

# PHI 304: Ethical Theory

Spring 2010

MW 2:00 - 3:15 pm

TBA

## Instructor Information:

Shawn E. Klein

sklein@rockford.edu

Office: Lang 114

Office Phone: 815-226-4115

Office Hours: MW 11:30-1:30; M 3:30-5; and by appointment.

Class Website: <http://www.whoneedsphilosophy.com/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/rcphil>

## Catalog Description:

Through the study of landmark works of past and contemporary moral philosophers, issues of values, virtues, rights, duties, relativism and universalism are studied in depth.

PRQ: None. Credits: 3.00

## Course Objectives:

At the end of the semester, the student should be able to:

1. Critically engage and evaluate philosophical argument.
2. Explain the philosophical viewpoints discussed.
3. Distinguish between these philosophical viewpoints.
4. Understand the philosophical terms used.

## Textbook:

Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Hackett Publishing Co., 1983. ISBN: 0-915145-45-6.

Foot, Philippa. *Natural Goodness*. Oxford University Press, 2001. ISBN: 0-19-926547-X

There will be other readings either handed out in class or online.

## Grading and Evaluation:

Final grades are based on a 350-point system consisting of the following:

Participation	50
Hume Paper	100
Foot Paper	100
Class Discussion Leadership	100
Total:	350 pts

The grading scale is as follows:

328 – 350	94 – 100 %	A
314 – 327	90 - 93 %	A-
304 – 313	87 - 89 %	B+
293 – 303	84 – 86 %	B
279 – 292	80 - 83 %	B-
269 – 278	77 - 79 %	C+
259 – 268	74 – 76 %	C
244 – 258	70 - 73 %	C-
209 – 243	60 – 69 %	D
0 – 208	0 – 59 %	F

Letter Grade Point Values for Class Discussion and Papers:

A	100
A-	92
B+	88
B	85
B-	82
C+	78
C	75
C-	72
D+	68
D	65
D-	62
F	0

**Class Participation & Attendance:**

Class participation is an essential part of the philosophical process and classroom learning. Class participation includes taking part in class and group discussions as well as other in-class assignments. Out of class homework assignments may be included as part of the student’s class participation grade.

Attendance as such is not required, but students are expected to attend every class. Regular class attendance is necessary in order to understand the material in this class and to participate. Students should plan to attend all classes and participate in discussions and class exercises. Tardiness or leaving early is not appreciated, and if happens often enough, it *will* affect your final grade.

If students miss a class, for whatever reason, it is *their* responsibility to find out what work was missed. They should always get class notes from another student. The students are responsible for the work from any missed class.

Quizzes or any other in-class worked missed due to an absence cannot be made up.

*Senior Day:* Seniors planning to participate in senior day must see the instructor for permission to miss class.

**Readings:**

The classes will be primarily held in seminar format, with minimal lecture. You are expected to be familiar with the readings in their entirety. On a week to week basis, I will provide more detail on what sections of the texts on which you should be focusing.

**Class Discussion Leadership Assignment**

See attached assignment description.

**Papers:**

There are two required papers. These papers are not biographical or historical; the focus of the paper must be on analyzing the philosophical ideas of the ideas discussed. Paper length: 2000-2500 words. Topics must be discussed with and approved by instructor. Drafts for review are optional, but are strongly recommended. To be considered for review, draft must be turned in by draft due date and be 50% complete (at least 1000 words). Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Center:

[www.rockford.edu/?page=WritingCenter](http://www.rockford.edu/?page=WritingCenter)

*Tentative Due Dates:*

Hume Paper Draft Due: 2/24

Hume Paper: 3/17

Foot Paper Draft Due: 4/14

Foot Paper: 5/3

**Academic Misconduct:**

Students are expected to adhere to the Rockford College Academic Honor Code. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated under *any* circumstances. Please see the Student Code section of the Student Handbook (available from the Rockford College website: <http://www.rockford.edu/?page=StudentHandbook>) for a full explanation of plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.

If you are unsure if a situation falls under academic dishonesty or not, consult the instructor prior to turning in the work.

