

PHIL. 252. ETHICS AND THE GOOD LIFE. FALL 2013

PROF. ANTHONY RUDD

This course is intended to introduce you to some of the major approaches to ethical questions that have been developed by philosophers, mostly (but not exclusively) in the Western tradition. We will be considering such questions as: Is ethical behavior simply about producing the best outcome? Or is it about doing the right thing, irrespective of consequences? Should we be more concerned with the sort of actions a person should do, or with the sort of person s/he should be? What are states of character (virtues) and how should we cultivate them? What difference, if any, could a person's religious beliefs make to his/her ethical views? And how can the various theories discussed in this course can be applied to practical moral problems?

Classes will be held between 10.45 and 11.40 in Old Main 210 (section A) and between 2.00 and 2.55 in Holland Hall 317 (section B) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

My office hours are 10.00 - 10.30 am and 3.00 - 3.30 pm on M, W and F; my office is HH 606B. My email is rudd@stolaf.edu; my phone extension is 3047.

You will need to buy the following texts:

L. Pojman and L. Vaughn (eds), *The Moral Life*, 4th edition.

C. Williams (ed) *Personal Virtues*

Some other texts that you will need are available on Moodle.

The class will be divided into three groups. Before each class for which reading has been assigned, members of one of these groups (in rotation) will be required to send me an email with two questions/comments on the reading. These can be questions about the meaning of the reading; criticisms of it; or points arising from it which you think are worth discussing. I will (at my discretion) use these in structuring the discussion. You

should come prepared to talk in class about the issues you raised in your email. (NB: those of you not in the relevant group should still come with questions/comments on the reading that you want to raise!)

Assessment

The quality of your emails over the term will count for 10% of the total grade, and your participation in class for another 10%. Otherwise assessment will be on the basis of three short essays (or take home tests) (10% each); ***a final essay of 2000 words (25%); an in-class quiz (10%); and an in-class presentation based on a first draft/plan of that essay (15%).***

Written work that is handed in late will be marked down a grade, unless an extension has been agreed with me in advance. Persistent poor attendance at class without an adequate explanation will also result in the loss of a grade.

Plagiarism – the passing-off of somebody else’s work as though it were your own – is a serious offence. It will normally result in – at least – failing the entire course.

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Connie Ford (ford@stolaf.edu) or Laura Knobel-Piehl (knobel@stolaf.edu) in the Academic Support Center (507-786-3288, Buntrock 108) as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. If you have already arranged accommodations through Student Accessibility Services, please arrange for the submission of your accommodation letter within the first two weeks of class. Accommodations will only be provided after the letter is submitted to me and with sufficient lead-time for me to arrange testing or other accommodations. Although I will receive the letter electronically, I expect you to initiate a conversation with me about the accommodations.

Syllabus

Week One

F, Sept 6 Introduction.

Week Two: Relativism and Toleration

M Sept 9 Relativism: read Benedict and Rachels (both in Pojman & Vaughn, Ch 3)

emails from group A

W Sept 11 Relativism and 'Civil' Disagreement: Read Watson (Moodle). **emails from group B**

F Sept 13 'Civil' Disagreement and Toleration: read E. Langerak 'Disagreement: Appreciating the Dark Side of Tolerance' (moodle) **emails from group C**

Week Three: Utilitarianism

M. Sept 16 Utilitarianism: read Bentham, Mill, (P & V, Ch 4) **A**

W. Sept 18 Utilitarianism: Read Le Guin, Nielsen (P & V, Ch 4) **B**

F. Sept 20 Utilitarianism: Read Williams (P & V, Ch 4). **C**

Week Four: Kantian Ethics

M. Sept 23 Kantian Ethics: read Kant (P & V, Ch 5) **A**

W. Sept 25 Kantian Ethics: Read Frankena (P & V, Ch 5) **First essay due. B**

F. Sept 27 Kantian Ethics: Read Fried (P & V, Ch 5) **C**

Week Five: Virtue Theory

M. Sept 30 Virtue Theory: read Mayo, Aristotle (P & V, Ch 6) **A**

W. Oct 2 Virtue Theory: read MacIntyre (P & V, Ch 6) **B**

F. Oct 4 Virtue Theory: read Frankena (P & V, Ch 6) **C**

Week Six: *The Quiet American*

M. Oct 7 Watch *TQA*

W. Oct 9 Watch *TQA*

F. Oct 11 Discussion of *TQA* **Second essay due**

FALL BREAK: Saturday, Oct 12 through Tuesday Oct 15

Week Seven: Specific Virtues

W. Oct 16 Generosity: Kupfer in Williams, *Personal Virtues* **A**
F Oct 18 Gratitude and Justice: Boleyn-Fitzgerald, in *Personal Virtues* **B**

Week Eight: Specific Virtues

M. Oct 21 Humility: Snow in *Personal Virtues* **C**
W. Oct 23 Pride: Smith in *Personal Virtues* **A**
F. Oct 25 Compassion: Nussbaum in *Personal Virtues* **B**

Week Nine: Specific Virtues

M. Oct 28 Hope: Bovens in *Personal Virtues* **C**
W. Oct 30 Patience and Courage: Callan in *Personal Virtues* **A**
F. Nov 1 **No Class (Take-Home Test)**

Week Ten: Specific Virtues

M. Nov 4 Love: Solomon in *Personal Virtues* **Take-Home Test due**
W. Nov 6 Forgiveness: Roberts in *Personal Virtues* **B**
F. Nov 8 Trust: Jones in *Personal Virtues* **C**

Week Eleven: Meaning, Religion and Christian Ethics

M. Nov 11 Review of Personal Virtues A
W. Nov 13 Meaning in Life and Religion: Frankl, Camus, Pojman (P & V, Ch 9) B
F. Nov 15 Jesus (P & V, Ch 7); Dostoevsky, 'The Russian Monk' (moodle) **C**

Week Twelve Christian Ethics, For and Against

M. Nov 18 Kierkegaard, 'Works of Love' (moodle) **A**

W. Nov 20 Nietzsche (P & V, Ch 2) **B**
F. Nov 22 *Quiz*

Week Thirteen

M. Nov 25 Preparing for Presentations

THANKSGIVING BREAK: Wednesday, Nov 27 through Sunday, Dec 1

Week Fourteen

M. Dec 2 Presentations

W. Dec 4 Presentations

F. Dec 6 Presentations

Week Fifteen

M. Dec 9 Presentations

W. Dec 11 Conclusion

Final Essay Due: **Dec. Wed 18th, 11.00 (Section A)**
 Dec. Tue 17th 4.00 pm (Section B)