"If, like truth, the lie had but one face, we would be on better terms. For we would accept as certain the opposite of what the liar would say. But the reverse of truth has a hundred thousand faces and an infinite field."

-Montaigne, Essays-

"Ethics deals with things to be sought and things to be avoided, with ways of life and with the telos (the chief good or aim of life)."

-Epicurus, quoted by Diogenes Laertius-

"We are discussing no small matter, but how we ought to live."
- Socrates, as reported by Plato in the Republic-

"Shun Evil. Do Good."

-Buddha-

"Poor is the pupil who does not surpass his master."

-Leonardo da Vinci, Notebooks-


**PHI 125**

**INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS**
Hopkins  
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**Required Instructional Materials:**
Selected Blackboard Readings  
Selected Handouts  
Bound Notebook or Folder

**Course Objectives:**

“In writing this textbook, we proceed from the conviction that philosophy is a synoptic enterprise, interested in everything, and that sources of wisdom, rather than being limited by disciplinary boundaries, are far-reaching and global. We think that the goal of studying ethics is not only simply gain detached knowledge of theory but also strive for an understanding of how best to live. Moreover, we believe that such a goal requires engaging the emotional and sensory dimensions of our lives in addition to the rational and argumentative dimensions. We find that standard textbooks are limited: first in the aspects of life they consider; second, in the kinds of materials they include for reflection on values; and third, in the dimension of our lives that they engage. . .” (Minch and Weigel, *Living Ethics* Preface)

“Socrates was right when he suggested, well over two millennia ago, that determining how to live is “no small matter.” (*Living Ethics*, p. 1, Plato’s Republic)

In support and agreement with the above, it is my hope that PHI 125 will fulfill the following:

- You will be introduced to various global moral theories, approaches and issues in ethics and begin to identify your own ethical biases and perspectives and methods.
- You will understand and participate in ethical decision making in theory, practice and debate.
• You will acquired additional critical thinking skills.

• You will explore issues as rethought in post-modern terms; i.e. African-American, Post-Colonial, Feminist, and Asian perspectives. Your text book is cutting edge in this area, but there might also be some select handouts given needed.

• You will acquire and demonstrate a philosophical ethics vocabulary helpful in the taking of future philosophy and humanities courses.

• You will be able to better recognize and decipher personal ethical dilemmas, no matter how intricate and complex.

• You will discover and enjoy meaningful philosophy in writing forms other than philosophical ones.

Course Requirements:

1. A Directed Ethics Journal (Two Parts: Directed Response Reflection 30% and Research Project 20%): = 50%

2. 4 Debates (notes required) 10% each = 40%

3. Individual Teaching of any Reading, Any Chapter after 3 (prompt/rubric and sign-up to follow) =10%

1. The Directed Journal (2 Parts)

Your Directed Ethics Journal is composed of response, musings, analyses, and research and thus encourages both free and formal writing approaches. It is divided into two parts; one that is directed and involved weekly entries specifically grounded in your text, handouts, and Blackboard readings, while the other part is a more familiar research project where you choose the topic of your choice; (i.e., a topic, philosopher, ethical position, meta-ethical exploration, etc.).

The Directed Response Reflection Assignments (6 total; more than 6 will be given)

While these assignments might vary, I do want you to “free-write” your responses in a meditative (Aurelius, Descartes like?) fashion: diary, journal, ongoing letter to a friend, thoughts for a conference, a literary series, a blog etc. etc. A straightforward answer is NOT recommended without some sort of personal voice approach.

The Research Guidelines
The following are required for an “A” quality journal:

- Four scholarly outside sources; (one may be from the text, one of these may be from Blackboard;) these must be handed in;
- Citation page;
- written essay, power point or other format welcome, but detailed notes also required;
- Must be issue or philosopher position driven, but also show careful analysis and evaluation;
- Must be applied to a real life event or thought experiment;
- Must contain and share detailed notes;
- Must provide quotes (either in annotated bibliography or throughout body of project);
- Must share on final exam day

analysis of what you have found, (including discussion of articles please) and your particular argument position or analysis on your topic.

2. **The Debates:**

*Four (4) times this semester you will prepare for and participate in a debate based* Pick a topic that you are passionate about and think and write about this as a research activity throughout the semester. It may be something as broad as defining an ethical term – the good, the bad, justice, fairness, responsibility etc. Or, you may want to explore a normative or applied ethical issue, i.e. animal rights, ecological accountability, plagiarism, cheating, lying, immigration, planned parenthood, the legalization of a presently outlawed substance, terrorism, an ecological issue, just war, justification for violence, the role of religion in ethics, birth control, the roles of feelings, kindness, etc. You may also wish to explore a fundamental ethical thinker (Aristotle, Bok, Baier, Mill, Kant, Confucius, Gutierrez,), or an approach to ethics (Care, Utilitarianism, Buddhist, Virtue, Pluralist etc.) in greater detail. The list is long and open ended, so I shall ask you for your topic at the beginning of week 4.

