

Sabancı University
FALL 2021

HUM 317
MAJOR WORKS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Instructors:

Elif Yavnik, Ahmet Faik Kurtulmuş

eyavnik@sabanciuniv.edu

faik.kurtulmus@sabanciuniv.edu

Wednesday 10.40-12.30 FASS G006 & online

Thursday 11.40-12.30 FASS 1011 &online

Office Hours:

Elif Yavnik: by appointment, via Zoom

Ahmet Faik Kurtulmuş: by appointment, via Zoom

*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 virtue ethics, deontology, and consequentialism, as well as a criticism of traditional moral philosophy. With that background, the second part then focuses 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 names in the areas.

Course Requirements and Grading

Grading:

Attendance: %10

In-class Quizzes: %15

Group Presentations: %10

Midterm: %30

Final: %35

Attendance:

The course will be held in a hybrid format. Students will be able to attend the course both in class and via Zoom. Students who join via Zoom are expected to keep their cameras on and microphones off during class. If you are joining via Zoom and would like to speak, please say so in the chatbox on Zoom which I will check regularly. This will be the equivalent of raising your hand in the classroom.

Attendance will be taken on an hourly basis. Attendance follow-up starts at the end of the add-drop period. After 2 unexcused hours your attendance grade will fall by 1 point with

every unexcused absence. (That is to say, with 3 unexcused absences you get a 9/10, with 4 you get 8/10, etc.) Students who miss 9 hours of class in total will receive a “0” for their attendance grade.

Absences for medical reasons are to be documented with a doctor’s report, and acceptance of medical reports are due to instructor 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.

Important health measures for face-to-face hours: Everybody in the classroom is required to properly wear a mask, covering their mouth and noses, during the entire face-to-face sessions. All the windows will remain open during these sessions, unless the weather makes it impossible. During the breaks, everyone will leave the room in order to allow the classroom air to be refreshed.

Participation in class:

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.

In-class Quizzes:

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. At the end of the semester everyone’s lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Group Presentations:

We will have group presentations in the last weeks of class. 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 week 9. Each group will have around half an hour to present and lead discussion on their topic. Everyone in the group is expected to contribute to both the preparation and the presentation stages.

Midterm and Final Exams:

Midterm and Final exams will be held face to face, in the classroom.

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	64-59
F	58-0

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.

Papers 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.

Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fraud, and any failure to cite all materials and sources in your work.

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).

Reading and Course Schedule

All readings will be made available on SuCourse+.

INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1

Plato, *Republic*, selection
James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism", selection

HISTORY OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY

WEEK 2

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, selection

WEEK 3

Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, selection

WEEK 4

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, selection

WEEK 5

Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine"

WEEK 6

MIDTERM EXAM

(No class on Thursday)

ISSUES IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY

WEEK 7

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, selection

WEEK 8

Care Ethics:

Virginia Held, "Care and Justice in the Global Context"

WEEK 9

Animal Rights:

"Experimentation with Animals"

Deadline to turn in the group presentation project outline

WEEK 10

Deep Ecology:

Andrew McLaughlin, "The Heart of Deep Ecology";

Arne Naess, *The Ecology of Wisdom*, selection

WEEK 11

Digital Ethics:

Creel and Hellman, "The Algorithmic Leviathan: Arbitrariness, Fairness, and Opportunity in Algorithmic Decision Making Systems"

WEEK 12

Global Justice:

Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

WEEK 13

Transhumanism and Human Enhancement:

Nick Bostrom, "Human Genetic Enhancements: A Transhumanist Perspective"

Janet Kourany, "Human Enhancement: Making the Debate More Productive"

WEEK 14

Group Presentations

Catch up and review before the final exam