

**Philosophy 2010**  
**Introduction to Ethics**  
**Spring 2011**

**Course Description:** Ethics is concerned with how we should live our lives and with what separates right from wrong action. In these inquiries, we can focus on overarching normative theories, or else on particular topics to which these theories can be applied; we will spend roughly half the course in each regard. Starting with normative theories, we will consider: the virtue ethics of Plato and Aristotle, the social contract theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism, and Immanuel Kant's deontology. After our survey of normative theories, we will consider a range of topics in applied ethics: abortion, cloning, euthanasia, animal rights, capital punishment, terrorism, and torture. Our study of ethics will be complemented by movies that develop moral themes; a principal focus will be on integrating our abstract inquiries with popular media in the hopes of augmenting the ways in which we think about ethics.

**Professor:** Dr. Fritz Allhoff  
3006 Moore Hall, T 2:00-3:00p, W 3:00-4:00p  
269.387.4503 (w)

**TA:** Mr. Andrew Jones  
[andrew.w.jones@wmich.edu](mailto:andrew.w.jones@wmich.edu)  
3035 Moore Hall, M 4:00-5:00p, R 12:00-1:00p

**Class:** W 4:00-7:20p, 3508 Knauss Hall

**Text:** The course reader (required) is available at the WMU Bookstore.

**Website:** [elearn.wmich.edu](http://elearn.wmich.edu). Lecture notes will be posted on the e-learning website following lecture. Other course materials will be posted here as appropriate. Course announcements will be sent out by email to WMU accounts; students are required to monitor those accounts.

<b>Grading:</b>	Midterm exam	25%
	Final exam	25%
	Response papers	50%

**Exams:** Both exams are in-class and require blue books. They will test the lectures and readings only and will not incorporate the movies. The final exam is not cumulative and will just cover material from after the midterm. Absent appropriate medical documentation, exams must be taken during the dates and times indicated below; please do not ask for alternative arrangements.

**Response Papers:** Each week, you will write a 1000-word ( $\pm$  100 words) response paper in which you integrate the lecture and reading(s) with the philosophical themes developed in the movie. Discussion questions may be offered as prompts, but you are encouraged to be creative and to explore the associated ideas as you see fit. Strong papers will *explicitly* reference the assigned reading(s) (e.g., with direct quotes and/or page numbers), as well as *specific* scenes, characters, and/or dialogue from the movies.

Response papers are due at the beginning of class the following week; emailed papers will not be accepted. Papers submitted after the mid-class break or into the TA's mailbox by 500p on Friday will be penalized one letter grade. Papers submitted after 500p on Friday and before the break the next Wednesday will be penalized two letter grades. Papers will not be accepted more than one week late. The last paper is due at the beginning of the final exam and will not be accepted thereafter.

Your lowest two paper grades—whether those papers were submitted or not—will be dropped. In other words, you only have to write 10 of the 12 response papers, though you are invited and encouraged to write all 12. The dropping of two paper grades is meant to accommodate personal exigency as might arise throughout the semester including illness or any other reason for missing class or being unable to complete the assignment. Therefore, please do not ask for make-up assignments or extensions, as, again, reasonable accommodation is already built into the course structure.

**Movie Screenings:** Every attempt was made to pick movies that are philosophically provocative while being, at the same time, inclusive and appropriate for diverse audiences of different predilections and sensibilities. If some movie would, for whatever reason, be personally challenging for you, feel free to replace it with another from the list at the end of this syllabus, preferably from the same topical category. You may replace up to two movies over the course of the semester; no advance coordination with or notification to the professor or TA is required.

**Tentative Lecture Schedule, Reading Assignments, and Movie Screenings:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Movie</b>
1	1/12	Introduction to Ethics	N/A	N/A
2	1/19	Plato's <i>Republic</i>	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Books II-IV	<i>Equilibrium</i>
3	1/26	Virtue Theory	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Books I-II	<i>Groundhog Day</i>
4	2/2	Social Contract Theory	Thomas Hobbes, "The Social Contract"; John Locke, "On the State of Nature"	<i>Lord of the Flies</i> (1963)
5	2/9	Utilitarianism	Jeremy Bentham, "Principles of Morals and Legislation"; John Stuart Mill, "What Utilitarianism Is"	<i>Outbreak</i>
6	2/16	Deontology	Immanuel Kant, "Foundations for the Metaphysics of Morals"	<i>The Invention of Lying</i>
7	2/23	Midterm Exam	N/A	N/A
8	3/2	No Class (Spring Break)	N/A	N/A
9	3/9	Abortion	Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"; Don Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"	<i>Cider House Rules</i>
10	3/16	Cloning	Leon Kass, "The Wisdom of Repugnance"; Gregory Pence, <i>Who's Afraid of Human Cloning</i> (excerpts)	<i>Gattaca</i>
11	3/23	Euthanasia	James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"; Dan Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia"; Daniel Callahan, "Physician-Assisted Dying"	<i>The Sea Inside</i>

<b>12</b>	3/30	Animal Rights	Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal"; Carl Cohen, "The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research"	<i>Fast Food Nation</i>
<b>13</b>	4/6	Capital Punishment	Ernest van den Haag, "In Defense of the Death Penalty"; H.A. Bedau, "A Reply to van den Haag"	<i>Dead Man Walking</i>
<b>14</b>	4/13	Terrorism	Fritz Allhoff, <i>Terrorism, Ticking Time-Bombs, and Torture</i> , Chs. 1-2	<i>Paradise Now</i>
<b>15</b>	4/20	Torture	Fritz Allhoff, <i>Terrorism, Ticking Time-Bombs, and Torture</i> , Chs. 5-6	<i>Unthinkable</i>
<b>EW</b>	4/27	<b>Final Exam, 500-700p</b>		