I recommend that some of your research begin with Blackboard and perhaps a reading from one chapter if at all possible; (there will be some that we cannot cover). In this way, you will have a core theme to give you an ethical foundation. Newspaper articles and interviews, etc. will be given extra credit points.

*At the end of the semester, I ask for an 8-10 pages philosophical study* upon a class vote from the instructor’s list of suggestions. Part of your grade will also be based on class activity with others, so attendance is crucial and an absence will greatly reduce your ability to receive an “A” grade. If you are unable to attend any of these debates, you must write an additional paper which provides a careful outline of your position via the debate requirements listed below. However, THE FINAL DEBATE (EXAM WEEK) IS MANDATORY.

(NOTE: A FILM may be shown for one or more of these debates as a point of departure for discussion).
The Debate Requirements

1. You must provide **detailed copious notes** on your philosophical position via the readings for that particular unit. For each debate, three readings thinkers must be represented in these notes (no repetitions please), and I expect at least 5 quotes attached from each thinker.

2. Also, you must provide an **abstract** stating and defending your position. It should be no more than two pages typed and should outline your position through the philosophers you have chosen to write your notes on. As you write this abstract, please include three quotes each in your notes for each philosopher. These quotes should give evidence of support your position. Finally, provide a specific personal “applied” example from your reading, the film, lecture, or personal experience which helps substantiate your stance.

3. **The Teaching Reading**

Pick any reading and be prepared to “teach” it to the class in your own way. I expect a lesson plan, notes, and any strategy (including audio-visuals, etc.) that you wish to use to be handed in. Enjoy! (10%).

**Miscellaneous:**

**Attendance:** Class attendance and prepared participation is expected so that the developed class community personality can proceed accordingly. I shall try to my utmost ability not to bore you, but rather energize you with films, etc. Still, I expect that you will be responsible and attend regularly. You will also find that built in to this course is work that requires this regularity if you wish to receive a quality grade (i.e. presentations, debates and notes as graded). If you miss more than 6 classes, I reserve the right to drop your final grade.

**Due Dates for Class Assignments:** All due dates are listed on your syllabus. Nevertheless, you have a voice and the class may ask for a one day extension if needed. If you miss the agreed upon class requirements days, these must be made up in some fashion within one week.

**Class Etiquette (Ethics):** You are expected to be responsible in your language and behavior in this course. Freedom of speech and activity here require to rational rules of respect, honesty, fair play, safety and open-minded speculation and argumentation. Any inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through the appropriate CLC channels. In addition, text messaging will be discouraged and cell phone use must be performed outside the classroom. Computers, while allowed for scholarly use, are deemed “public” for viewing by myself and your peers.
Tentative Course Schedule

WEEK 1 – August 25-29

General Introduction with Terms and Tasks
*Assignment:* Buy Book and start reading; Choose and ethical dilemma (SH) and solve it as best as you can through three ethical theories after reading Introduction pp. 1-16 and hearing more about these theories in class.

WEEKS 2 AND 3 – September 3, September 8-12

2
On Learning and the Nature of Ethics
*Assignment:* Read Chapters 1 and SH and SR TBA

Reflection Response for Journal Review #1

3
On Reasoning and Creating in Ethics
*Assignment:* Read Chapters 2 and 12 selections in Class TBA

WEEK 4 - September 15-19

4
On Feeling in Ethics
*Assignment:* Bring Text and read Chapter 3; I will make copies from old edition

Reflection Response for Journal Review #2

DEBATE 1

WEEK 5 – September 22-26

5
On Flourishing and Believing
*Assignment:* Read Chapters 3 and 5 selections in Class TBA

Reflection Response for Journal Review #3

WEEK 6 – September 29 – October 3

On Relating
*Assignment:* Read Chapter 6; read SH if given

Reflection Response for Journal Review #4

WEEKS 7 and 8 October 6-10, 13-17

On Cooperating
Assignment: Read Chapter 7 selections TBA in Class (Social Contract for Week 7; Equality and Justice for Week 8)

Reflection Response for Journal Review #5

WEEKS 9 and 10 – October 20-24, 27-31

On Confronting
Assignment: Read Chapter 8

DEBATE 2

WEEKS 11 AND 12 – November 3-7; 10-14

Loving and Caring
Assignment: Read Chapter 9; selections on Loving to be handed out from old edition

Reflection Response for Journal Review #6

WEEKS 12 AND 13 – November 17-21; 24

Working and Consuming
Assignment: Read Chapters 10, 11

Reflection Response for Journal Review #7

DEBATE 3

WEEKS 14 AND 15 – December 1-5, 8-12

Reflection Response for Journal Review #8

Extending Ethics Perceptions TBA
Assignment: Chapter readings from 13 selected; Class Vote on Final Debate; Film (TBA pending Ethical Issue Chosen by Class); Develop Debate Preparation

WEEK 16 – FINAL EXAM WEEK DEBATE

Assignment: ENTIRE JOURNAL DUE; NO EXCEPTIONS
Prepare and Develop Debate Platform with other class members; Mandatory Attendance (TBA)

DEBATE 4