

Northeastern Illinois University  
El Centro  
PHIL HU 213-WL1 ETHICS  
Fall 2009

**Instructor:** Prof. Josef Ben Levi  
**Time/Day:** 10:20 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Saturday  
**Room:** EC 105  
**Email:** J-BenLevi@neiu.edu

### Course Description

This course will introduce the student to ethical problems and controversies and gives the student the opportunity to confront those situations in a classroom setting. Students will be asked to consider certain ethical dilemmas and will attempt to answer questions such as "What is intrinsically good?"

### What is ethics?

Ethics is the study of the age-old question, "How ought I to live?" Historically, this question has been answered in multiple ways and it is our task to acquaint ourselves with responses generated by various thinkers. The study of ethics is one major area of philosophy. The remaining areas are:

- 1) What is real? (**Ontology/Metaphysics**) and,
- 2) What can I know? (**Epistemology**)

The answers to these latter two questions are bound up with our answer to the first. Ethics, in a sense, is "first philosophy." Our secondary task is to critically evaluate ethical theories while learning to apply them to everyday situations.

### Texts and Materials

Machiavelli, Niccolo, *The Prince*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1961.  
Cafaro, Philip, *Virtue Ethics (Not Too) Simplified*, Paideia Theoretical Ethics  
Dubrovsky, Vladimir N., *Cosmology and Moral Philosophy*, Paideia Theoretical Ethics  
Miculan, Alison Roberts, *Ethics and Reality*, Paideia Theoretical Ethics  
Ross, Anthony, *Metaphysics, Predestination and Free Will*  
Lucero-Montaro, Alfredo, *Spinoza's Ethics: Determinism and Freedom*  
Fremerey, Hubertus, *Two Concepts of Truth*  
Khashaba, D.R., *Explaining Explanation*  
Kelly, Dr. A.B., *An Emergent Eschatology*

## Course Outline:

Week	Date	Topic
1	08/29	Course Overview – Miculan
2	08/30	Miculan
3	09/05	Miculan/Cafaro
4	09/12	Cafaro/Dubrovsky
5	09/19	Dubrovsky/Ross
6	09/26	Ross/Lucero-Montaro
7	10/03	Lucero-Montaro
8	10/10	Fremerey
9	10/17	Khashaba/Kelly
10	10/24	Machiavelli
11	10/31	Machiavelli
12	11/07	Machiavelli
13	11/14	Machiavelli
14	11/21	Machiavelli
15	11/29	Thanksgiving Holiday
16	12/05	Machiavelli
17	12/12	Final Exam and Final Paper

### Class Rules:

Class will start on time. **There will be no cell phone usage or texting in class** All cell phones must be turned off or in vibrate mode. Eating in class is prohibited. Note that **ATTENDANCE** is crucial for a passing grade in this class!

### Note:

As a fundamental part of this class, including understanding classical philosophical thought, students will be introduced to various concepts in the original Greek language. Occasionally other ancient languages will be introduced in order to enhance the inner meaning of ideas taught in this course. Also on occasions the class will be presented with a philosophical concept or proverb that will require a one or two page student analysis to be submitted at the beginning of the following class session.

## **Evaluation**

At the end of the semester you will: (1) understand ethical theory and be able to use it in decision making; (2) understand the roles of both law and ethics in establishing boundaries on individual and/or organizational actions; (3) be familiar with the ethical issues related to some of today's controversial moral questions; (4) recognize the consequences of actions on various groups and in various contexts, as well as having been exposed to a variety of issues. A quality 6-page research paper on a ethical issue from one of the topics listed in the syllabus is required at the end of the semester.

- 1) Attendance (50%)
- 2) Midterm (15%)
- 3) Final Examination (15%)
- 4) Final Paper (20%)

## **Research Topics**

1. Ethics and Health Care
2. Ethics and the Military
3. Ethics and Education
4. Ethic and Labor
5. Ethics and Business
6. Ethics and Politics
7. Ethics and Economics
8. Ethics and Technology
9. Ethics and Immigration
10. Ethics and Social Welfare
11. Ethics and Housing
12. Ethics and Poverty/Homelessness