

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

74-4340

Advanced Ethics

Instructor: J. Harvey  
2010

Fall

Prerequisite(s): PHIL\*2120 & 1.00 credits in Philosophy at the 3000 level

Instructor: J. Harvey

Time: Wed. 11.30-2.20

Brief Course Synopsis:

This course is to do with Kantian ethics and some of the main themes to be found there. The two main goals, then, will be, first, to come to understand the key points in Kant's short book, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, and secondly, to explore philosophically some of the central issues raised there. These issues may include such matters as the nature of autonomy, the role of reason in ethics, the role of inclinations and emotions in ethics, the "value" of human beings, self-respect, the possibility of having moral obligations to oneself, etc.. For each such issue we consider, there will be a small collection of fairly recent, article-length readings, so that we can reflect on the issues after thinking about more recent philosophical work on them. (For the Kant text, one will need to use the edition accessible on D2L. No cost is involved, but it is important that everyone use the same edition so that the references are consistent and clear to everyone in the class.)

Formal Evaluation:

It is a seminar style course. As is usual with fourth year philosophy courses, a major part of the ongoing work, therefore, consists of the preparation for and contributions to seminar-classes where you are not a presenter. This work will significantly affect the course grade (i.e., it's not a "lecture course"--where you sit and listen for nearly all of the time and where the grade is achieved by written work alone). There are three components to the formal evaluation:

1. Preparation and contribution (30%)

This includes some very short but careful pieces of writing early in the course (details given separately) and also preparation for and contributions to all the classes where you are not a presenter.

2. Presentation-paper (30%)

An in-class presentation-paper---which will be written and distributed to the instructor and students ahead of time---and responding to questions, points, etc., from others in the relevant session. After a presentation I speak with each presenter for a short while---usually during a break or at the end of the class---and explain just one-two specific revisions to be made before

the presentation-paper (and presentation itself) is graded. (Given the enrolment in the class, it will have to be a really brief contact unfortunately, so as to keep the work schedule on track and to get the presentation grades to you as soon as possible.) I will select the items that will be most helpful to you, the ones you are most ready to move on. (It will be very manageable and will not involve rewriting the whole paper!) The specific revisions will then provide the vision and the confidence to make the same improvements in your term paper before you hand it in (thus improving the quality of the paper and your grade for it). The specified revisions, together with the original paper and my comments on it, to be handed in for your grade on your presentation paper.

3. Term paper (40%)

With a different focus from the presentation-paper.

Laptop Free Course

No laptops are allowed in the classroom without the written permission of the instructor. Such permission will be given only when the request is supported by documentation from CSD establishing the need for the use of a laptop.

Please see also the “SEVEN STANDARD STATEMENTS” (below), which are required to be distributed with all course-descriptions in the College of Arts.