PHILOSOPHY 528
THEORIES OF ETHICS

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http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~corlett/Welcome.html
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Office Location: AL 432.
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Course Description: (Outcomes): Philosophical analysis of concepts of moral value from meta-ethical and normative perspectives. Various leading theories of ethics are enumerated and explored, including moral realism, moral anti-realism, moral intuitionism, deontologism, consequentialism, etc.. The emphasis of this course is on historically-based contemporary ethical theories. Students are expected to learn the contents of these and some other related theories and concepts such that they will become conversant with such ideas at a graduate-level of understanding. Students will also become conversant with the arguments for and against such theories.

Course Requirements: (Outcomes assessment): All students are required to take two in-class essay-type examinations. These examinations will test the student's ability to understand the contents of the assigned readings and lectures that cover the contents of the above stated course outcomes. The two examinations are designed to test and measure the student's knowledge of the contents of the textbook readings and classroom discussions, and to test and measure the student's competency in English grammar, spelling and usage. This course is taught and students are graded according to standards at highly respected academic institutions throughout the U.S.. Each student is required, for a passing grade in the course, to complete two closed-book and closed-notes, in-class essay-type examinations that are designed to test and measure students' general and philosophical comprehension of the informational contents of the assigned readings

especially with regard to philosophical analysis and argumentation. Examination questions and their answers are based on the required readings. Lectures and discussions track many of the highlights of the assigned readings. Each of these examinations is worth up to 50 points. Scores for each of the examinations are to be added and the course grade is to be determined according to the following scale:

93-100=A
90-92=A-
88-89=B+
83-87=B
80-82=B-
78-79=C+
73-77=C
70-72=C-
68-69=D+
63-67=D
60-62=D-
0-59=F

Graduate students are required to take the same two examinations as the undergraduates take, but the *grades* on those examinations will be averaged together with the *grade* on the 30-40 page term paper. They are required to obtain pre-approval of their written term paper proposal no later than the 12th class meeting of the term. Consult the "Requirements for Philosophy Term Papers." Failure to obtain written approval by the Professor for the term paper by the 12th class session will result in a loss of one full grade on the term paper (ex.: from a "B" to a "C") after the term paper has been graded for form and content. As the "Requirements for Philosophy Term Papers" indicates, *graduate students are to select a specific argument or analysis found in the assigned readings and make THAT the focus of the paper*.

Important Notes:

Each student is responsible for understanding everything expressed in class by the Professor and by students engaged in discussion with the professor even if the student is absent from class. **Absolutely <u>no</u> permission is granted to electronically tape or otherwise electronically duplicate class lectures for any purpose whatsoever as they are the copyrighted property of Professor Corlett**.

It is recommended that students take notes well and continuously during each class period.

The two examinations are designed to test and measure the student's knowledge of the contents of the textbook readings and classroom discussions, and to test and measure the student's competency in English grammar, spelling and usage.

<u>Students caught cheating on examinations or term papers shall be awarded a grade of "F" for the course and shall be prosecuted to the fullest extent of SDSU regulations</u>!

Class session attendance is crucial for learning the course material well. Students absent from or arriving late to more than two class sessions, regardless of reason, are subject to be dropped from the course with a grade of "F" at the professor's discretion. Students who are absent the first day of class without prior approval from the professor shall be dropped from the course at the professor's discretion.

Examinations may be re-scheduled only if the student obtains approval from the professor *prior to* the examination to be re-scheduled. Otherwise, no re-scheduled examinations are permitted. Since the taking of both examinations is required for a passing grade in the course, a student's missing an examination and not having such approval will cause the student to fail the course. For those obtaining such pre-approval, a re-scheduled examination might not have the same content as the one given to the rest of the class on the original date of examination.

Students with special documented medical needs should avail themselves of Disabled Student Services, SS 1661, and should immediately discuss such needs with the Professor so that such needs might be accommodated for testing purposes.

SDSU Counseling & Psychological Services. If any student feels the need to talk to someone or seek confidential guidance for the benefit of their personal, academic, or social well-being, contact: http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/cps/. Phone number: (619) 594-5220. Address: 5700 Hardy Ave., Suite 4401, San Diego, CA 92115 (4th floor of the Calpulli Center). Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8am-4:30pm.

Expectations of Students: Pursuant to standards at academically respectable universities throughout the United States, students are expected to study the assigned readings and notes for this course at least 6 hours per week (two hours for each hour of registered coursework for this course) and to participate philosophically in classroom discussions.

Required Course Readings:

D. Copp, Ed., *Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (Oxford, 2006).

Students are encouraged to access the required readings legally and in the most cost effective manner.

NOTE: **It is illegal to violate federal copyright laws which prohibit the illegal downloading or otherwise illegal accessing of copyrighted materials. Publishers are aggressive and increasingly successful in filing and winning lawsuits against students and others who violate such laws.**

Tentative Course Outline:

Week 1: Introduction to Ethical Theory.
Week 2: Moral Realism.
Week 3: Ethical Naturalism and Non-naturalism.
Week 4: Anti-realist Expressivism and Quasi-realism.

Week 5: Moral Sentimentalism and Moral Psychology.
Week 6: Moral Relativism and Moral Nihilism.
Week 7: Hume and Kant on Morality and Practical Reasoning.
Week 8: Moral Responsibility Theory.
Week 9: **Examination #1**. Value Theory.
Week 10: Forms and Limits of Consequentialism. **Graduate students: begin in earnest seeking a term paper topic.**
Week 11: Deontology.
Week 12: Moral Rights. **Graduate students: approval of term paper proposals due without penalty.**
Week 13: Kantian Normative Ethics.
Week 14: Moral Intuitionism and Virtue Ethics.
Week 15: Theory, Practice, and Moral Reasoning. **Graduate students: Term papers due in class.**
Final exam week: **Examination #2.** The content of examination #2 is not cumulative of the earlier section of the course.