missed material and/or announcements made in class, by asking a fellow student or coming to office hours.

You may miss up to *two* class periods without explanation or penalty. Every *unexcused* absence beyond that will result in a 2% deduction, first from your attendance grade, and beyond that from your final grade. I will make judgments on the *excusability* of absences on a case by case basis, but it's worth noting that missing class to spend time with family or friends, or to complete work for other classes, will *not* qualify.

Your attendance grade will *not* take account of late arrivals, but frequent lateness will be noted and will likely figure into my calculation of your participation grade.

Participation (7%) Participation can take many forms. For example, it might involve making some kind of contribution to the classroom discussion, whether by way of asking a question, sharing a thought, or criticizing some aspect of the material. (Note that you certainly don't have to *like* or *agree with* what we're reading or discussing in order to participate adequately.) Alternatively, it might involve engaging in some follow up chat with me in connection with one of your reading responses, online (see below).

Throughout the term I'll inform the class about any thematically relevant talks or events happening on campus. Attendance at these events will also count toward your participation grade. Note that you may be asked to provide assessments of your own participation at some point.

Reading Responses (26%) These will be short written responses to one or more of the readings we cover each week. The idea is for you to show me that you are *engaging with the material*, and for me to deliver some individualized feedback to you throughout the term. Reading responses will consist of *two* distinct tasks:

1. *Answering a question about the relevant text(s), which I'll provide ahead of time.*

2. *Raising a (pertinent!) question, confusion, criticism or comment about the material.*

Responses should consist of no more than 3-4 complete sentences total, and must be submitted online through the *Canvas* website before 12:00 noon on the relevant class date. Late submissions will not be graded, but may receive feedback upon request. You may miss up to *two* responses without penalty.

In-Class Exams (30%) These will be in-class closed-book exams made up of multiple choice and short answer questions on the material covered in UNITS 1, 2 and 3. The first will be shorter, and designed to give you a sense of what to expect. Study guides will be provided.

Short Essays (30%): These will be short (900-1000) word essays on the issues we cover in UNITS 4, 5, and 6. Each of these units will include two issues. At the start of each new unit, I will provide prompts for both, of which you may choose one to write on. You must submit essays for two of the latter three units. Further details on the contents of the essays will be provided later in the term. Late essays will be penalized by $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade per day late (ex: from B+ to B), where "one day" means exactly 24 hrs from the due date.

Explanation of Grades:

If ever you feel I have made a mistake in grading some aspect of your work, please feel free to set up an office visit with me to discuss it. However, this should be done as soon as possible; the longer you wait to bring it up, the less likely it is that anything can be done.

The table below illustrates how letter grades translate into percentage grades, along with their associated grade points and meaning according to CU's official explanation of grades. (<https://catalog.colorado.edu/about-cu-boulder/credits-grading/>).

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Meaning
A	92.6 - 100	4.0	superior/excellent ^
A-	90 - 92.5	3.7	
B+	87.6 - 89.9	3.3	
B	82.6 - 87.5	3.0	good/better than average ^
B-	80 - 82.5	2.7	
C+	77.6 - 79.9	2.3	
C	72.6 - 77.5	2.0	competent/average ^
C-	70 - 72.5	1.7	
D+	67.6 - 69.9	1.3	
D	62.6 - 67.5	1.0	
D-	60 - 62.5	0.7	minimum passing
F	Below 60	0.0	failing

Official CU Policies

Accommodation for Disabilities:

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior:

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Honor Code:

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation:

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious Holidays:

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you plan on requesting accommodation for religious holidays or obligations, see me as soon as possible. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Class Schedule

*** Subject to revision. Any changes will be communicated in class or by email a.s.a.p. ***

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>General Topic</i>	<i>Required Reading</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
UNIT 1: INTRODUCING THE COURSE				
1	M Aug 26	Introductions		
	W Aug 28	Syllabus, Etc.		
	F Aug 30	What is philosophy?	Douglass “What to the Slave...”	RR 1
2	M Sep 2	NO CLASS	LABOR DAY	
	W Sep 4	What is philosophy?	Plato “Apology of Socrates”	RR 2
	F Sep 6	SPECIAL EVENT	DETAILS IN CLASS	
3	M Sep 9	What is it <i>for</i> ?	Russell “The Value of Phil...”	RR 3
	W Sep 11	What is it <i>for</i> ?	Dewey “The Problems of Men”	RR 4
	F Sep 13	Prep for Exam 1		
4	M Sep 16		EMP 2-8; 34-37	Exam 1

