Kenyon College & New Albany High School
Introduction to Ethics Syllabus
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Prof. Joel Richeimer, Kenyon College
> Richeimerj@kenyon.edu

Instructor Tony Macerollo, New Albany H.S.
> Macerollo.1@napls.us

Welcome! I look forward to learning with you this year. When I say learning with you, take this literally. This class will be a joint effort between your teacher, fellow students and you. Papers, critiques, participation, and presentations will be in class activities with guided cooperative help throughout the year.

Please take advantage of the resources at your disposal. This course will help lead you down the path to answer one of the most important questions on earth – How Should We Live?

Unit 1. Introduction to Ethics. Differing Ethical Visions
- How Should One Live One's Life?
- What is the Good Life?
- How Should One Relate to Others?
- How Should One Relate to Their Community
- Ethics v. Morality

Ethical visions are divided into three areas:
- Applied Ethics (sometimes called practical ethics)
- Normative Ethics
- Meta-Ethics

Unit 2. Applied Ethics: Test Case: The Rationing of Scarce Goods
We will use the cases below in order to uncover our ethical feelings and intuitions.   This illustrates how our ethical feelings often fall into traditional normative ethical positions.
- Triage
- The Maritime Tradition
- Organ Transplants

Unit 3. Normative Ethics

There are three normative families of Normative Ethical Theories that are used to solve applied ethics problems:

- Consequentialist Theories
- Deontological Theories
- Virtue Ethical Theories

Unit 4. Consequentialism

Consequentialism and deontological theories are modern theories. The "overall consequences" mean everything that the act brings about. Ethics are based on the overall consequences that the act brings about. If the good consequences outweigh the bad consequences then the act is right. If the bad consequences outweigh the good consequences, then the act is wrong.

- Reading - J.J.C. Smart – "An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics"
- Reading - J.S. Mill – "Utilitarianism"

Unit 5. Deontological Ethics

There are three types of deontological theories:

- Divine Command Theories
- Social Contract Theories
- Kantianism

Unit 5A. Divine Command Theories

Right or wrong is determined by God

- The Meta-Ethical Objection: The Open Question Argument
- Reading - Plato – *Euthyphro*

Unit 5B. Social Contract Theories

Right or wrong is determined by a contract.

- Readings from John Locke
- Readings from Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan*
- Readings from Thomas Jefferson – *The Declaration of Independence*

Unit 5C. Kantianism

Right or wrong is determined by reason.

Kant – *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Moral*

Unit 6. Virtue Ethics

According to virtue ethicists, consequentialists & deontologists, understand right and wrong too narrowly. Right or wrong must be understood in a larger context of the 'good life' – in terms of community and traditions. Virtue ethics has ancient roots.

This section will take delve into philosophical readings from all over the world.

- Reading - Alasdair McIntyre - *After Virtue* – Scotland
- Reading - Aristotle – Nicomachean Ethics (Books 1 & 2) – Ancient Greece
- Reading - *Culture: Ethics & Morality in Africa. PG 396.* – Africa
- Readings from Confucius – China
- Readings from Ben Franklin - America

Unit 7. Meta Ethics

The fields of applied ethics and normative theory focus on *what is moral*, meta ethics focuses on *what morality itself is*.

A) Ethical Non-Cognitivism

Ethical statements are neither true nor false.

- Reading - A.J. Ayer – "on emotivism"

B) Ethical Cognitivism

Ethical statements are either true or false. There are types of ethical cognitivism. They are:

i.) Ethical Relativism

Ethical statements are true or false but they are relative to a culture (or some other group).

ii.) Ethical Realism

Ethical statements are simply true or false. They are objective.

What makes ethical statements true or false?

- God -- Divine Command Theories
- Biology - Aristotle
- Metaphysical Structure of the World - Plato