**If you turn in a plagiarized paper, exam, or any other product of academic misconduct, this will result, at instructor's discretion, in a failing grade for the entire course, appropriate college authorities will be notified, and disciplinary procedures will be initiated.**

**Classroom Behavior:**

It is expected that all students will behave in a polite, respectable manner at all times, and that they will always be tolerant and civil towards their fellow students and instructor.

Any other behavior at any time will not be tolerated. The instructor reserves the right to remove a student if they fail to follow this policy.

**Dropping/Withdrawal:**

It is part of a student's academic responsibility to decide whether or not to drop or withdraw from a course once enrolled. If you find this course does not meet your needs or that you need to withdraw for some other reason, you must take the appropriate actions to drop or withdraw from the course. If you need to withdraw but are unable to come to campus, please contact me via telephone or email. *Instructor will not drop any students for non-attendance.*

**Electronics:**

All cell-phones, pagers, and other electronic devices must be turned off during class times. See the instructor if there is a reason that you need such a device on.

It is permissible to use a laptop to take notes, but any internet connections must be turned off. This privilege will be suspended if the laptop is used for a purpose unrelated to classroom activities.

Texting or messaging of any kind is not permitted during class. If a student cannot resist, then the phone will be confiscated for the duration of the class period.

You must get instructor approval for recording of classroom activities.

**Statement of Accommodation:**

If you believe you are eligible to receive any type of academic accommodation, through such federal laws as the ADA, please contact the Lang Center for Health, Wellness, and Counseling, 815 226-4083. The Lang staff manages disability services for Rockford College

**Course Schedule:**

Tentative schedule is attached.

**Addendums:**

- Confirmation form: This form must be signed and returned to instructor.
- Information on being a philosophy major
- Class Discussion Leadership Assignment
- Paper Rubric

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Important Dates</b>	
Wed, 01/13	Intro		
Wed, 01/20	Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals		
Mon, 01/25			
Wed, 01/27		Last Day to Drop: 1/29	
Mon, 02/01			
Wed, 02/03		Guest Speaker: William Kline TBD	
Mon, 02/08			
Wed, 02/10			
Mon, 02/15			
Wed, 02/17			
Mon, 02/22			
Wed, 02/24		Hume Draft Due	
Mon, 03/01		Foot, Natural Goodness	
Wed, 03/03			Hume Draft Returned
Mon, 03/08	Spring Break		
Wed, 03/10			
Mon, 03/15			
Wed, 03/17	Foot, Natural Goodness	Hume Paper Due	
Mon, 03/22			
Wed, 03/24			
Mon, 03/29			
Wed, 03/31			
Mon, 04/05			
Wed, 04/07			
Mon, 04/12			
Wed, 04/14		Foot Draft Due	
Mon, 04/19		TBD	
Wed, 04/21	Foot Draft Returned		
Mon, 04/26	Guest Speaker: Douglas Rasmussen		
Wed, 04/28			
Mon, 05/03	Foot Paper Due		
<p>This schedule is a tentative and rough guide to the semester. It is subject to change depending on the needs and contingencies of class.</p>			

## **Class Discussion Leadership Assignment:**

Students will take responsibility for leading the discussion of the assigned readings. There will be two students per reading assignment. Students will need to be ready to go when we start on the assigned reading. You will usually have at least a 2 class period forewarning. The two students on assignment should work independently, but they will need to make sure the focuses of their discussions are different.

The discussion leader will pick out a main theme or topic from the reading. The leader will develop discussion questions, at least 5, centered at examining this theme. These will be the basis for the class discussion. Note: this is not a presentation. The leader is facilitating and leading the discussion, not lecturing or speechifying. The instructor and other students will be taking active roles in the discussion as well.

If you are absent on the day you supposed to lead the class, you will need to be ready to go at the next class meeting. If you are unable to do this, you will need to arrange an extra leadership assignment later in the semester.

Students will receive a letter grade for each leadership assignment, based on the criteria below. These grades will be averaged to determine total leadership grade. Most students will take a leadership role around 5 or 6 times. Students must do at least four leadership assignments to get a leadership grade. (In other words, three As will still earn you 0 points.)

