

PHI 1700, Fall 2023

Global Ethics

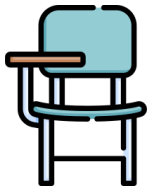
Fridays 9:05 am - 12:00 pm

Instructor: Maggie Fife (she/her)

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mfife@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Room: Vertical Campus 10-125

Office Hours: Fridays 12:00-1:00 or by appointment

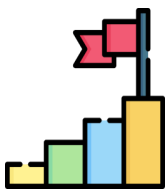


Course Description:

Ethics is the attempt to clarify moral concepts, justify moral principles, and understand the good life. In this course, we will explore a broad range of complex ethical questions, including:

- Is morality relative to a time or culture?
- What determines whether an action is right or wrong?
- Are there universal moral rules?
- Is retributive punishment justifiable?
- When are we morally responsible for actions or states of affairs?
- What makes our lives better?

In exploring these and other questions, students will develop skills in identifying, analyzing, and critiquing moral arguments, as well as challenging their own perspective.



Learning Goals:

This course should help students:

- Acquire an understanding of major ethical theories.
- Cultivate critical thinking and argumentation skills.
- Enhance reading comprehension skills and gain confidence in their own ability to understand difficult texts.
- Evaluate and critique moral claims.
- Become more comfortable with college-level writing through informal and formal writing assignments.
- Approach both academic texts and differing views charitably.



Required texts:

All readings and supplemental materials will be posted on Blackboard.



Requirements/Grading:

Attendance and participation – 20%

Discussion board posts and replies – 20% total

- ↳ 10 posts: 10%
- ↳ 10 replies: 10%

In-class tests – 30%

- ↳ Test 1: 15%
- ↳ Test 2: 15%

Scaffolded paper assignment – 30% total

- ↳ Outline: 5%
- ↳ First draft: 5%
- ↳ Peer review: 5%
- ↳ Cover letter: 5%
- ↳ Final draft: 10%



Our Classroom Community:

A respectful environment is necessary for learning. As members of this classroom community, we must all do our part to build a respectful and inclusive space. I do not tolerate discrimination of any kind. We will discuss some sensitive and divisive topics, and I encourage you to approach differing views with openness and charitability.

Furthermore, I have the following expectations:

- Arrive on time.
- Complete each reading before class and bring the reading to class.
- Participate in class and small group discussions. Challenge yourself: If you are someone who has trouble speaking up, come with one question or comment prepared. If you are someone who speaks a lot in class, challenge yourself by stepping back and listening to others' comments.
- We commit to integrity in this course by properly crediting the ideas of others. Familiarize yourself with Baruch's [Academic Honesty](#) policy and [plagiarism tutorial](#). I reserve the right to report any suspected instance of cheating or plagiarism to Baruch's disciplinary committee for action.
- Use of artificial intelligence: we will explore the use of generative AI in class, and some activities will require you to use ChatGPT. Learning to use AI is an emerging skill, and you should be aware of its benefits and current limitations. For your final paper, you will be asked to identify if and when you used AI. We will discuss this more throughout the semester.

**Accessibility:**

I try to make my class accessible, but it's possible I've missed something. Please let me know what I can do to help you succeed. In addition to working with me, you may also find useful services at In addition to working with me, you may also seek out various campus services like the [Writing Center](#), [Disability Services](#), [Student Academic Consulting Center](#), [Baruch Technology Loan Program](#), etc.).

**Need help?**

If you find any aspect of this course challenging, please come talk to me. There are many reasons someone might have a hard time: some people find organizing their thoughts in writing challenging, others might find philosophical readings unusual and hard to follow—they often are! I can help with these and other challenges.



Course Schedule:

- All readings and materials will be posted on Blackboard.
- Discussion board posts are due by 9am on Wednesdays. Discussion board replies are due by 9am on Fridays.

Units	Date	Topic	Assignments
Unit 1: Ethical Theories	Fri 8/25	Introduction to ethics and moral reasoning	
	Fri 9/1	Cultural relativism and ethical egoism	
	Fri 9/8	Utilitarianism	
	Fri 9/15	No class	
	Fri 9/22	Kantian ethics	
	Fri 9/29	Virtue ethics and care ethics	
	Fri 10/6	★ Test 1	In-class test 1
Unit 2: Moral Concepts and Applied Ethics	Fri 10/13	Justice and inequality	
	Fri 10/20	Free will, moral luck, and moral responsibility	
	Fri 10/27	Incarceration and punishment	
	Fri 11/3	★ Visit to The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture for Making Time: Art in the age of Mass Incarceration	
	Fri 11/10	AI and data ethics	Paper outline
	Fri 11/17	Abortion	
	Fri 11/24	No class	
	Fri 12/1	Moral emotions and in-class peer review	Paper draft
	Fri 12/8	The good life / the meaning of work	
Finals	Fri 12/15	★ Test 2	Final paper, in-class test 2