Syllabus: Philosophy 1300

Introduction to Ethics  
Autumn 2020 – 100% ONLINE

## COURSE OVERVIEW

## Instructor:

Glenn Hartz

Email address: hartz.1@osu.edu

Phone number: 419 755 4354

Office hours: Monday and Tuesday 11 am–12 pm (via Zoom or phone) and by appointment. Students should email me to arrange to meet with me at other times by zoom or phone.

Office Location: 219 Ovalwood Hall, Mansfield Campus

## Course description

The objective of this introductory course in ethics is to put you in a position to handle ethical decisions with a degree of sophistication made possible only by a clear grasp of the main alternative ethical theories. In terms of the GE guidelines below, these theories have been among the most powerful influences on “the norms which guide human behavior.” Whether one is a painter, a police person, or a lawyer, one faces moral dilemmas each day and can profit from studying a variety of approaches to such situations. Students are encouraged to become active participants in the art of philosophizing and in interpreting some of the major theories in the field of ethics.

The readings for the course help maintain a practical emphasis, since on the whole the authors pay close attention to concrete cases of moral decision-making which arise every day in our culture. Of course, a more lofty goal, presupposed in every philosophy course, is that you may be drawn into an appreciation of the intrinsic value of theoretical inquiry – to see the value of sound thinking and good writing as applied to ethical matters as well as to a wide range of other topics. Indeed, philosophy's greatest contribution is its ability to see individual topics in light of the whole of inquiry, and to find rich connections between these various subject areas. Thus, in lecture I will draw on the sciences, literature, religion, and non-ethical philosophical topics in order to show you how ethical issues are intertwined with a wide range of theoretical and practical problems. Hopefully, you too will be able to make such connections along the way.

The first part of the course will be devoted to a rigorous survey of traditional ethical theory. Kant's "deontological" ethics will be compared with utilitarianism, or a "consequentialist" ethics, so that you will become familiar with two main alternative answers to the question, On what grounds do we make substantive moral decisions? Kant urges us to make this a matter purely of motive, or of the condition of the "will" which stands behind the decision and subsequent action. Utilitarians, by contrast, claim that the only satisfactory ground for justification is an appeal to the consequences of a decision or act – for example, a net gain in pleasure for the largest number of people.

After studying these two alternative approaches, we will look at a completely different tradition which accounts for certain aspects of morality which, it claims, deontological and consequentialist theories fail adequately to address. This is the "Ethics of Virtue" tradition, which sees cruelty and malice as inherently morally offensive, and courage, gratitude, and generosity as inherently worthy of praise. These attitudes and emotions are said to have moral status regardless of how they are related to duties to perform actions or to consequences of actions. Virtue theorists also recommend that one pay close attention to one's ability to tell right from wrong based on such natural feelings or sentiments as compassion and revulsion. The final section discusses two main questions. (1) Are ethical standards completely relative to the culture out of which they arise? Ethical relativism holds that this must be answered affirmatively, but there are many arguments which seem to show that there must be something objective and universal about at least some very general ethical claims. (2) Are all actions best construed as proceeding from egoism or can one sometimes act out of a genuinely altruistic motive and do something for others and not at all for yourself?

To summarize, the course is divided into three sections (here listed with a few representative theorists), with an exam at the end of each section.

1. Traditional Normative Ethical Theory (Kant, Rachels, Bentham, Mill, Smart, Williams)

2. The Virtue Tradition (Aristotle, Augustine, Wallace, Taylor, Fried, Bok)

3. Relativism and Egoism (Herodotus, Benedict, Stace, Hobbes, United Nations Charter)

## Course learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students should successfully be able to:

Demonstrate a detailed understanding of some of the major ethical positions, and conduct a fruitful and historically informed dialogue about their strengths and weaknesses.

Manifest good writing skills on exam essay questions and in discussion posts.

## Carmen guide for this course:

The course material is found in the “Assignments” area of the Carmen site for the course. All links to lectures, handouts referred to in lectures, study guides, discussion questions, quizzes, lectures, and exams are organized there complete with any due dates. A list of items *by due date* is in the “Syllabus” area of the Carmen page. An easy way to access the class on a phone or tablet is to get the Canvas (the management system Carmen uses) “Student” app and log in with your OSU credentials. After the first time you should be able to simply open the app. The app keeps track of what’s coming up as due and what might be missing in your record.

