

## SAMPLE SYLLABI

### PHI130: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: MORALITY AND SOCIETY

**Class Information:** Days, Time, Location

**Instructor Information:**

Lauren O'Dell

Email: laurenkodell@gmail.com (preferred to Canvas messages)

Office Hours: Days and Time, and by appointment

Location: Office Code

**Course Description:** The role of the citizen is ever-changing and largely determined by the rights, responsibilities, and obligations that society impresses upon it. Understanding the moral status of the citizen requires an understanding of the moral systems that form civilization. This entry level course will analyze various moral and ethical traditions in Western philosophy and use them to discuss topics in modern day society. We will read about views people have about (i) right (moral) conduct; (ii) certain moral problems (e.g., abortion, animal rights, environmental rights, the limits of the law, etc.) and; (iii) what one is doing when one is arguing and thinking about ethics.

**Course Objectives:**

The goals of this course are:

1. To provide knowledge of the central theories of morality beginning with the Greeks up to contemporary philosophy.
2. To enhance skills in critically assessing arguments related to morality and society.
3. To improve critical thinking and writing skills.
4. To give you a better understanding of the philosophical theories underlying Community, Culture, and Citizenship in the United States as well as satisfy said UK Core requirement.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe and critically evaluate the main elements, attractions, and criticisms of various social theories including social contract theory, utilitarianism, and relativism.
2. Discuss the role of religion in politics and society.
3. Discuss the challenges involved in maintaining a cohesive community with differing cultures.
4. Engage in various questions in philosophy regarding society and morality.
5. Analyze the implications of cultural relativism, utilitarianism, deontology, etc.
6. Discuss citizen responsibility and duty from a moral standpoint.
7. Analyze arguments against and in favor of various moral positions.
8. Describe and critically analyze different types of governments.
9. Identify and critically analyze key issues in contemporary society.

**Grading, Assignments and Attendance:**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
E	<60%

The course grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation***	15%
Reading Presentation	20%
Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Final Exam	25%

**Participation\*\*\*:** This course is discussion-based so heavy emphasis will be placed on in-class participation and group work. The grade will be based on attendance, in-class discussion contributions, and peer review of group work effort. Minor in-class assignments or homework may also contribute to this grade as deemed appropriate. A one-page preliminary reflection and a one-page final reflection will be included in this grade. Note that if in-class participation standards are not being met, daily reading assignments will be given as stated below. Also, attendance will be taken daily. Only three classes can be missed without penalty. See attendance policy for more details.

**\*\*\*Reading Assignments:** Students are expected to complete all readings prior to the class time for which they are assigned. If discussions about the reading seem to be lacking (i.e. people are not reading), daily reading assignments will be added to the coursework. To ensure understanding, students will compose a one-page paper before class, analyzing what they feel are the most important points in the text and forming a position on them. Exercises in class may include group discussions, partner exchanges, or even presentations to the class about what you wrote. These will be graded pass/fail.

**Reading Presentations:** At the beginning of the semester, groups will be assigned for the reading presentation and the final exam. Each group will do one 15-20 minute presentation on the reading assignment for that day. This will count toward 20% of the final grade. Detailed instructions will be discussed in class.

**Exams:** There will be two subject exams, each worth 20% of your final grade. The first exam will be an in-class, closed book exam that will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions that relate to content that has been covered in class. The second exam is a take-home, open-book essay question that will be 4-5 pages in length (double spaced, Calibri 11 or Times New Roman 12 font). This will be a scaffolded assignment that includes an annotated bibliography. A prompt and a rubric will be provided at least two weeks prior to the due date. Proper citations and formatting are required.

Exams may only be missed for excused reasons (as defined by S.R. 5.2.4.2). If you miss an exam for an excused absence, you will be asked to take the exam with me at a mutually agreed upon time outside of class. If you miss the exam for an unexcused reason, you will not have an

opportunity to make up the exam. No late take-home exams will be permitted. They must be turned in on time unless discussed with me 48 hours before the exam due date.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be a group research project and presentation. It will count toward 25% of the final grade. More instructions on the final exam will be provided in class. No late projects will be accepted.

**Sustainable Classroom Policy:** The University of Kentucky strives to build classrooms that are ecologically sound, socially just, and economically viable, now and for the future. Sustainable classrooms prepare students and empower the campus community to support sustainable development in the Commonwealth and beyond.

This is a sustainable classroom. Here your instructors aim (1) to create the healthiest, most collaborative and innovative learning environments possible, (2) to reduce your costs and improve your intellectual development through thoughtful resource conservation and waste reduction, (3) to foster a culture of involvement in sustainability through education and engagement, and (4) to enable UK students, faculty, our campus, and our Commonwealth to become more sustainable through the use of University resources.