Leadership grading criteria:

- Quality of discussion questions.
  - Good questions raise important issues. They are open-ended and so they cannot be answered by a yes or no, or by restating basic factual issues. They get discussion participants to see the issue in a new light. They encourage participants to make connections between different ideas. They promote dialogue between participants.
  - Questions will need to be turned in (must be typed).
- Preparedness
  - A prepared leader will have more than the minimum # of discussion questions, they will be familiar with the relevant text, and have examples and illustrations from the text and life to help move the discussion along.
- Originality
  - This is sort of a degree of difficulty. Have you taken on a more difficult and original focus? The willingness to challenge one's self and the class will be taken in to account in one's grade.

## Paper Grading Rubric

- **Accuracy and Understanding:**
  - Are you accurately representing the ideas of the thinkers you are discussing?
  - Are you demonstrating your grasp of the material by being able to put the ideas into your own words?
  - Things to avoid:
    - Factual errors
    - Overreliance on long, direct quotations
    - Vague claims/attributions
  
- **Critical Thought:**
  - Have you provided sufficient reasons and specific evidence to support your claims?
  - Do you provide unique examples and illustrations that support your claims?
  - Things to avoid:
    - Being non-specific or too general
    - Making a claim without providing grounding
  
- **Conciseness and Clarity:**
  - How clear are you in the communication of what you are trying to say? Can anyone pick up the paper and know what you are talking about?
  - Have you organized the paper in clear and effective manner?
  - Do you have a clear topic/theme?
  - Things to avoid:
    - Jumping from idea to idea without transitions
    - Unnecessarily grandiose introductions or conclusions/Puffery
    - Repetition
    - Poor grammar, spelling, or organization that interfere with communication
  
- **Relevancy:**
  - Does the paper focus on your topic/theme?
  - Can you say what you want to say while staying focused on your point?
  - Things to avoid:
    - Irrelevant personal/historical/biographical material or anecdotes
    - Going off on tangents unrelated to topic
  
- **Mechanical:**
  - Proof read; Use complete sentences
  - Double check spelling of names, new concepts
  - Standard margins, double-spaced, standard type-face and font-size
  - Staying within length parameters.
  - On time

## Majoring in Philosophy: Graduate School and Career Benefits

Socrates famously said “The unexamined life is not worth living.” We might update that to say “The *examined* life will make you a living.” Majoring in philosophy prepares you not just for a life of rational reflection, but for your career and professional life.

### *Graduate School Information:*

- LSAT (Law School Admission Test) is required for most laws schools.
  - Philosophy majors consistently score well, second only to physics/math majors, with an average score of 157.4 on the test, 5.2 points higher than the overall (weighted) mean.
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) is required for most graduate business programs, including MBAs.
  - Philosophy majors scored the fourth highest overall on the GMAT with a mean score of 580, trailing only the majors from physics, mathematics, and engineering.
- GRE (Graduate Record Exam) is required for many graduate programs.
  - According to the Educational Testing Service (ETS), philosophy majors rank first on the Verbal Reasoning and the Analytical Writing sections of the exam.

### *Careers and Professions:*

- Law
- Business/Management: from entrepreneurs and executives to marketing and public relations
- Government Service
- Clergy
- Publishing and Writing
- Medicine
- Journalism

### *A Few Notable Philosophy Majors:*

- Stephen Breyer and David Souter, Supreme Court Justices,
- Phil Jackson, NBA coach,
- Steve Martin, actor, author and comedian,
- Carl Icahn, billionaire financier,
- Carly Fiorina, former CEO, Hewlett Packard,
- Stone Philips, broadcaster
- Rudi Giuliani, former mayor of New York.

For more information, check out [www.whoneedsphilosophy.com](http://www.whoneedsphilosophy.com)

## Syllabus Confirmation Form

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the course syllabus, in particular the policies regarding academic misconduct, for [class:]\_\_\_\_\_. I agree to bring any questions or concerns to the instructor immediately.

This form must be completed, separated from the syllabus, and returned to the instructor prior to the last day to drop class (Spring 2010: 1/29/10).

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_