## GE Course Information

This course fulfills the goals and expected learning outcomes for GE Cultures and Ideas

#### Goals

Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

#### Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression.
2. Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

## Course materials

### Required

### Text:Phil. 1300-Introduction to Ethics--Glenn Hartz

This is a customized “course packet” or anthology of readings. You can order an online “pdf” copy for about $30. and use this to do the readings ahead of lecture. Have it ready in a separate window or another device as you watch (references to the reading are found throughout the lectures). Link: <https://www.zipbookstore.com/university-course-materials/ohio-state-university-mansfield/phil.-1300-introduction-to-ethics--glenn-hartz>

Students are encouraged to pursue any topics they find interesting in more depth than is available in the text or lecture by searching the library and the larger web for articles in such reputable and edited resources as the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<https://plato.stanford.edu>). You can also explore posts or videos on the topics – remembering of course that videos or unedited posts might be in various respects unreliable.

## Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

* **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
* **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
* **Email:** [8help@osu.edu](mailto:8help@osu.edu)
* **TDD:** 614-688-8743

### Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

* Basic computer and web-browsing skills
* Navigating Carmen

### Technology skills necessary for this specific course

* Entering information on discussions, quizzes, and exams on Carmen, and streaming lectures also through Carmen.
* Buying textbook pdf.

### Necessary equipment

* Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection or a suitable tablet or (for some parts of the class) phone
* (for optional Zoom meetings) Webcam: built-in or external webcam, fully installed
* (for optional Zoom meetings) Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet or phone mic or external microphone

# Grading and faculty response

## How your grade is calculated

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ASSIGNMENT CATEGORY** | **Percentage** |
| *Exams (3 exams, 28 points each)* | 84% |
| *Quizzes (6 Carmen-administered quizzes, 1 point each)* | 6% |
| *Section Participation (1 point) and SEI Grades (1 point)* | 2% |
| *Discussions (jointly)* | 8% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

**Assignment information**

**DISCUSSION (8%)**

*Participation in the discussion components is required*. Discussions are worth 8% of the grade. They are individually graded by me, worth 1 point each and that is “pro-rated” by camen to make a total of 8% of the grade. You get 1 point for posting a suitable response which is at least 3 lines. **Students are required to make a SUBSTANTIVE\* POST TO THE DISCUSSION question for each assignment which includes a discussion question. This must be done by the due date (found for each discussion question under “Assignments”).**

[\*A “substantive post” is at least 3 lines long and one which raises a good question (which has not been raised by other students) or answers a course-related question or a post from a fellow-student. Examples of non-substantive posts: “Good point, Jay!” “I think Bentham’s utilitarianism stinks” (with no explanation as to why).]

**NOTE: If this discussion-requirement is not met, the entire exam for that section will not be graded and it will stand as a zero.** (So obviously you cannot pass the class if you don’t do the discussions.)

The purpose of the discussion room is to allow interaction between you and your fellow students and me. It functions the way discussions play out in the traditional classroom. So it is an essential element of each section.

**Exams (84%)**

There are three of them. You will have 80 minutes to complete each one. They cover only the sections they follow; the final is not cumulative. The exam’s structure is: 20 multiple choice questions worth 4 points each (total of 80 points out of 100), and an “essay” text box worth the remaining 20 points.

What I'm looking for on the “essay” is a well-organized, well thought out explanation of some problem or question. The best answers will

(1) show a mastery of the details of those assigned readings and lecture materials which are relevant to the question asked;

(2) bring in concrete examples to illustrate the theoretical points made;

(3) show independence of thought and balanced judgment in putting together a rationale for one's own position on the issue (when this is asked for);

(4) be clearly written (writing skills will be relevant to the grade); and

**(5) make reference, when appropriate, to objections discussed in the course of covering various theories or arguments. In other words, I want, not just the theory or argument, but these discussed in the context of objections and replies. This makes the answer more objective and balanced.**

At the end of each section, you will find a link to a list of questions which will serve as a study guide for the essay part of the exam. Knowing the answers to these will help you craft your answer to the essay question.

*But the essay itself will be written “on the spot” and the exact questions will not be revealed prior to the exam. Thus you will be required to “think on your feet” and put the material into a new framework.* For example, the study guide will ask you to explain the causal argument and the contingency argument separately, but on the online exam you might be asked to compare the two arguments, explaining an objection to each.

Q. “How do I prepare for an exam?” You may write up sample answers to these questions and send them by message within Carmen or email (hartz.1@osu.edu) for the essay questions prior to each exam. Please follow these guidelines:

1. No matter what program you prepare them in, please **cut and paste the answers into the message area** of an email; that way I can add suggestions in caps and reply to your message.

