

Sabancı University  
SPRING 2024

**HUM 317**  
**MAJOR WORKS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY**

Instructors:

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Tuesday 12.40 - 12.30 FENS L058  
Wednesday 10.40 - 12.30 FENS 2019

Office Hours:

Elif Yavnik: by appointment  
Ahmet Faik Kurtulmuş: by appointment

\*Please note that this syllabus is tentative and subject to change.

**Course Description**

This course aims to familiarize students with the field of moral philosophy, with both the cornerstones in its history and certain pressing debates today. It is organized in two parts. The first part provides a background in traditional approaches. It examines moral relativism, virtue ethics, deontology, and consequentialism. Against that background, the second part then focuses on the criticisms of these traditional views and on key contemporary discussions in moral philosophy. It addresses issues such as human enhancement, animal rights, deep ecology, and global justice, among others. In both parts, the reading are selected from the main figures in the areas.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

Grading:

Attendance and Participation: %10

Quizzes: %15

Group Presentations: %10

Midterm: %30

Final: %35

Attendance and Participation (%10):

Class attendance is mandatory. Lectures will not be repeated and/or summarized during the discussion hours.

Attendance follow-up starts at the end of the add-drop period, and attendance is taken on an hourly basis during the lectures and the discussion hours. Please note that missing an

entire lecture counts as missing 2 hours, whereas missing one discussion counts as missing 1 hour. Students who miss 12 hours of class in total will receive an N/A for the course grade.

Absences for medical reasons are to be documented with a doctor's report.

Acceptance of medical reports are subject to instructor's approval.

An absence may also count as excused in case a life situation that you need to attend arises: in such cases please email me beforehand, if possible.

In order to take a make up exam, the medical report must be submitted within 3 days after the original exam date.

Thoughtful and meaningful participation in class is highly encouraged. Outstanding contribution to the class and proof of engagement with the course material beyond course requirements may bring your final course grade up by half a letter (thus bringing it up from a B- to a B, for example), at the instructor's discretion.

#### Quizzes (%15):

There will be unannounced quizzes during class time. There will be no make ups for missed quizzes. If a student is absent on the day we have a quiz but they have emailed me before class to let me know about their excuse, that quiz will not be included in their quiz average. Anyone who is absent without an excuse will automatically get a zero on that quiz.

#### Group Presentations (%10):

We will have group presentations in the last week of classes. During the semester the students will form presentation groups and decide on the topics they want to present on. (I encourage you to talk to me as soon as you begin thinking about a topic. We can even brainstorm about it in class, about how to treat it as an issue in moral philosophy, and everyone can benefit.) The students are to then to submit a one-page outline of their research with their topic and group members' names by April 2nd. Everyone in the group is expected to contribute to both the preparation and the presentation stages.

- The presentations are to:  
introduce the subject,  
explain the prominent approaches to it,  
focus on one or two specific questions,  
lay out the main discussions around them,  
talk about what the group thought and discussed about these questions, what they found enlightening, interesting, challenging, and/or confusing,  
and finally offer two or three questions to open the topic up to discussion.

- The presentation outlines are to include:  
the names of the group members,  
the working title of the presentation,  
a brief description of the subject to be presented, and  
a preliminary list of the resources to be used.

Point to letter grade conversion chart:

A	100-96
A-	95-92
B+	91-88
B	87-84
B-	83-80
C+	79-76
C	75-72
C-	71-68
D+	67-64
D	64-60
F	59-0

### **Academic Integrity**

Major Works courses do not tolerate dishonesty and plagiarism.

Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fraud, and any failure to cite all materials and sources in your work. Plagiarism is an ethical and academic offense. In case the instructor suspects that an exam is not student's original work, the student will be given an oral examination.

Please be advised that AI generated works as well as use of paraphrasing and translation tools are regarded as plagiarism.

Exams with plagiarism issues will be graded F, and your semester grade may be F depending on the severity of the offense.

The offense may also be referred to as the University Ethics Committee.

### **Anti-Discrimination Policy**

The classroom will be free from all discrimination based on, including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, language, disability, gender, and sexual orientation. The students are expected to maintain this environment.

### **Special Needs**

It is the policy of Sabancı University to accommodate students with special needs and disabilities. To determine accommodations and/or academic adjustments, please let us know and contact the Disabled Students Support Unit of CIAD ([specialneeds@sabanciuniv.edu](mailto:specialneeds@sabanciuniv.edu)).

## Reading and Course Schedule

All readings will be made available on SuCourse+.

WEEK 1	Introduction {Recommended short reading: Plato, <i>Republic</i> , selection}
WEEK 2	James Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism”, selection
WEEK 3	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , selection
WEEK 4	Kant, <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , selection
WEEK 5	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , selection Nozick, “The Experience Machine”
WEEK 6	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
WEEK 7	Care Ethics: Virginia Held, “Care and Justice in the Global Context”

### **April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Deadline to turn in the group presentation project outline**

WEEK 8	Deep Ecology: Andrew McLaughlin, “The Heart of Deep Ecology”; Arne Naess, <i>The Ecology of Wisdom</i> , selection
WEEK 9	Animals and Morality: “Experimentation with Animals”
WEEK 10	Global Justice: Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
WEEK 11	Global Justice: Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
WEEK 12	Transhumanism and Human Enhancement: Janet Kourany, “Human Enhancement: Making the Debate More Productive”
WEEK 13	Nietzsche, <i>Genealogy of Morals</i> , selection
WEEK 14	Group Presentations