Sustainability starts with you taking care of yourself so that you can be at your best in this class. Do the readings and homework assignments. Come to class. Join in the discussion. Get enough sleep, water, food, and coffee beforehand. If you are facing challenges securing classroom materials, food, or housing, and this is affecting your performance in class, please contact the Dean of Students, Nicholas Kehrwald, at [nkehrwald@uky.edu](mailto:nkehrwald@uky.edu) or 859-257-3754. Furthermore, please notify your instructor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.

**Required Course Texts:**

The Elements of Moral Philosophy 7th Ed. By: James Rachels (referred to as *EMP* in reading schedule) **Rent on Amazon: \$10.87 (2021)**

The Fundamentals of Ethics 3rd Ed. By: Russ Schafer-Landau (referred to as *FOE* in reading schedule) **Buy Used on Amazon: \$13.91 (2021)**

Any required readings that are not from these books will be provided for you.

**Course Schedule**

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Primary Readings</i>	<i>Additional Readings</i>
Course Introduction and Syllabus	Syllabus	
<b>Unit I- The Good Life and Normative Ethics Through History</b>		
Reason and Argument, What to Expect	<i>Almossawi: An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments.</i> <a href="https://bookofbadarguments.com/">https://bookofbadarguments.com/</a> (Links to an external site.)	<i>FOE</i> Introduction (pgs. 1-19)

Minimum Concept of Morality	<i>EMP</i> Ch. 1 (pgs. 1-13); Ch. 13 (pgs. 173-183)	
Hedonism	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 1-2 (pgs. 23-43) *Group Presentation 1	
Desire Theory and Objective Theory	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 3-4 (pgs. 44-60)	
Virtue Ethics	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 17 (pgs. 254-273) <i>EMP</i> Ch. 12 (pgs. 157-172) *Group Presentation 2	<i>Aristotle</i> : Books VII.5-8, VIII.2-4, 9, IX.4, 8-12, X (Canvas)
Social Contract Theory	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 13-14 (pgs. 193-218) <i>EMP</i> Ch. 6 (pgs. 82-97) *Group Presentation 3 *Social Contract Game	<i>Hobbes</i> : Leviathan-Book I Chapters 10-13 (Canvas) <i>Locke versus Hobbes</i> (Canvas)
Absolute Moral Rules	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 15 (pgs. 219-236)	<i>EMP</i> Ch. 9 (pgs. 125-135)
Kant's Ethics	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 11-12 (pgs. 159-191) <i>EMP</i> Ch. 10 (pgs. 136-145) *Group Presentation 4	<i>Kant</i> : Groundwork (Canvas)
<b>Exam I</b>	See Study Guide	
<b>Unit II- Other Moral Theories</b>		
Culture and Religion	<i>EMP</i> Ch. 2 (pgs. 14-31); Ch. 4 (pgs. 49-63) <i>FOE</i> Ch. 6 (pgs. 76-90)	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 5 (pgs. 63-75)
Ethical Egoism	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 7-8 (pgs. 91-118) *Group Presentation 5	
Consequentialism	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 9 (pgs. 119-137) *Group Presentation 6	<i>Railton</i> : Alienation, Consequentialism, and The Demands of Morality (Canvas)
Utilitarianism	<i>EMP</i> Ch. 7 (pgs. 98-109) <i>FOE</i> Ch. 10 (pgs. 138-158)	<i>Bentham</i> (Canvas) <i>Mill</i> : Utilitarianism (Canvas)
Feminism	<i>Linedeman</i> : What Is Feminist Ethics? <i>FOE</i> Ch. 18 (pgs. 274-288) *Group Presentation 7	<b>Extra Credit</b> : Watch "TheMask You Live in," available on Netflix, and write a one-page thoughtful analysis. Due same day as Exam II.
Relativism	<i>FOE</i> Ch. 19-21 (pgs. 291-341)	<i>Ruth Benedict</i> : A Defense of Ethical Relativism (Canvas)

	*Group Presentation 8	
<b>Exam II</b>		
<b>Unit III- Applied Ethics and Contemporary Issues</b>		
Unconscious Bias	Understanding Microaggression (Canvas) Understanding Unconscious Bias (on Canvas)	Microaggression Examples (Canvas) Case Studies (on Canvas)
Race and Criminal Justice	Documentary Thinking Through Race and Racism (Canvas)	
Gender	Sexual Assault Fact Sheet (Canvas)	<i>Thomson (Canvas)</i>
Media and Social Media	Discussion	
Class Choice	TBD	
<b>Final Exam Presentations</b>		