2. Answers which arrive less than **24 hours** prior to the exam cannot be evaluated.

3. I will look at as many sample answers as I can, with the understanding that I might not be able to get to yours. Of course if you submit yours well in advance and don’t hear anything for a few days, try prompting me through another email address. Thus some places block all email sent to OSU, and some students sent things and assuming I was ignoring them, whereas actually the messages were intercepted by the remote server. (Everyone should have 2 email accounts, just in case: gmail, yahoo, etc.)

4. Typically I can read only ONE draft of each answer.

**You may study in groups, but you may not take exams or quizzes in groups or divulge quiz or exam content to other students.** *I plan to open the exam from 12:00 AM to 11:59 PM (roughly midnight to midnight) on the day noted on the schedule. IF IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO TAKE THE EXAM ON THAT DAY OR IN THAT TIME PERIOD, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE SO THAT YOU CAN TAKE IT ON ANOTHER DAY PROVIDING THE REASON GIVEN IS SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS,*

**Quizzes (6%):**

Quizzes are jointly worth 6%. The 6 quizzes will be worth 1 point each. All of these (except the quiz on Revenge\*) will consist of 4 questions over material covered in past lectures, with particular emphasis on the immediately preceding lecture. These work this way: you watch a lecture and then you may open the quiz. You have one chance to take it (one “attempt”) and 20 minutes to complete it. All of these quizzes will be administered online through Carmen. Be careful not to take the quiz until after the lecture listed as required for that quiz (e.g., “Quiz 2 take after Lecture 4 on Mill”).

\*The quiz on Revenge will be an essay reporting your findings as you research the topic of revenge prior to our discussion of the topic.

**Other Grades (2%)**

There are two remaining items: the “Section Participation” grade (1 point) and the “SEI” grade, (1 point), both filled in by the instructor at the end. The Participation grade reflects the entire section’s level of involvement in the discussion area. (Sometimes we have very little engagement there, with students posting clichés or making general points. Other times the students are interacting with each other and making specific references to their experiences. If this class shows that higher level of engagement, every active member will receive 1 point.) The “SEI” grade will be reserved for the section’s achieving 60% participation on the Student Evaluation of Instruction form (administered online) at the end of the class. When 60% (or close to that) has been reached, everyone will get 1 point.

## Late assignments

There is no advance provision for late assignments. Any special circumstances (e.g., pregnancy, death in the family, illness) must be relayed to me by message or email as early as possible to see if an adjustment is justified.

## Grading scale

93–100: A   
90–92.9: A-   
87–89.9: B+  
83–86.9: B  
80–82.9: B-   
77–79.9: C+   
73–76.9: C  
70 –72.9: C-   
67 –69.9: D+   
60 –66.9: D  
Below 60: E

## Faculty feedback and response time

### Grading and feedback

For exams with an essay question, you can generally expect feedback within **a week.**

### E-mail

Unless otherwise noted, I will typically reply to e-mails within **24 hours on school days.**

### Discussion board

I typically check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every **day on school days**.

# Attendance, participation, and discussions

## Student participation requirements

Because this is a distance-education course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone's expected participation:

* **Logging in**: **Do so regularly, but note that you must log in at least once during the first week to be counted as “attending” the class for Federal reporting purposes.**
* **Office hours and live sessions**: **OPTIONAL OR FLEXIBLE**Any live, scheduled events for the course are optional. Please contact me if you would like to talk and we’ll arrange it.
* **Participating in discussion forums**: **For each discussion topic, you must post a response to it by the due date or else the exam for that section will not be graded (it will receive a zero).**

## Discussion and communication guidelines

* **Writing style**: While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
* **Tone and civility**: Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably.

# Other course policies

## Student academic services

Student academic services offered on the OSU main campus <http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>.

## Student support services

Student support services offered on the OSU main campus <http://ssc.osu.edu>.

## Academic integrity policy

**Plagiarism** is passing off the ideas or words of another as one’s own without crediting the source. The university does not permit you to use someone else's work, without acknowledgment, or to use "crib notes" as a basis for writing an exam or quiz or to copy off a neighbor's paper during an exam or quiz. Please note also that you can get in trouble for "lending" your course materials to someone else if that person uses them and gets caught. As mandated by the university, all cases of suspected cheating/plagiarism will be dealt with by the Committee on Academic Misconduct, which gets to decide which of several nasty treatments should be administered to you. (These can be serious consequences.) So do not cut and paste web pages and turn them in as your own work. This is counterproductive (you’re here to see what you can do) and academically illegal (as mentioned before). It’s also not smart because a simple Google search of 4 words matches it to the source and you’re sure to lose the case when it comes up.

