

**PHIL 181: Ethics**

**John Felice Rome Center**

Spring 2024

Dr. Francesco Mariani

Email: [fmariani@luc.edu](mailto:fmariani@luc.edu)

Mon. & Wed. | 17:15 - 18:30 p.m.

Office Hour: Mon. 18:30 - 19:30 p.m.

(by appointment)

**Course Description**

The course aims to provide an overview of ethics in modern and contemporary philosophy. In particular, the course aims to compare two opposite paradigms of modern ethics as represented by Kant and Nietzsche. Through the study of these two philosophers, one will see how they offer different answers and solutions to the fundamental questions of ethics, such as: how should we, as rational beings, treat others? What is the origin of our moral obligations? How is ethics determined by the history and society of which we are a part? How do our ethical beliefs affect culture, politics, law, economy? The course will examine the problem of peace, equality, different notions of justice and the other concepts that are at the heart of the ethical discourse about the world we live in.

The course is divided into 3 thematic blocks. The first block is devoted to Kantian ethics, the comparison between Kant and utilitarianism, the Perpetual Peace, and the comeback of Kantian thought in the work of John Rawls. The second block is devoted to Nietzsche's reconstruction of the origin of ethics and his harsh critique of Western culture and civilization. Freud's diagnosis of man's crisis and discomfort in modern society will also be discussed. The third block is devoted to the analysis of some of the most pressing ethical, bioethical, and ethico-political problems of today's society.

**Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the course students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the various approaches of the philosophical questions related to ethics, with attention to the historical and conceptual development of these questions, and be able to articulate some of the major problems and responses central to this area of philosophy.

This course will also enable students to:

- (a) distinguish alternative paradigms on ethics, the individual's understanding and evaluation of his or her role in the world, the relationship between the individual and the community;
- (b) look for and appreciate the reasons given in support of the different views, to assess the forcefulness of the challenge that each poses for the others;
- (c) grasp the historical and cultural determinacy of any philosophical conception of ethics;
- (d) identify in the different philosophical conceptions the point of balance between historical material elements, on the one hand, and theoretical and spiritual, on the other hand;
- (e) engage in dialogue with great philosophers, paying close attention to their meaning, their reasons, their concerns, their vision;
- (f) insert their own reflections into the dialogue;

### **Required Texts/Materials**

Assigned and supplementary readings posted on Sakai;  
Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*; (available online)  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*; (available online)

### **Attendance Policy**

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two absences.

The final course grade will drop by 1 % for each absence beyond the allowance specified. This course meets twice a week, thus a total of two absences will be permitted. Attendance is mandatory in class including on all scheduled Friday class days. Students should consult the on-campus nurse or call the on-call doctor if they are sick. The collective health of the JFRC is everyone's responsibility. DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL.

### **Assessment Components**

- |                                |      |
|--------------------------------|------|
| • Midterm Exam (in-class test) | 35 % |
| • Final Exam (take-home paper) | 35 % |
| • Participation                | 15 % |
| • Presentation                 | 15 % |

### **Grading**

94-100: A  
90-93: A-  
87-89: B+  
84-86: B  
80-83: B-  
77-79: C+  
74-76: C  
70-73: C-  
67-69: D+  
60-66: D  
59 or lower: F

### **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty (use of AI included) are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here: [http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml).

You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

**Late or Missed Assignments**

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.

**Accessibility Accommodations**

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

**Course Schedule**

Date	Topic(s)	Assignment
Mon. 1/15	Introduction to the course	
Wed. 1/17	Introduction to Kant	
Mon. 1/22	Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Moral I	<i>Groundwork</i> , Chapter 1 (first half)
Wed. 1/24	Groundwork II	<i>Groundwork</i> , Chapter 1 (second half)
Mon. 1/29	Groundwork III	<i>Groundwork</i> , (excerpts)
Fri. 2/02	Kant vs Utilitarianism	Rachels, Chapter 7-8
Mon. 2/05	John Rawls. A Theory of Justice I	<i>A Theory of Justice</i> (§ 40)
Wed. 2/07	Student presentations I	“ ”
Mon. 2/12	Perpetual Peace I	<i>Perpetual Peace</i> , First section
Wed. 2/14	Perpetual Peace II	<i>Perpetual Peace</i> , Second section
Mon. 2/19	Justice, Equity, Cultural Relativism	Rachels (excerpts)



JOHN FELICE

**ROME  
CENTER**

Date	Topic (s)	Assignment
Wed. 2/21	Ethics of Care and Virtue Ethics	Rachels (excerpts)
Mon. 2/26	General review	
Wed. 2/28	<b>Midterm exam</b>	
Mon. 3/11	Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals I	<i>Zarathustra</i>
Wed. 3/13	Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals II	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i> , How the 'true world' finally became a fable
Mon. 3/18	Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals III	<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i> , (excerpts)
Wed. 3/20	Freud's Thoughts on war	<i>Thoughts on war</i>
Mon. 3/25	Student presentations II	" "
Wed. 3/27	Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents	<i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 4/03	Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents	" "
Mon. 4/08	Student presentations III	
Wed. 4/10	Movie	
Mon. 4/15	Truth and Post-Truth	McIntyre, <i>Post-Truth</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 4/17	Student presentations IV	
Fri. 4/19	Study Day	
Mon. 4/22	General review	
Wed. 4/24	<b>Final exam</b>	