**Statement on Academic Honesty:** You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate Catalog that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Movie</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Time (min.)</u>
Abortion	<i>The Cider House Rules</i>	1999	126
Abortion	<i>4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days</i>	2007	113
Abortion	<i>Lake of Fire</i>	2006	152
Abortion	<i>Roots of Roe</i>	1993	60
Abortion	<i>Vera Drake</i>	2005	125
Business Ethics	<i>Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room</i>	2005	109
Business Ethics/Whistleblowing	<i>The Insider</i>	1999	157
Business Ethics/Whistleblowing	<i>The Most Dangerous Man in America</i>	2009	92
Capital Punishment	<i>Dead Man Walking</i>	1995	122
Capital Punishment	<i>In Cold Blood</i>	1967	134
Capital Punishment	<i>The Life of David Gale</i>	2003	130
Cloning	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>	2010	103
Cloning	<i>The Island</i>	2005	127
Deontology	<i>Hostel</i>	2006	94
Deontology	<i>The Invention of Lying</i>	2009	100
Deontology/Altruism	<i>Hotel Rwanda</i>	2004	121
Deontology/Utilitarianism	<i>Gone Baby Gone</i>	2007	114
Deontology/Utilitarianism	<i>Hot Fuzz</i>	2007	121
Deontology/Utilitarianism	<i>The Dark Knight</i>	2008	152
Deontology/Utilitarianism/Research Ethics	<i>Extreme Measures</i>	1996	118
Disability Ethics	<i>Monica &amp; David</i>	2010	68
Disability Ethics	<i>The Diving Bell and the Butterfly</i>	2007	112
Dystopia/Censorship	<i>Equilibrium</i>	2002	107
Dystopia/Totalitarianism	<i>1984</i>	1984	113
Dystopia/Totalitarianism	<i>The Lives of Others</i>	2006	137
Egoism	<i>Rope</i>	1948	80
Egoism	<i>Wall Street</i>	1987	126
Environmental Ethics	<i>An Inconvenient Truth</i>	2006	94
Environmental Ethics	<i>Grizzly Man</i>	2005	100
Environmental Ethics	<i>Into the Wild</i>	2007	148
Environmental Ethics	<i>Wall-E</i>	2008	98
Ethics of War	<i>Apocalypse Now</i>	1979	153
Ethics of War	<i>Dr. Strangelove</i>	1964	94
Ethics of War	<i>Fog of War</i>	2003	95
Euthanasia	<i>Million Dollar Baby</i>	2005	132
Euthanasia	<i>The Sea Inside</i>	2004	125
Existentialism	<i>Winter Light</i>	1963	81
Food Ethics	<i>Food, Inc.</i>	2008	93
Food Ethics/Animal Rights	<i>Fast Food Nation</i>	2006	116
Genetic Intervention	<i>Gattaca</i>	1997	106
Medical Ethics	<i>All about My Mother</i>	1999	101
Medical Ethics	<i>Sick around the World</i>	2008	60
Medical Ethics	<i>Sicko</i>	2007	123
Medical Ethics	<i>Talk to Her</i>	2002	115
Moral Dilemmas	<i>Sophie's Choice</i>	1982	150

Moral Relativism/Nihilism	<i>Match Point</i>	2005	124
Moral Relativism/Nihilism	<i>No Country for Old Men</i>	2007	122
Moral Theories	<i>Do The Right Thing</i>	1989	120
Moral Theories	<i>Schindler's List</i>	1993	195
Moral Theories	<i>The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance</i>	1962	123
Moral Theories	<i>Unforgiven</i>	1992	131
Moral Theories/Existentialism	<i>Crimes &amp; Misdemeanors</i>	1989	107
Organ Transplantation	<i>Dirty Pretty Things</i>	2002	93
Organ Transplantation	<i>My Sister's Keeper</i>	2009	109
Poverty/Globalization	<i>Blood Diamond</i>	2006	143
Poverty/Globalization	<i>Central Station</i>	1998	113
Poverty/Globalization	<i>Life + Debt</i>	2001	80
Poverty/Globalization	<i>Outsourced</i>	2006	103
Problem of Evil	<i>A Serious Man</i>	2009	106
Sexual Morality	<i>Kinsey</i>	2004	118
Sexual Morality	<i>The People vs. Larry Flynt</i>	1996	129
Social Contract	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	1963	92
Social Contract	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	1990	90
Terrorism	<i>Paradise Now</i>	2005	90
Terrorism/Torture	<i>Bader Meinhof Complex</i>	2008	150
Terrorism/Torture	<i>Battle of Algiers</i>	1966	121
Terrorism/Torture	<i>Ghosts of Abu Ghraib</i>	2007	82
Terrorism/Torture	<i>Road to Guantánamo</i>	2006	95
Torture	<i>Taxi to the Darkside</i>	2007	106
Torture	<i>Unthinkable</i>	2010	97
Torture/Punishment	<i>Saw</i>	2004	103
Utilitarianism	<i>Casablanca</i>	1942	102
Utilitarianism	<i>Failsafe</i>	1964	112
Utilitarianism	<i>Outbreak</i>	1995	127
Utilitarianism	<i>Watchmen</i>	2009	162
Virtue Ethics	<i>Groundhog Day</i>	1993	101