### Specific policies for this online course

* **Quizzes and exams**: You must complete the exams and quizzes yourself, without any external help or communication – including help from classmates or web sites.
* **Written assignments**: Your written assignments, including discussion posts, must be your own original work. Anyone turning in the work of another as their own will be open to academic misconduct charges (see Academic Integrity section below).
* **Collaboration and informal peer-review**: The course includes opportunities for collaboration with your classmates. While study groups and peer-review of major written projects is encouraged, remember that comparing answers on a quiz or assignment is not permitted.

### Ohio State’s official academic integrity policy

### It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

## Copyright disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

## Statement on title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu)

## Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

### The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](http://slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu/); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

### Accessibility of course technology

**This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.**

* **[Carmen (Canvas) accessibility](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2061)**
* **Streaming audio and video**
* **Synchronous course tools**

## Your mental health!

Everybody hurts. If it’s your turn to face barriers to learning – such as Covid-19, a strained relationship, increased anxiety, an alcohol/drug problem, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation – feel free to let me know and/or contact the offices below. We do better when everyone’s informed and no one feels as if they have to suffer in silence.

If you or someone you know are suffering from any of these conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](http://ccs.osu.edu/) or calling 614- 292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273- TALK or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

# Course schedule (tentative)

Links to all lectures, handouts, discussions, and quizzes, with the due dates included, are under the “Assignments” tab in Carmen.

| Week | Dates | Topics and Assignments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Aug. 25-28 | Orientation (Zoom meeting; link will be emailed)  **Introductory Lecture**  **Introductory Lecture Discussion Q. (due Sept. 23)** |
| 2 | Aug. 31-Sept. 4 | Lecture 1: Kantianism  Lecture 1 Discussion Q. (due Sept. 21)  Lecture 2: Critical Discussion of Kantianism  Lecture 2 Discussion Q. (due Sept. 23)  Quiz 1 (due Sept. 23) |
| 3 | Sept. 8-11 | Lecture 3: Utilitarianism: Bentham  Lecture 3 Discussion Q. (due Sept. 23)  Lecture 4: Utilitarianism: Mill  Lecture 4 Discussion Q. (due Sept. 23)  Quiz 2 (due Sept. 23) |
| 4 | Sept. 14-18 | Lecture 5: Utilitarianism: Smart  Lecture 5 Discussion Q. (due Sept. 23)  Short Film on Utilitarianism: Most (“Bridge”) |
| 5 | Sept. 21-25 | Review for Exam 1  Exam 1 (Sept. 24) |
| 6 | Sept. 28-Oct. 2 | Lecture 6: Aristotle  Lecture 6 Discussion Q. (due Nov. 9)  Lecture 7: Mayo  Lecture 7 Discussion Q. (due Nov. 9) |
| 7 | Oct. 5-9 | Lecture 8: Following God (Augustine)  Lecture 8 Discussion Q. (due Nov. 9)  Quiz 3 (due Oct. 1)  Lecture 9: Generosity (Wallace)  Lecture 9 Discussion Q. (due Nov. 9) |
| 8 | Oct. 19-23 | Lecture 10: Pride (Taylor)  Lecture 10 Discussion Q. (due Nov. 9)  Quiz 4 (due Nov. 9)  Lecture 11: Enjoying Sin (Augustine and Matthews)  Lecture 11 Discussion Q. (due Nov. 9) |
| 9 | Oct. 26-30 | Students Do Research on the topic of Revenge  Quiz 5: Essay on Revenge (due Oct. 27)  Instructor’s Discussion of Revenge |
| 10 | Nov. 2-6 | Lecture 12: Lying (Fried and Bok)  Lecture 12 Discussion Q. (due Nov. 9)  Review for Exam 2 |
| 11 | Nov. 9-13 | Exam 2 (Nov. 10)  Lecture 13: The Case for Ethical Relativism  Lecture 13 Discussion Q. (due Dec. 7) |
| 12 | Nov. 16-20 | Lecture 14: Criticism of Ethical Relativism  Lecture 14 Discussion Q. (due Dec. 7)  Quiz 6 (due Dec. 7)  Lecture 15: The Case for Egoism  Lecture 15 Discussion Q. (due Dec. 7) |
| 13 | Nov. 30-Dec. 4 | Lecture 16: The Case Against Egoism  Lecture 16 Discussion Q. (due Dec. 7)  Review for Exam 3 |
| 14 | Dec. 7-9 | Exam 3 (Dec. 8) |