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>General Topic</i>	<i>Required Reading</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
UNIT 2: MAJOR ETHICAL THEORIES				
4	W Sep 18	Consequentialism	EMP 8-20	RR 5
	F Sep 20	Utilitarianism	Mill “Utilitarianism” EMP 95-103	RR 6
5	M Sep 23	Utilitarianism	Mill “Utilitarianism” EMP 103-106	RR 7
	W Sep 25	Deontology	EMP 20-32	RR 8
	F Sep 27	Kantianism	Kant “Groundwork...” EMP 82-86	RR 9
6	M Sep 30	Kantianism	Kant “Groundwork...” EMP 86-93	RR 10
	W Oct 2	Virtue Theory	EMP 32-34	RR 11
	F Oct 4	Aristotelianism	Aristotle “Nico...” Book I. 1-4 & 7	RR 12
7	M Oct 7	Aristotelianism	Aristotle “Nico...” Book II. 1-9	RR 13
	W Oct 9	Prep for Exam 2		
	F Oct 11			Exam 2
UNIT 3: NON-IDEAL CONDITIONS				
8	M Oct 14	Racism	Documentary Film: “Stay Woke”	
	W Oct 16	Racism	Appiah “Racisms” EMP 381-87; Online IATs (Race & Skin-Tone)	RR 14
	F Oct 18	Racism	McIntosh “Unpacking...”	RR 15
9	M Oct 21	Sexism	Cudd “Sexism” EMP 388-97; Online IATs (Gend/Work & Gend/Sci)	RR 16
	W Oct 23	Sexism	Mill “On the Subjection...”	RR 17
	F Oct 25	Sexism	Mill “On the Subjection...”	RR 18
10	M Oct 28	Oppression	Young “Five Faces...” EMP 398-411; Online IATs (Age & Sexuality)	RR 19
	W Oct 30	Oppression	Young “Five Faces...”	RR 20
	F Nov 1	Prep for Exam 3		
11	M Nov 4			Exam 3

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>General Topic</i>	<i>Required Reading</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
UNIT 4: LIMITS OF THE LAW				
11	W Nov 6	Free Speech	Lawrence “Regu...” EMP 170-76; Golding “Campu...” EMP 177-81	RR 21
	F Nov 8	Free Speech	NPR; CU Expression Website FAQs	
12	M Nov 11	Gun Control	Wheeler “Arms...” EMP 258-63; DeGrazia “Handguns...” EMP 264-74	RR 22
	W Nov 13	Gun Control	Gonzales; French; CU Weapon Policy	
UNIT 5: GENDER JUSTICE				
12	F Nov 15	Sexual Consent	Conly “Seduction...” EMP 466-82	RR 23
13	M Nov 18	Sexual Consent	Anderson “Sex...” EMP 483-91	RR 24
	W Nov 20	Harassment	Davis “Sexual...” EMP 493-502	Essay 1 Due
	F Nov 22	Harassment	Crouch “Sexual...” EMP 504-7; TAL	RR 25
14	M Nov 25	NO CLASS	NOVEMBER BREAK	
	W Nov 27			Essay 2 Due
	F Nov 29			
UNIT 6: RACIAL JUSTICE				
15	M Dec 2	Affirmative Action	Cahn “Two Concepts...” EMP 433-43	
	W Dec 4	Affirmative Action	Hanson “Facing...” EMP 444-49	RR 26
	F Dec 6	Racial Reparations	Boxill “The Morality...” EMP 413-20	RR 27
16	M Dec 9	Racial Reparations	Kukathas “Repara...” EMP 422-32	
	W Dec 11	Racial Reparations	Coates “The Case for Reparations”	RR 28
17	...	NO CLASS	EXAM PERIOD	
	W Dec 18			Essay 3 Due